PRODUCT DISPLAY HANGER

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ABSTRACT

A product display hanger includes a substrate with an adhesive applied to one surface. A release liner is disposed on the substrate and may include two substantially parallel die cuts formed therein. Thus, a portion or all of the release liner between the die cuts can be separated from the substrate to expose the adhesive on the substrate. Portions of the release liner remaining on the substrate have indicia thereon for identifying the preferred alignment and spacing for products to be displayed or other visible indicia or holes may be provided as a means of guidance for mounting product. At least one hanger hole may be formed near one end of the display hanger for suspending the display hanger from a hook.
PRODUCT DISPLAY HANGER

This application claims priority on U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/751,056 filed on Dec. 15, 2005.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The invention relates to laminated products, and specifically laminated products that can be used to display products.

2. Description of the Related Art

Many consumer items are sold in small packages, such as bags, blister packs or cartons. These consumer items include food, toiletries, cosmetics and hardware articles. Small packages can be obscured on a retail store shelf. As a result, many advertising and marketing experts try to create a visually distinctive vertical display of small products in the store. The vertical display enables a consumer to access the product without searching through shelves, bins or the like.

Some products that are intended for a vertical display have packages with a mounting aperture. The mounting aperture is telescoped over a horizontal rod or peg that may be suspended from a shelf. Displays of this type can permit a product to be accessed conveniently. However, only the first small product in the display is visually apparent to the consumer. Thus, the visual impact of the display is not great. Additionally, the manufacturer must rely upon the retailer to set up the horizontal mounting rod to load the products properly onto the mounting rod and to reload products as necessary. Retailers, on the other hand, often do not like the horizontal mounting rods to display products because they may impede access to other products in a shopping aisle and because they are easily disengaged from the shelf or other support. Frequently, shelf or peg space is not available to the vendor for season trials or impulse items.

Some products are displayed on a vertical array of alligator clips. The alligator clips typically are made of metal and are supported on a vertically aligned metal support rod. The vertical array of alligator clips is retained by a retailer and is loaded or reloaded by the retailer. The size and gripping strength of each alligator clip should be selected to ensure that the clips will properly support the packages that are displayed for sale. Clips that are too weak for a particular product may cause the product to slip from the grips of the alligator clip in response to inadvertent contact. Manufacturers typically are at the mercy of retailers for selecting an appropriate array of alligator clips and then mounting the products properly in that array. Of course, manufacturers could preload their products onto arrays of alligator clips and could send the preloaded arrays of alligator clips to the retailer. However, this arrangement requires the manufacturer to maintain an inventory of alligator clip arrays and then to recycle the arrays of clips back to the manufacturer for reloading and redistribution. Furthermore, the arrays of alligator clips are inherently expensive and add to the weight of the product and significantly increase shipping costs.

Some product displays include a board or panel to which packages are stapled. Consumers then may remove products from the panel. Display panels of this type are large and heavy, and hence add to shipping expenses. Furthermore, displays of this type generally cannot be reloaded and consumers often have difficulty removing products from such a display.

In view of the above, it is an object of the invention to provide a set for vertically supporting an array of consumer products.

Another object of the invention is to provide a product display that is adjustable and can be loaded in a rapid manner.

It is another object of the invention to provide product displays that are light weight and easily stored loaded or unloaded with product prior to use.

A further object of the invention is to provide a product display that is inexpensive and can be discarded after one or more uses.

Another object of the invention is to provide a product display that can be adapted easily for products of different weights, lengths and fill configurations.

Still a further object of the invention is to provide a product display that permits products to be mounted in a neat and orderly array, but can be readily adapted to fulfill arbitrary customer preferences as the mounting media and design is not predetermined. Still another object of the invention is to provide a product display that allows mounting of products which are not hole-punched for hanging.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a product display hanger for supporting and displaying products for sale. The product display hanger includes a thin flexible substrate with a layer of adhesive on one surface. The substrate may be a unitary piece of paper, plastic or foil. Alternatively, the substrate may comprise two or more layers of dissimilar materials that are laminated together to provide appropriate strength and flexibility and to provide a surface that will cooperate well with the selected adhesive. For example, the substrate may comprise a layer of paper laminated with a layer of plastic or foil.

The adhesive is selected to have a high loop/tack initial grip and shear qualities (i.e. the ability to hold or to give up a grip) selected to hold products in transit and on the selling floor. The adhesive will be selected in accordance with the specific material of the substrate and the products that are intended to be sold. The adhesive composition may vary from aggressive for bags of snack foods to removable in quality for items such as paper pouches, cartons or polyethylene, bags the adhesive is covered by a release liner that can be removed immediately prior to loading the products onto the adhesively coated portions of the substrate. Thus, the release liner may be removed and the products to be sold can be placed on the adhesive. The product display hanger and the products thereon then can be suspended in a retail facility and the products can be removed sequentially by consumers. Products do not have to be removed from any clips or plastic retaining fingers but can simply be peeled off or resealed if necessary.

The substrate preferably is an elongate tape and the release liner may extend longitudinally along the tape. In a preferred embodiment, the release liner may have two longitudinal die cuts extending along the release liner and
spaced inwardly from the side edges of the tape. A central portion of the release liner may be removed, thereby leaving strips of the release liner along the longitudinal edges of the tape. The strips of the release liner that remain adjacent to the edges of the tape may be imprinted with equally spaced indicia, such as lines that extend transverse to the longitudinal direction of the tape. These indicia enable workers to align products evenly and ensure that each product has a sufficient amount of adhesive. The side strips of the release liner that remain affixed to the substrate can be provided with different release characteristics to ensure that only the central portion of the release liner is removed. As an alternative, the substrate may be imprinted directly with indicia to guide workers for proper placement of the products. The indicia may be visible through the adhesive or may be printed on the reverse side of a transparent or translucent substrate and may be visible through the substrate. An alternative mounting scheme can use a series of die cut holes for provision as a mounting guide.

[0018] The width of the tape and the width of the release liner will determine the holding strength for the product. Hence, wider tapes can be provided for heavier products. Additionally, or alternatively, the width of the removable central portion of the release liner can be varied in accordance with the intended weight of the product that will be displayed. The central portion of the release liner can be wide relative to the tape for supporting and displaying relatively heavy products. The central portion of the release liner can be narrower to support and display light weight products. The matching of the adhesive area to the weight of the product that will be sold also is useful for controlling the relative ease with which the products can be separated from the tape. Thus, the shear strength and other characteristics of the adhesive should be sufficient to permit the package to separate from the adhesive without having the adhesive separate from the tape and without having the material of the package delaminate. As a result, a product can be held securely, but released easily. The type of adhesive and the dimensions of the substrate will be selected on a case-by-case basis depending on the weight of the package and the material from which the package is made. A solvent based adhesive is good for use with plastic or foil packages, such as the types of packages in which many snack foods are sold. A solvent based adhesive also can be used with a plastic substrate. A removable adhesive or a microspherical repositional adhesive can be used with paper packages and/or paper substrates. The open area of adhesive exposure can further be adjusted by simply adjusting the complete slit with of the strip.

[0019] The holding strength and the releasability can be varied by punching holes in the substrate. The holes effectively define a smaller surface area of the adhesive on the substrate of the product display hanger. As a result, the holding strength and the releasability can be varied by selecting holes in the substrate of appropriate dimensions and placing the holes at appropriate spacing.

[0020] One end of the substrate can be formed with a hanger hole. The hanger hole enables the substrate to be suspended from a hook. The hanger hole can be reinforced by forming two spaced apart hanger holes near one end of the substrate. The central portion of the release liner can be removed and the end of the substrate can be folded over so that the hanger holes are substantially registered with one another. As a result, a double thickness of the substrate material is provided around the hanger hole. Each hanger hole can be formed by a substantially U-shaped cut to define a flap that is hinged to the substrate. The U-shaped cut avoids creating waste material associated with a punched hole, and hence minimizes debris collection and waste recycling problems. The registered fold lines can be gravitationally below the U-shaped cuts to minimize the risk of having the weight of the display tear the substrate at opposite ends of the fold lines.

[0021] The product display hanger may be manufactured in a roll form. Perforations may extend through the substrate and through the release liner transverse to the longitudinal direction of the rolled material and at selected distances from one another conforming to the desired length of the hanger. Thus, a manufacturer or a retail store can pull one product display hanger from the roll and can tear the product display hanger from the remainder of the roll. The central portion or all of the release liner can be removed to expose the adhesive material along the longitudinal center of the substrate. The top part of the substrate can be folded over to register the hanger holes with one another to provide a double thickness support at one end of the display hanger. Products then can be mounted to the adhesive exposed at the longitudinal central portion of the substrate. The spacing and alignment of the products is facilitated by the indicia imprinted on strips of the release liner that remain adjacent the opposite side edges of the substrate or indicia on the substrate. Because the mounting strips are supplied in continuous roll form, tow more repeat lengths can be used to accommodate package of differing length, for great exposure, or to relieve excessive bulkiness which are not accomplished by any other strip hanging method.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing an end-to-end array of display hangers wound into a coiled for periodic dispensing as needed.

[0023] FIG. 2 is a top plan view of a hanger display in accordance with the invention.

[0024] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the hanger display.

[0025] FIG. 4 is a top plan view similar to FIG. 2, but showing the center part of the release liner removed to expose the adhesive material.

[0026] FIG. 5 is a side elevational view similar to FIG. 3, but showing an array of package releasably supported on the hanger display.

[0027] FIG. 6 is top plan view similar to FIG. 4, but showing an alternate embodiment.

[0028] FIG. 7 is a top plan view similar to FIG. 4, but showing another alternate embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0029] A product display hanger in accordance with the invention is identified generally by the numeral 10 in FIGS. 1-5. The product display hanger 10 is an elongate laminated tape with first and second longitudinal ends 12 and 14 and first and second side edges 16 and 18. A plurality of the
product display hangers 10 are connected in end-to-end relationship and can be wound into a tight coil C, as shown in FIG. 1 for dispensing from a tape type dispenser. More particularly, the first end 12 of one product display hanger 10 is joined unitarily to the second end 14 of an adjacent product display hanger 10. Perforations extend between the adjacent product display hangers 10 so that the display hangers 10 can be separated sequentially from one another, or used in tandem. The perforation for the continuity of product display hangers 10 on a roll or coil is created to allow for separation into individual product display hangers for continuity and strength so as to be used in sections of two, three or more product display hangers hinges as may be necessary for the proper display and adhesion of the products. Furthermore, multiple product display hangers 10 from those continuously supplied on coil C may be used for display of more larger product as may be required.

[0030] Each product display hanger 10 includes a substrate 20 and a release liner 22. The substrate 20 may be formed from paper, paper board, plastic or laminated assemblies thereof, and the particular material of the substrate 20 is selected in accordance with structural needs dictated by the products that are to be displayed, cost and aesthetic preferences of the manufacturer of the products that are to be displayed. A substrate 20 formed from plastic can be transparent or opaque and colored. A preferred plastic is a polyolefin with a thickness of 8-12 gauge. Polyester works well, but may be too expensive for many applications. A laminated assembly of polypropylene and paper also works well and can have an acceptable cost for many applications.

[0031] The substrate 20 includes opposite rear and front surfaces 24 and 26 and an adhesive 28 is applied to the front surface 26. The adhesive 28 is selected to have a high loop tack/initial grip and specific shear qualities to hold products in transit and on the selling floor. However, the adhesive 28 also is selected to permit the products to be peeled from the front surface 26 of the substrate. Furthermore, the adhesive 28 is selected so that a product can be removed and replaced at least once.

[0032] The release liner 22 is formed from or coated with a material that can be separated from the adhesive 28. Additionally, the release liner 22 is formed with first and second die cuts 36 and 38 that extend parallel to the respective first and second side edges 16 and 18. The die cuts 36 and 38 extend completely through the release liner 22 and are spaced inwardly from the respective first and second side edges 16 and 18 by substantially equal amounts. With this design, a central portion 40 of the release liner 22 can be peeled from the substrate 24 to expose the adhesive 28, while leaving first and second side strips 46 and 48 on the substrate 20. The distance between the respective die cuts 36, 28 and the side edges 16 and 18 preferably is at least 0.25 inch. Larger distances can be provided for intentionally narrowing the width of the exposed adhesive 28, thereby reducing the amount of force required to peel a product from the adhesive 28, as explained herein.

[0033] The side strips 46 and 48 of the release liner 22 are imprinted with lines 50 that extend transverse to the longitudinal dimension of the product display hanger 10. More particularly, the lines 50 on the first side strip 46 of the release liner 22 align with the lines 50 on the second side strip 48 of the release liner 22. The lines 50 are provided for marking locations and alignment at which products should be adhered to the display hanger. In this regard, the markings assist the products in alignment in an orderly array with the top edge of the product extending substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the product display hanger 10. Additionally, the lines 50 are spaced longitudinally from one another by distances that are selected to ensure an appropriate amount of adhesive for holding the particular product on the display hanger 10.

[0034] The product display hanger 10 further includes U-shaped hanger cuts 52a and 52b disposed centrally between the side edges 16 and 18 near the top end 12. The U-shaped hanger cuts 52a and 52b preferably are oriented so that their convex sides face one another. A score line 54 extends transversely across the product display hanger 10 at a location centrally between the hanger cuts 52a and 52b. Portions of the display hanger 10 near the top end 12 can be folded about the score line 54 so that the U-shaped hanger cuts 52a and 52b register with one another. Exposed portions of the adhesive 28 will hold this top portion of the display hanger 10 in its folded condition. The registered U-shaped cuts 52a and 52b can receive a hook, but do not create debris that must be accommodated. Furthermore, the orientation of the U-shaped cuts 52a and 52b avoids the risk of tearing the substrate at opposite ends of each U-shaped cut 52a and 52b due to the weight of the display 10.

[0035] The product display hanger 10 is used by pulling one product display hanger 10 from the roll shown in FIG. 1, and severing the product display hanger 10 from the remainder of the roll along the array of perforations at the top end 12. A worker then peels the central portion 40 of the release liner 22 from the substrate to expose the adhesive 28 on the top surface 26 of the substrate 20. The side strips 46 and 48 of the release liner 22 remain on the substrate 20 near the respective first and second side edges 16 and 18. The worker then folds top portions of the product display hanger 10 about the score line 54 so that the two hanger holes 52 substantially register with one another. As a result, a double thickness exists at the top of the product display hanger 10 so that the entire display hanger 10 can be supported from a hook or the like. The worker then positions packages 56 on the product display hanger 10. In this regard, the top edge of each package 56 is aligned with one pair of lines 50 to ensure that the top edge of the package 56 is substantially normal to the longitudinal direction of the product display hanger 50. Subsequent packages 56 then are attached sequentially with the top edge aligned along the next pair of lines 50.

[0036] This assembly of products 56 and the display hanger 10 can be shipped from the manufacturer of the products to the retail store. The retail store then merely suspends the hanger 10 at an appropriate location by passing a hook through the hanger hole 52. Consumers can sequentially remove the products 56 from the adhesive 28 exposed on the longitudinal central portion of the display hanger 10. The adhesive 28 has sufficient tack so that products 56 can be replaced on the display hanger 10 if necessary. The display hanger 10 can be discarded when all products have been sold, and a new product display hanger 10 can be suspended at the retail store.

[0037] As noted above, the adhesive 28 is designed to hold the packages securely while still permitting packages to be removed easily by a consumer. The surface area of the
adhesive 28, and hence the adhesiveness can be controlled by the relative positions of the die cuts 36 and 38. More adhesiveness can be provided by moving the die cuts 36 and 38 closer to the respective side edges 16 and 18. Less adhesiveness can be provided by moving the die cuts 36 and 38 closer to one another and further from the side edges 16 and 18. The adhesive 28 should be selected in view of the weight of the product in the package 56 and the surface characteristics of the package 56. For example, solvent based adhesives have good holding characteristics for packages made of plastic, such as the packages in which many snack foods are packaged. A microspherical repositionable adhesive or a removable adhesive are good for packages made from paper or polyethylene. One repositionable adhesive that has been found suitable for many applications is the T1055 adhesive available from Nastar, Inc of Middleton, Wis. Adhesive residue on the package generally will be considered undesirable, particularly if the packages 56 are for food or for products that will be accessed periodically, such as supplies of paper clips or staples. Thus, the bond between the adhesive 28 and the substrate 20 should be stronger than the bond between the adhesive 28 and the package 56 so that adhesive residue will not be removed from the substrate 20 with the package 56. Furthermore, the strength of the package 56 should exceed the strength of the bond between the adhesive 28 and the package 56. Thus, the package 56 will not delaminate, tear or open as the package 56 is being removed from substrate 20. The characteristics of the package 56, including the weight and the material of the package 56 generally will be dictated by the manufacturer of the product in the package. A small amount of testing may be required by the manufacturer of the display hanger 10 to ensure that the above-described performance parameters are met. The testing may involve testing different types of adhesives 28, different widths for the substrate 20 and different materials for the substrate to achieve the above-described performance parameters for a package 56 made from specified material and of a specified weight. This type and level of testing is well within the skill of a person having ordinary skill in the art.

The display hanger 10 may be offered in several standard widths, and the optimum width will be selected based on the weight of the package 56, the material from which the package 56 is made, the type of adhesive 28 and the material from which the substrate 20 is made. The standard widths may be 0.75 inch, 1.00 inch, 1.50 inch and 2.00 inch. The optional widths enable the substrate 20 to be made from a six inch wide roll that can be slit to produce display hangers 10 of the width required for the particular application (e.g. eight at 0.75 inch, six at 1.00 inch, four at 1.50 inch and three at 2.00 inch) with no waste.

FIG. 6 shows an alternate embodiment that permits adjustment to the holding and releasability of the product display hanger. In this regard, the alternate product display hanger 10A includes a substrate 20A with a plurality of cutouts 60 at spaced apart positions thereon. The cutouts 60 reduce the amount of the substrate that remains, and hence, alters the amount of exposed adhesive 28.

FIG. 7 shows another product display hanger 10B. The product display hanger 10B has a substrate 20B and a release liner 22B, similar to the first embodiment. However, the release liner 22B does not have longitudinal cuts comparable to the cuts 36 and 38 in the release liner 22 of the first embodiment. Thus, the entire release liner 22B is removed from the substrate 20B. The substrate 20B includes indicia 50B at selected spacing to indicate the proper spacing of packages to be displayed on the substrate 20B. The indicia 50B can be printed on the front surface 26B of the substrate beneath the adhesive 28B. Alternatively, the indicia 50B can be printed on the rear surface of the substrate 20B, particularly if the substrate 20B is formed from a transparent or translucent plastic.

While the invention has been described with respect to a preferred embodiment, it is apparent that various changes can be made without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. For example, the display hanger was illustrated as a long narrow strip. However, the display hanger can be a wide rectangle or any other shape. The display hanger is illustrated as being used with bags. However, the display hanger can be used with paper board boxes, rigid or semi-rigid plastic containers with or without lids, unpackaged products or the like. These and other changes will be apparent to those skilled in this art after having reviewed this disclosure and the accompanying drawings.

What is claimed is:
1. A display hanger for displaying products, said display hanger comprising substrate having opposite top and bottom ends and a front surface extending between the ends, an adhesive disposed on at least a portion of the front surface, a release liner removably applied to at least a portion of the adhesive on the front surface of the substrate, and at least one hanger hole in proximity to the top end of the display hanger for suspending the display hanger from a support.
2. The display hanger of claim 1, wherein the at least one hanger hole comprises first and second hanger holes at different distances from the top end, a fold line disposed symmetrically between the hanger holes, portions of the substrate between the fold line and the top end of the substrate defining a flap folded towards the bottom end of the substrate so that the adhesive holds the flap in a folded condition with the first and second hanger holes substantially registered with one another.
3. The display hanger of claim 2, wherein the first and second hanger holes are defined by substantially U-shaped cuts.
4. The display hanger of claim 3, wherein each of said U-shaped cuts has opposite ends disposed closer to the bottom end of the display hanger when the flap is folded.
5. The display hanger of claim 1 further comprising indicia at substantially equally spaced positions between the top and bottom ends for aligning products on the display hanger.
6. The display hanger of claim 5, wherein the indicia is printed on the front surface of the substrate.
7. The display hanger of claim 5, wherein the substrate has a rear surface opposite the front surface, the indicia being printed on the rear surface and the substrate being formed from a transparent or translucent material so that the indicia is visible through the substrate and the front surface of the substrate.
8. The display hanger of claim 1, further comprising cuts extending along the release liner and defining a central portion of the release liner that can be removed from the substrate to expose at least a portion of the adhesive thereon.
9. The display hanger of claim 8, wherein the cuts are spaced inwardly from side edges of display hanger so that strips of the release liner remain adjacent side edges of the display hanger when the central portion of the release liner is removed to expose the adhesive.

10. The display hanger of claim 2, wherein the strips of the release liner have indicia disposed thereon for aligning products on the display hanger in a preferred alignment and at a preferred spacing from one another.

11. The display hanger of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is selected to provide a stronger attachment of the adhesive to the substrate than to a package attached to the display hanger.

12. The display hanger of claim 1, wherein the substrate is formed from paper.

13. The display hanger of claim 1, wherein the substrate is formed from a synthetic material.

14. The display hanger of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of cutouts extending therethrough at locations aligned with the central portion of the release liner, the cutouts being dimensioned and disposed for matching adhesion to characteristics of the product that will be displayed.

15. The display hanger of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is a microspherical repositionable adhesive.

16. A display hanger assembly comprising an elongate strip having a plurality of display hangers connected substantially end-to-end, perforation lines being formed between the respective display hangers in the strip so that the respective display hangers can be separated from the strip, each of said display hangers comprising substrate having opposite top and bottom ends and a front surface extending between the ends, an adhesive disposed on at least a portion of the front surface, a release liner removably applied to at least a portion of the adhesive on the front surface of the substrate, and at least one hanger hole in proximity to the top end of the display hanger for suspending the display hanger from a support.

17. A method for displaying products, comprising:

providing a display hanger in the form of an elongate strip having a substrate with a front surface, an adhesive disposed on at least a portion of the front surface, a release liner removably applied to at least a portion of the adhesive on the front surface of the substrate, and indicia at spaced apart locations on the display hanger and visible when the release liner is removed;

removing at least a portion of the release liner to expose at least a portion of the adhesive;

removably attaching packages to the adhesive at locations aligned with the indicia; and

shipping the display hanger with the packages thereon to a store for display.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the display hanger includes at least one hanger hole near one end of the substrate, and wherein the method further includes suspending the display hanger from a hook at the store.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the display hanger includes at least first and second hanger holes at different distances from one end of the substrate, the method further comprising folding an end portion of the substrate around a fold line between the hanger holes so that the adhesive secures a folded portion of the substrate against remaining portions of the substrate with the hanger holes registered.

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