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(54) **Rigid, hinged-lid packet of cigarettes, with a coupon and manufacturing method thereof**

(57) A packet (1) of cigarettes having a group (4) of cigarettes; an inner package (3) enclosing the group (4) of cigarettes; an outer container (2) housing the inner package (3) and having a lid (7) hinged along a hinge (8); and a coupon (21) housed inside the outer container (2), between the outer container (2) and the inner package (3), and glued to the inner surface of a first wall (11, 12) of the outer container (2).

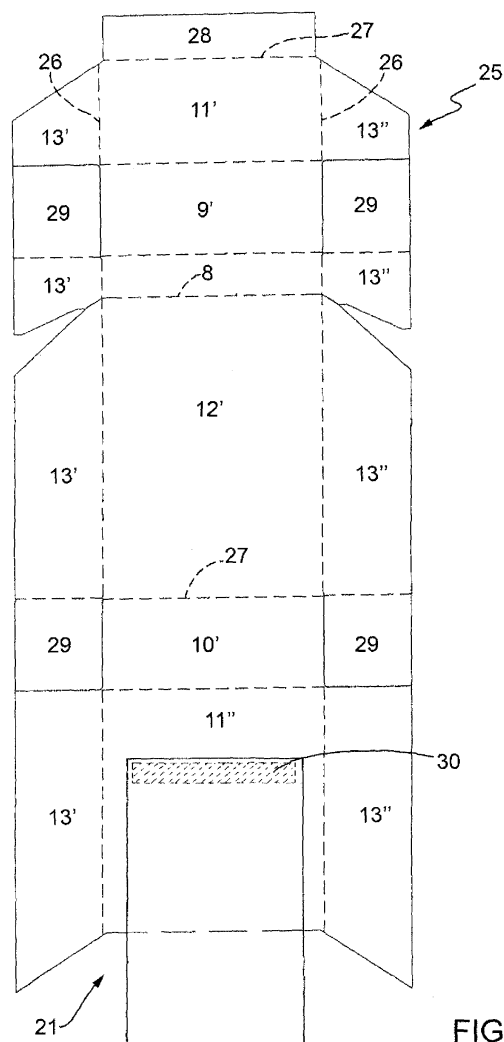


FIG.4

Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a rigid, hinged-lid packet of cigarettes with a coupon, and relative manufacturing method.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] A rigid packet of cigarettes comprises a cardboard outer container with a hinged lid; and an inner package housed inside the outer container and containing a group of cigarettes. And a sheet of transparent plastic overwrapping material (normally cellophane or polypropylene) is wrapped about the outer container and heat sealed to preserve the moisture and aroma of the tobacco.

[0003] Some packets of cigarettes contain a coupon in the form of a single or fan-folded sheet printed, for example, with advertising, or in the form of a picture card. The coupon is normally located between the outer container and the transparent plastic overwrapping, so the coupon is visible without opening the packet; or is located inside the outer container, at the front, i.e. between a front wall of the inner package and a front wall of the outer container.

[0004] One known method of inserting a coupon inside the outer container is to place the coupon on the front wall of the inner package, and then fold a blank about the inner package and the coupon to form the outer container. Though widely used, this method has the major drawback of allowing a considerable time lapse between placing the coupon on the front wall of the inner package and folding the blank about the inner package and coupon; during which time, steps must be taken to prevent the coupon from moving with respect to the inner package, and to ensure it is kept in the right position on the inner package. Such steps, however, are normally complicated and, therefore, expensive, and are not always successful, with the result that a considerable number of packets of cigarettes are rejected.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is an object of the present invention to provide a rigid, hinged-lid packet of cigarettes with a coupon, designed to eliminate the above drawbacks, and which at the same time is cheap and easy to produce.

[0006] Another object of the present invention is to provide a method of producing a rigid, hinged-lid packet of cigarettes with a coupon.

[0007] According to the present invention, there are provided a rigid, hinged-lid packet of cigarettes with a coupon, as claimed in the accompanying Claims, and a relative manufacturing method.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] A number of non-limiting embodiments of the present invention will be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a front view in perspective of a packet of cigarettes in accordance with the present invention in a closed configuration;

Figure 2 shows a front view in perspective of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in an open configuration;

Figure 3 shows a rear view in perspective of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes in a closed configuration; Figure 4 shows a spread-out view of a first embodiment of a blank, with a coupon, from which to form an outer container of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes;

Figure 5 shows a spread-out view of a second embodiment of a blank, with a coupon, from which to form an outer container of the Figure 1 packet of cigarettes.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0009] Number 1 in Figures 1, 2 and 3 indicates as a whole a rigid packet of cigarettes comprising a cup-shaped, rigid-cardboard outer container 2, and a package 3 housed inside container 2. Package 3 contains a parallelepiped-shaped group 4 of cigarettes, and has a top, so-called pull-off portion 5, at the top and front, which is pulled off when unsealing packet 1, to access the cigarettes inside package 3.

[0010] Container 2 has an open top end 6; and a cup-shaped lid 7 hinged to container 2 along a hinge 8 to rotate, with respect to container 2, between an open position (Figure 2) and a closed position (Figures 1 and 3) opening and closing open top end 6 respectively.

[0011] When lid 7 is in the closed position, container 2 is in the form of a rectangular parallelepiped comprising a top wall 9 and a bottom wall 10 opposite and parallel to each other; two opposite, parallel major lateral walls 11 and 12; and two opposite, parallel minor lateral walls 13. More specifically, one major lateral wall 11 defines a front wall of container 2, and the other major lateral wall 12 defines a rear wall of container 2. Four longitudinal edges 14 are defined between lateral walls 13 and front and rear walls 11, 12; and eight transverse edges 15 are defined between top and bottom walls 9, 10 and front, rear, and lateral walls 11, 12, 13.

[0012] Packet 1 comprises a collar 16, which is folded into a U and fitted (glued) inside container 2, and projects partly from open top end 6 to engage a corresponding inner surface of lid 7 in the closed position. Collar 16 comprises a front wall 17 positioned contacting front wall 11 of container 2; and two lateral walls 18 located on opposite sides of front wall 17 and positioned contacting minor lateral walls 13 of container 2.

[0013] As shown more clearly in Figure 2, package 3 is in the form of a rectangular parallelepiped, and comprises a top wall 19 which, when packet 1 is closed, contacts top wall 9 of outer container 2; and a major lateral wall 20 which defines a front wall 20 of package 3, which, in use, contacts the front wall 11 of container 2 and the front wall 17 of collar 16.

[0014] Packet 1 also comprises a coupon 21 printed with advertising or in the form of a picture card, and which comprises a portion 22 which is gripped by the user to extract coupon 21 from packet 1.

[0015] More specifically, coupon 21 comprises a single sheet of paper of roughly the same width as, but no wider than, front wall 20 or top wall 19 of package 3, and is L-shaped, i.e. comprises a front portion 23 in addition to grip portion 22. Grip portion 22 defines a top portion 22 of coupon 21 and is located between top wall 19 of package 3 and top wall 9 of outer container 2 when packet 1 is closed; an edge 24 is defined between front portion 23 and top portion 22; and front portion 23 is interposed between front wall 20 of package 3 and front wall 11 of outer container 2.

[0016] As shown in Figures 4 and 5, container 2 is made from a corresponding flat, substantially elongated rectangular blank 25, the parts of which are indicated, where possible, in the following description using the same reference numbers, with superscripts, as for the corresponding parts of container 2.

[0017] Blank 25 has two longitudinal fold lines 26; and a number of transverse fold lines 27 defining, between the two longitudinal fold lines 26, a panel 11' forming a top portion of front wall 11 (in particular, the portion forming part of lid 7); a panel 9' forming top wall 9; a panel 12' forming rear wall 12; a panel 10' forming bottom wall 10; and a panel 11'' forming a bottom portion of front wall 11 (in particular, the portion forming part of container 2).

[0018] Each panel 11', 11'', 12' has two lateral flaps 13', 13'' located on opposite sides of panel 11', 11'', 12' and separated from panel 11', 11'', 12' by the two longitudinal fold lines 26. Panel 11' has a reinforcing flap 28; and each flap 13', 13'' of panel 12' has respective rectangular tabs 29 located at opposite ends of flap 13', 13''.

[0019] As shown in Figure 4, front portion 23 of coupon 21 does not extend the full length of panel 11'', and is glued, before packet 1 of cigarettes is formed, to the inner surface of panel 11'' by a transverse line 30 of weak-stick, possibly hot-melt, glue close to a bottom edge of front portion 23.

[0020] To form packet 1, outer container 2 is folded about package 3 containing group 4 of cigarettes. Lateral flaps 13' and 13'' are superimposed and glued together to define minor lateral walls 13 of container 2; each tab 29 is folded squarely with respect to respective lateral flap 13', 13'', and is superimposed on and glued to an inner surface of a respective panel 9', 10' to define an inner portion of a relative wall 9, 10; and top portion 22 of coupon 21 is folded along edge 24 so that, when packet 1 is closed, it is located between top wall 19 of package

3 and top wall 9 of outer container 2.

[0021] When packet 1 is open, portion 22 springs slightly back up off top wall 19 of inner package 3, so the user of packet 1, to extract coupon 21 from packet 1, can grip portion 22 easily and pull slightly on it to detach coupon 21 completely from package 3 and extract it easily from container 2.

[0022] In another embodiment shown in Figure 5, front portion 23 of coupon 21 does not extend the full length of panel 11'', and is glued, before packet 1 of cigarettes is formed, to the inner surface of panel 11'' by a transverse line 31 of strong-stick, possibly hot-melt, glue close to a bottom edge of front portion 23. A precut transverse tear line 32 is formed beneath line 31 of strong-stick glue, and is torn when coupon 21 is extracted by the user from packet 1. In this variation, front portion 23 of coupon 21 is therefore divided into two portions: a central portion 33 connected to top portion 22, and which is removed by the user together with top portion 22; and a bottom portion 34 comprising line 31 of strong-stick glue, and which remains fixed firmly to package 3 even after coupon 21 is removed.

[0023] When packet 1 is open, portion 22 springs slightly back up off top wall 19 of inner package 3, so the user of packet 1, to extract coupon 21 from packet 1, can grip portion 22 easily and pull slightly on it to tear transverse tear line 32, detach central portion 33 and top portion 22 of coupon 21 from bottom portion 34, and extract central portion 33 and top portion 22 easily from container 2.

[0024] In another embodiment, not shown in the drawings, coupon 21 comprises a single sheet of paper of roughly the same width as, but no wider than, top wall 19 of package 3, is L-shaped, and comprises a rear portion and a grip portion 22. Grip portion 22 defines a top portion 22 of coupon 21 and is located between top wall 19 of package 3 and top wall 9 of outer container 2 when packet 1 is closed; an edge 24 is defined between the rear portion and top portion 22; and the rear portion is interposed between a rear wall of package 3 and rear wall 12 of outer container 2.

[0025] In this case, the rear portion of coupon 21 does not extend the full length of panel 12', and is glued to the inner surface of panel 12', below hinge 8, by a transverse line 30 of weak-stick, possibly hot-melt, glue close to a bottom edge of the rear portion, or by a transverse line 31 of strong-stick, preferably hot-melt, glue close to a bottom edge of the rear portion, and above which a precut transverse tear line 32 is formed, and is torn when the user extracts coupon 21 from packet 1.

[0026] It should be pointed out that lines 30, 31 of glue may be defined by at least one application (not shown) of glue, and in particular by several applications of glue, preferably applied to blank 25, by one or more hot-melt glue applicators (not shown), in the most convenient number and location. More generally speaking, the glue connecting coupon 21 to blank 25 may be applied in any number of applications and wherever effective.

[0027] The preliminary step of gluing coupon 21 to the inner surface of panel 11" or panel 12' of blank 25 may obviously be performed either at the plant producing blanks 25 and coupons 21, or on a packing machine for producing packets of cigarettes 1 of the type described above, prior to performing the folding steps to form the actual packet 1 of cigarettes.

[0028] Packet 1 of cigarettes as described above has numerous advantages. In particular, it is cheap and easy to produce, by simply gluing coupon 21 directly to blank 25 of outer container 2. This prevents any slippage of coupon 21 when forming outer container 2, thus simplifying the packing procedure and drastically reducing the number of packets 1 of cigarettes rejected due to wrongly positioned coupons 21.

Claims

1. A packet of cigarettes comprising :

a group (4) of cigarettes;
an inner package (3) enclosing the group (4) of cigarettes;
an outer container (2) housing the inner package (3) and having a lid (7) hinged along a hinge (8);
and
a coupon (21) housed inside the outer container (2), between the outer container (2) and the inner package (3);
the packet (1) of cigarettes being **characterized in that** the coupon (21) is glued to the inner surface of a first wall (11, 12) of the outer container (2).

2. A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the coupon (21) is L-shaped, and comprises a first portion (23) glued to the inner surface of the first wall (11, 12) of the outer container (2); and a second portion (22) perpendicular to the first portion (23) and positioned contacting a top wall (9) of the outer container (2), between the top wall (9) of the outer container (2) and a top wall (19) of the inner package (3).

3. A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the first wall (11, 12) is a front wall (11) of the outer container (2), and the first portion (23) is located between the front wall (11) of the outer container (2) and a front wall (20) of the inner package (3), and is glued to the inner surface of the front wall (11) of the outer container (2).

4. A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the first wall (11, 12) is a rear wall (12), with the hinge (8), of the outer container (2), and the first portion (23) is located between the rear wall (12) of the outer container (2) and a rear wall of the inner package (3), and is glued to the inner surface of the rear wall

(12) of the outer container (2), beneath the hinge (8).

5. A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 3 or 4, wherein the first portion (23) of the coupon (21) is glued by at least one application (30) of weak-stick glue close to a bottom edge of the coupon (21).

6. A packet of cigarettes as claimed in Claim 3 or 4, wherein the first portion (23) of the coupon (21) is glued by at least one application (31) of strong-stick glue close to a bottom edge of the coupon (21); and the first portion (23) has a transverse tear line (32) formed above the at least one application (31) of strong-stick glue.

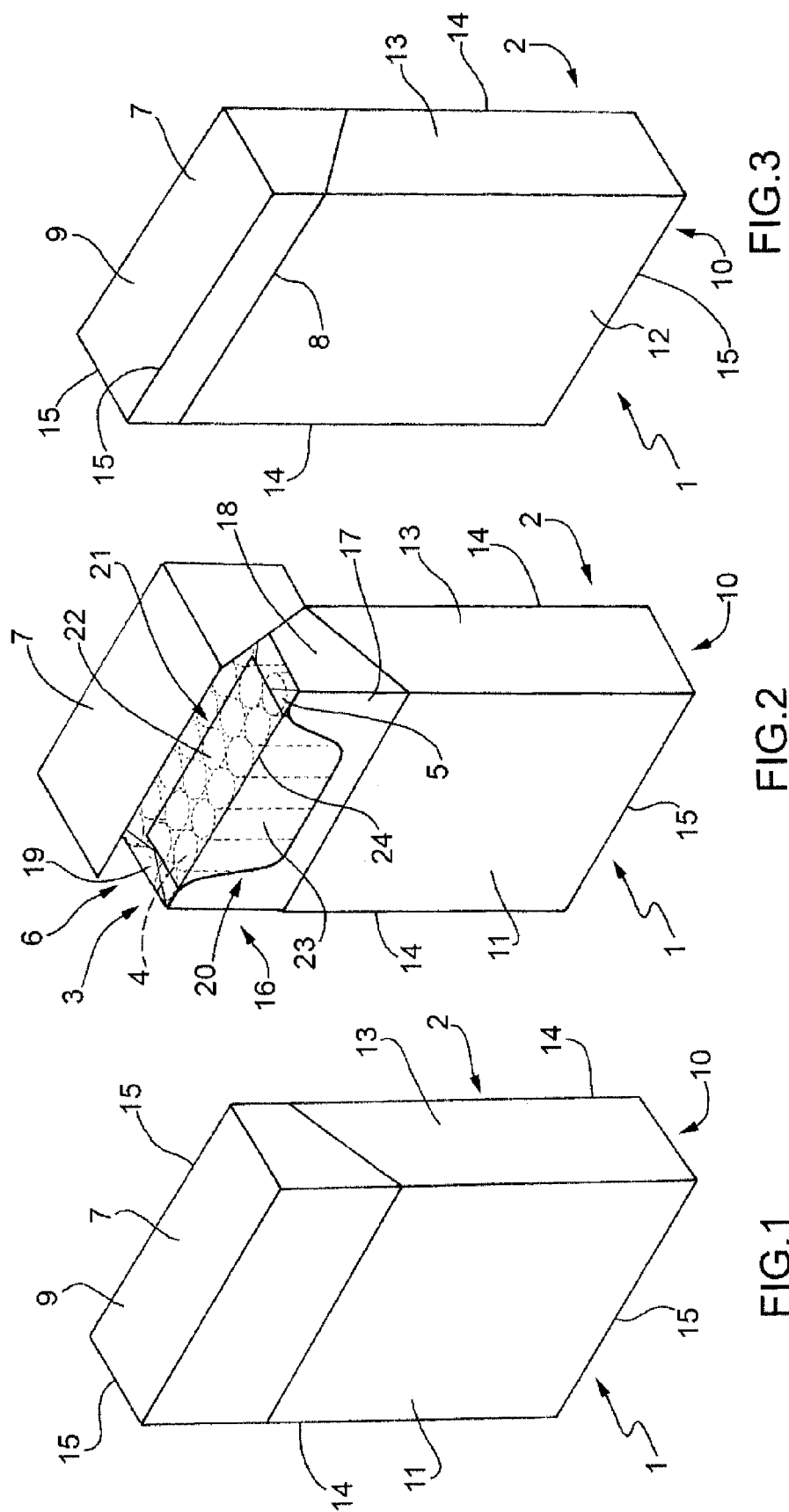
7. A method of producing a rigid, hinged-lid packet; the method comprising the steps of :

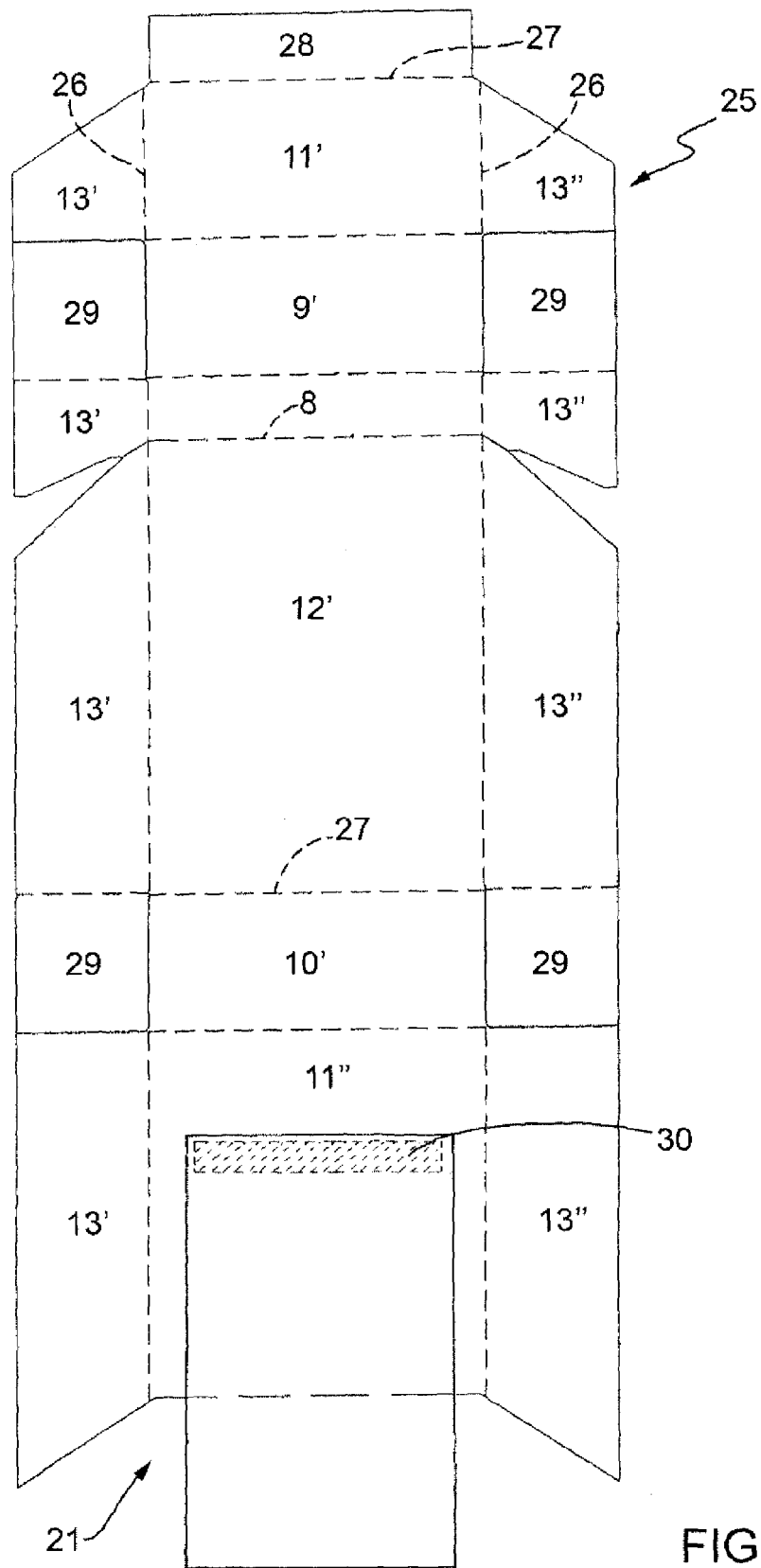
folding a first sheet about a group (4) of cigarettes to form an inner package (3);
folding a flat blank (25) about the inner package (3) containing the group (4) of cigarettes, to form an outer container (2) with a hinged lid (7); and inserting a coupon inside the outer container (2), between the outer container (2) and the inner package (3);
the method being **characterized by** comprising the further step of gluing a coupon (21) to the inner surface of a first panel (11", 12') of the blank (25) before folding the flat blank (25) of the outer container (2) about the inner package (3) containing the group (4) of cigarettes.

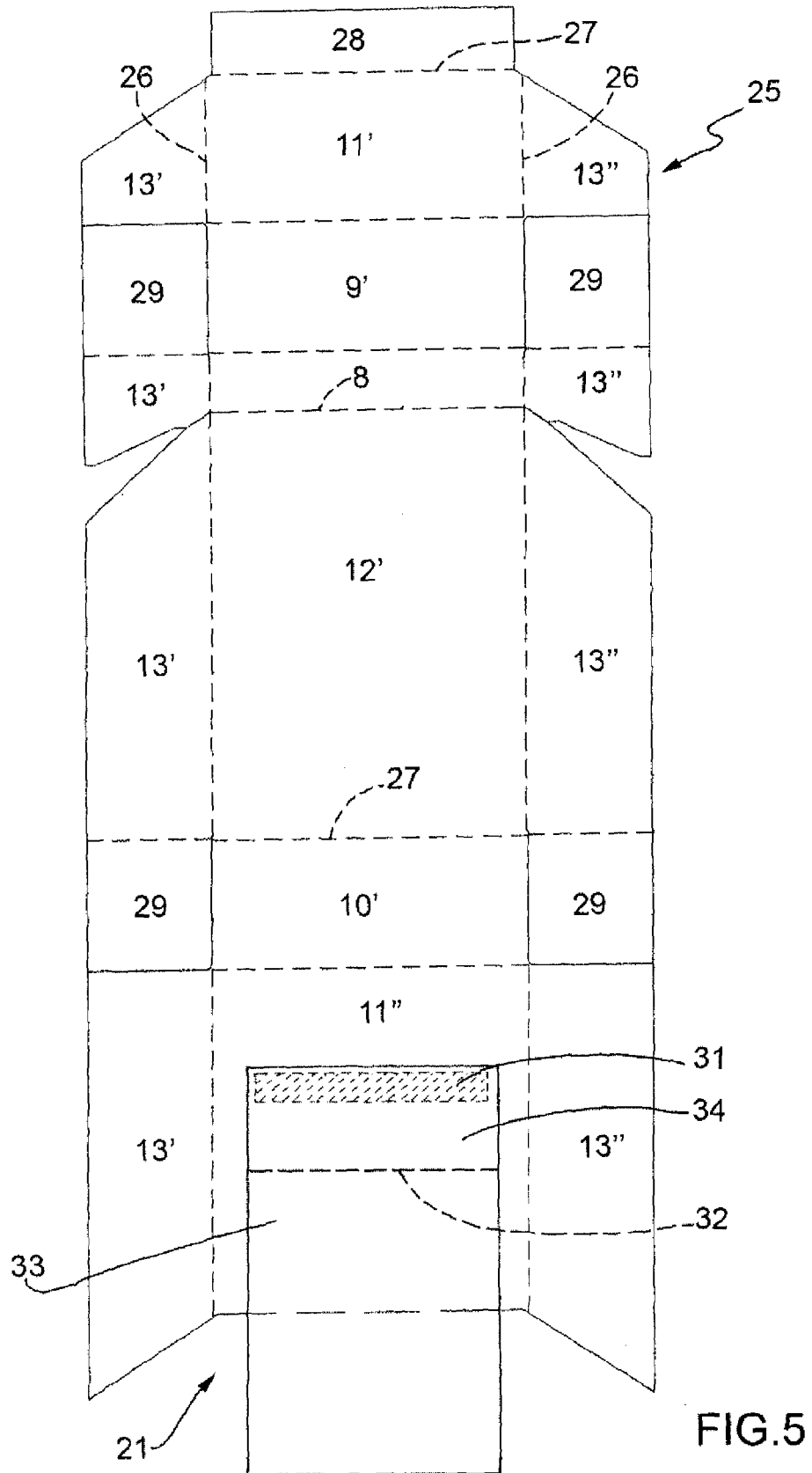
8. A method as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the first panel (11") forms a bottom portion of a front wall (11) of the outer container (2).

9. A method as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the first panel (12') forms a rear wall (12) of the outer container (2).

10. A method as claimed in Claim 8 or 9, wherein the coupon (21) is L-shaped, and comprises a first portion (23) glued to the inner surface of a first panel (11", 12') of the blank (25); and a second portion (22) connected to the first portion (23);
the method comprising the further step of folding the second portion (22) with respect to the first portion (23) along an edge (24), so the second portion (22) is perpendicular to the first portion (23) and positioned contacting a top wall (9) of the outer container (2), between the top wall (9) of the outer container (2) and a top wall (19) of the inner package (3).









EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 09 18 0907

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Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 24 March 2010	Examiner Leijten, René
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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EPO FORM 1503 (03.82) (P04001)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 09 18 0907

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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