SERVICE CADDY FOR TRANSPORTING ITEMS

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ABSTRACT

Various embodiments of a service caddy are presented. In one embodiment, the service caddy allows a server to transport one or more service items. The service caddy is comprised of a top surface adapted to hold one or more of the plurality of items; a bottom surface having a gripping indenture to allow a user to grip the service caddy; a sidewall connecting the top surface and the bottom surface; and, a resting indenture on the sidewall, the resting indenture being at an angle to the top surface, the angle being less than ninety degrees towards the center of the bottom surface.
SERVICE CADDY FOR TRANSPORTING ITEMS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] At various public events such as sporting events and concerts, as well as entertaining at home and serving beverages in a public house, service items such as food and beverage containers are transported to patrons for service of such food and beverages. Various means of transporting service items are known, including the use of a service caddy. However, a problem exists where the caddy is unstable, especially when transporting multiple items, thereby possibly causing the items or their contents to spill or break.

[0002] A second problem with the traditionally known food/beverage caddy is that its sidewall is substantially circular, having a bottom surface that can be difficult to stabilize while transporting without grasping the caddy with two hands. This shape does not provide adequate stability when the caddy rests, for example, on the forearm or against the shoulder of the user; thus, there is a higher risk that the items or their contents will spill or break.

[0003] Embodiments of the present invention solve this problem by employing a resting indenture on a sidewall of the service caddy. The resting indenture is at an angle to a top surface of the caddy and custom fitted to a mammalian forearm, thus providing adequate stability while the caddy is being used to transport items. The invention further addresses the problem by combining a gripping indenture with the resting indenture.

[0004] It is an object of the embodiments of the subject invention to provide a caddy that is quickly and readily stabilized, thereby preventing transported items or their contents from spilling or breaking due to the depth of the holders in which the items being carried are placed.

[0005] It is a further object of the embodiments of the subject invention to provide a caddy that maintains its stability even when transporting a maximum quantity of various sized service items.

[0006] Further objects and advantages will become apparent as the subject invention is described in further detail.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In one form of the invention, an embodiment is a service caddy for transporting at least one of a plurality of items simultaneously. The service caddy comprises a top surface, with holders for supporting one or more of the plurality of items. The caddy also has a bottom surface, and a sidewall that connects the top surface and the bottom surface. In one embodiment, the bottom surface includes a gripping indenture to allow a user to grip the service caddy with the fingers of the carrying hand, while the sidewall has a resting indenture, which may be somewhat scallop shaped. The resting indenture is at an angle to the top surface, the angle being less than ninety degrees towards the center of the bottom surface. The resting indenture is generally shaped to fit a mammalian forearm, thus providing adequate stability while the caddy is transporting items.

[0008] The gripping indenture is located in an area that is at the center of the bottom surface of the caddy, or located in an area of the bottom surface such that a distance between the gripping indenture and the resting indenture substantially approximates the distance between a mammalian palm and the middle part of a mammalian forearm, a mammalian palm and a mammalian shoulder, or a mammalian palm and a mammalian neck.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a service caddy for transporting items constructed in accordance with the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the service caddy for transporting items with an angled view of the resting indenture forming part of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a top plan view of one embodiment of the service caddy for transporting items.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a bottom plan view of one embodiment of the service caddy for transporting items showing a centrally disposed gripping indenture.

[0013] FIG. 5 is a side elevation view of one embodiment of the service caddy for transporting items; and

[0014] FIG. 6 is a bottom plan view of an alternate embodiment of the service caddy where the gripping indenture is located adjacent the periphery of the bottom surface of the caddy.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] A first embodiment of a service caddy for transporting items will now be described herein with reference to the accompanying drawing figures. Alternative embodiments will also thereafter be described.

[0016] Referring to FIGS. 1-5, in the first embodiment of the invention the service caddy is substantially circular. More particularly, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, the service caddy’s sidewall 10 connects a top surface 16 to a bottom surface 42 (FIG. 4), wherein the sidewall 10, the top surface 16 and the bottom surface 42 are all substantially circular. The top surface 16 of the service caddy includes a plurality of item holders 12. In the embodiment of FIGS. 1 through 4, the shape of each item holder 12 is substantially circular and of a depth substantially equivalent to the height of the sidewall 10, adapted to receive, for example, beverage containers or similar items. In an embodiment, the item holders 12 are tapered inward toward the bottom to firmly and releasably grip the bottom of a beverage bottle or other like container or item.

[0017] In the first embodiment of the invention, the item holders 12 are positioned in a concentric circle. Further, an advertising or sports logo 18 may be displayed in an area that is proximal to the center of the top surface 16 of the service caddy.

[0018] As seen in FIGS. 2 and 4, the sidewall 10 connects the top surface 16 with the bottom surface 42 at the perimeter of the respective surfaces 16, 42. As shown in both FIGS. 2 and 4, a portion of the sidewall 10 includes a resting indenture 20 that extends from the top surface 16 to the bottom surface 42. As best seen in FIG. 2, the resting indenture 20 is at a slant. In this embodiment of the invention, referring also to FIG. 4, the resting indenture 20 is directed at an angle to the top surface 16, where the angle is less than ninety degrees towards the center of the bottom surface 42. Also, while only one resting indenture 20 is illustrated, the present invention contemplates that more than one resting indenture 20 may be included in sidewall 10.
In an embodiment of the invention, the resting indenture 20 has a top edge 11 (FIG. 2) located on the top surface 16 in the shape of a first arc 14. The resting indenture 20 also has a bottom edge 50 (FIG. 2) on the bottom surface 42 in the shape of a second arc 22. Also in the illustration of this embodiment of the invention, the first arc 14 has a radius less than the second arc 22.

Referring to FIG. 4, in this embodiment, a portion of the sidewall 10 (seen in FIG. 1) includes the resting indenture 20 that extends from the top surface 16 (seen also in FIG. 1) to the bottom surface 42. The bottom surface 42 also includes a gripping indenture 40, which allows a user to grip the service caddy with the fingers and palm of one hand. The gripping indenture 40 has sidewalls 41 that are sloped in a generally upward direction towards the resting indenture 20, and the gripping indenture 40 is located in an area that is proximal to the center of the bottom surface 42. In an alternate embodiment (not shown) the gripping indenture 40 may be disposed in a bottom surface that extends downward from the center of top surface 16, and bottom surface 42 is eliminated.

The following sets forth the present invention’s cycle of operation. One or more items are placed in one or more of the item holders 12 of the service caddy. The bottom surface 42 of the service caddy is placed on the user’s forearm. The resting indenture 20 of the service caddy abuts the upper part of a user’s forearm, typically just below the elbow. The user’s fingers of the carrying hand grip the sidewalls 41 of the gripping indenture 40. The user then transports the one or more items on the service caddy, maintaining the equilibrium of the service caddy at all times with the fingers and forearm stabilizing the caddy while items are removed from or added to the item holders 12.

Several additional embodiments of the foregoing service caddy have been contemplated. For example, while the above described service caddy is substantially circular, in an alternate embodiment, the service caddy may take any other shape suitable for its intended purpose, and one of skill in the art will appreciate that the service caddy may likewise vary in size. Additionally, in an alternate embodiment, the top surface 16 may include just one item holder 12 and, optionally, any number of item holders 12 of mixed shapes and sizes. One of skill in the art will appreciate that each item holder 12 may be used to hold virtually any item. One of skill in the art will further appreciate that the sidewall 10 need not be of a uniform height, but may vary. Accordingly, the depth of each item holder 12 may also vary. In alternate embodiments, the item holder 12 may be formed in any shape suitable for its intended purpose. One of skill in the art will also appreciate that the item holders 12 may be modified into any number of sizes.

While the top surface 16 of the service caddy of FIG. 1 displays the advertising or logo 18 in an area that is proximal to the center of the service caddy, in an alternate embodiment, the advertising or logo 18 may be displayed, for example, in the center of an item holder bottom 30 (FIG. 3), or alternately, anywhere on the service caddy. In another embodiment, the item holder 12 may be placed in the area of the logo 18 instead, or another arrangement of the item holders 12 may be used that is suitable for their intended purpose.

Alternate embodiments of the resting indenture 20 have also been contemplated. For instance, while the first or top arc 14 of the resting indenture 20 has been described as having a radius less than the second or bottom arc 22, in an alternate embodiment (not shown), the first arc 14 may have a radius greater than or equal to the second arc 22. One of skill in the art will appreciate that the arc 22 may be substituted with a non-arcuate shape and optionally straight edges to form the resting indenture 20.

Similarly, alternate embodiments of the shape and fit of the gripping indenture 40 have been contemplated. For example, the gripping indenture 40 may be custom fitted to a mammalian hand by way of a plastic mold incorporating contoured indentations adapted to receive the fingers of the user. One of skill in the art will appreciate that the size of the gripping indenture 40 may vary with the size of the service caddy. In another embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the gripping indenture 40 may be located near or at the peripheral edge of bottom surface 42.

Like the shape and fit of the gripping indenture 40, 40′, additional alternate embodiments of the location of the gripping indenture 40 have been contemplated. The gripping indenture 40 of the first embodiment is described as being located in an area proximal to the center of the bottom surface 42, and in an alternate embodiment of the invention (FIG. 6), the gripping indenture 40′ is located in a peripheral area of the bottom surface 42, such that a distance between the gripping indenture 40, 40′ and the resting indenture 20 substantially approximates the distance between a mammal’s palm and mid-forearm.

In still another embodiment of the invention, the gripping indenture 40, 40′ is located in an area of the bottom surface 42 such that a distance between the gripping indentures 40, 40′ and the resting indenture 20 substantially approximates the distance between a mammal’s palm and shoulder. In yet another alternate embodiment, the gripping indenture 40, 40′ is located in an area of the bottom surface 42 such that a distance between the gripping indentures 40, 40′ and the resting indenture 20 substantially approximates the distance between a mammal’s palm and neck.

One of skill in the art will appreciate that the radius of the service caddy may exceed the distance between the mammal’s palm, shoulder and neck, but in such an embodiment, the location of the gripping indenture 40, 40′ would be moved to approach the sidewall 10 to facilitate the user’s reach of the gripping indentures 40, 40′. In yet another embodiment (not shown), the resting indenture 20 may be a separate member that is demountably attached to the sidewall 10.

In all, numerous embodiments have been described herein. While the description above refers to particular embodiments of the present invention, it will be understood that many modifications may be made without departing from the spirit thereof. The accompanying claims are intended to cover such modifications as would fall within the true scope and spirit of the present invention. The presently disclosed embodiments are therefore to be considered in all respects illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims, rather than the foregoing description, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are therefore intended to be embraced therein.

1. A service caddy for transporting at least one of a plurality of items, the service caddy comprising:
   a top surface having at least one item holder, said at least one item holder adapted to hold at least one of the plurality of items,
a bottom surface having a gripping indenture, the gripping indenture adapted to allow a user to releasably grip the service caddy with the user’s fingers; and a connecting element connecting the top surface and the bottom surface.

2. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the connecting element comprises a sidewall extending between the top surface and the bottom surface.

3. The service caddy of claim 2, including a resting indenture on the sidewall.

4. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the resting indenture is at an angle to the top surface, the angle being less than ninety degrees towards the center of the bottom surface.

5. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the resting indenture has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius less than the radius of the second arc.

6. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the gripping indenture has sidewalls sloped in the direction towards the resting indenture.

7. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the resting indenture has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius greater than the radius of the second arc.

8. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the resting indenture has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius equal to the radius of the second arc.

9. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the resting indenture is fitted with a resting surface adapted to receive a mammalian forearm.

10. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the gripping indenture is located in an area that is proximal to the center of the bottom surface.

11. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the gripping indenture is located in an area of the bottom surface such that a distance between the gripping indenture and the resting indenture substantially approximates the distance between a mammalian palm and a mammalian forearm portion.

12. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the gripping indenture is located in an area of the bottom surface such that a distance between the gripping indenture and the resting indenture substantially approximates the distance between a mammalian palm and a mammalian shoulder.

13. The service caddy of claim 3, wherein the gripping indenture is located in an area of the bottom surface such that a distance between the gripping indenture and the resting indenture substantially approximates the distance between a mammalian palm and a mammalian neck.

14. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the at least one item holder extends downward from the top surface.

15. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the top surface is adapted to display advertising material.

16. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the item holder is adapted to display advertising material.

17. The service caddy of claim 1, wherein the bottom surface is adapted to display advertising material.

18. The service caddy of claim 2, wherein the sidewall connecting the top surface and the bottom surface is adapted to display advertising material.

19. A service caddy for transporting at least one of a plurality of items, the service caddy comprising: a top surface having at least one item holder, said at least one item holder adapted to hold at least one of the plurality of items; a bottom surface; a connecting element connecting the top surface and the bottom surface; and a resting indenture member in the connecting element.

20. The service caddy of claim 19 wherein the connecting element comprises a sidewall extending between the top surface and the bottom surface.

21. The service caddy of claim 20, wherein the resting indenture member has an angle from the top surface, the angle being less than ninety degrees towards the center of the bottom surface.

22. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the resting indenture member has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius less than the radius of the second arc.

23. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the resting indenture member has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius equal to the radius of the second arc.

24. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the resting indenture member has a top edge on the top surface in the shape of a first arc and a bottom edge on the bottom surface in the shape of a second arc, the first arc having a radius greater than the radius of the second arc.

25. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the resting indenture member includes a resting surface adapted to receive a mammalian forearm.

26. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein at least one item holder extends downward from the top surface.

27. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the top surface is adapted to display advertising material.

28. The service caddy of claim 30, wherein the item holder is adapted to display advertising material.

29. The service caddy of claim 19, wherein the bottom surface is adapted to display advertising material.

30. The service caddy of claim 20, wherein the sidewall connecting the top surface and the bottom surface is adapted to display advertising material.

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