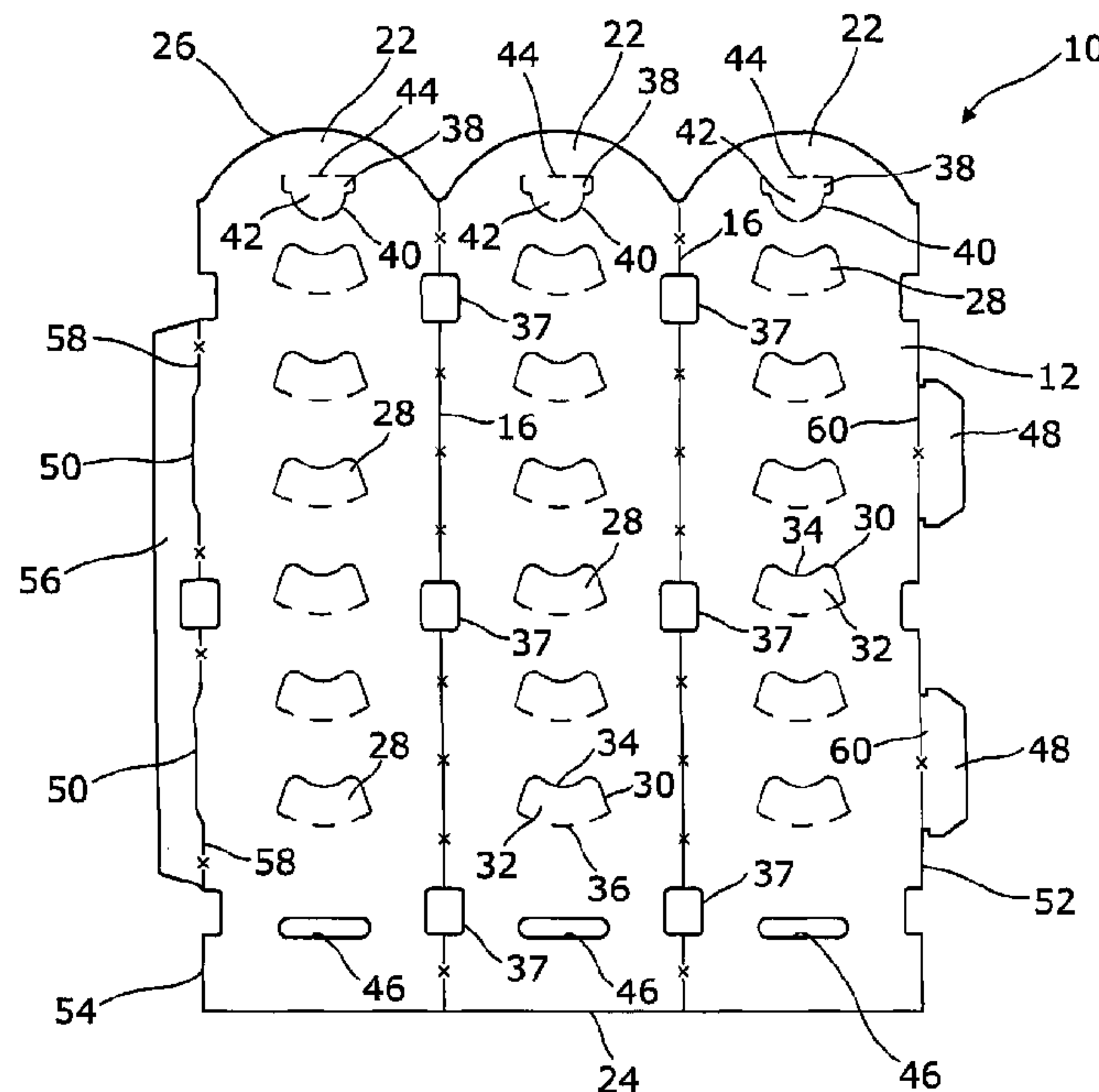




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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

The device (10) is in the form of a planar sheet (12) of material divided by means of vertical crease lines (16) into panel portions (22). The sheet is foldable about the crease lines to configure the panels to form a self supporting display stand (Figure 3). At least some of the panel portions have package supporting formations (28) for mounting packages (14) to the panel portions for display. For display purposes, the device can be hung in its planar configuration or folded to form a display stand. The device (10) can also be folded inside out into a transport configuration in which product containing packages mounted to the sheet are located internally (Figure 4).

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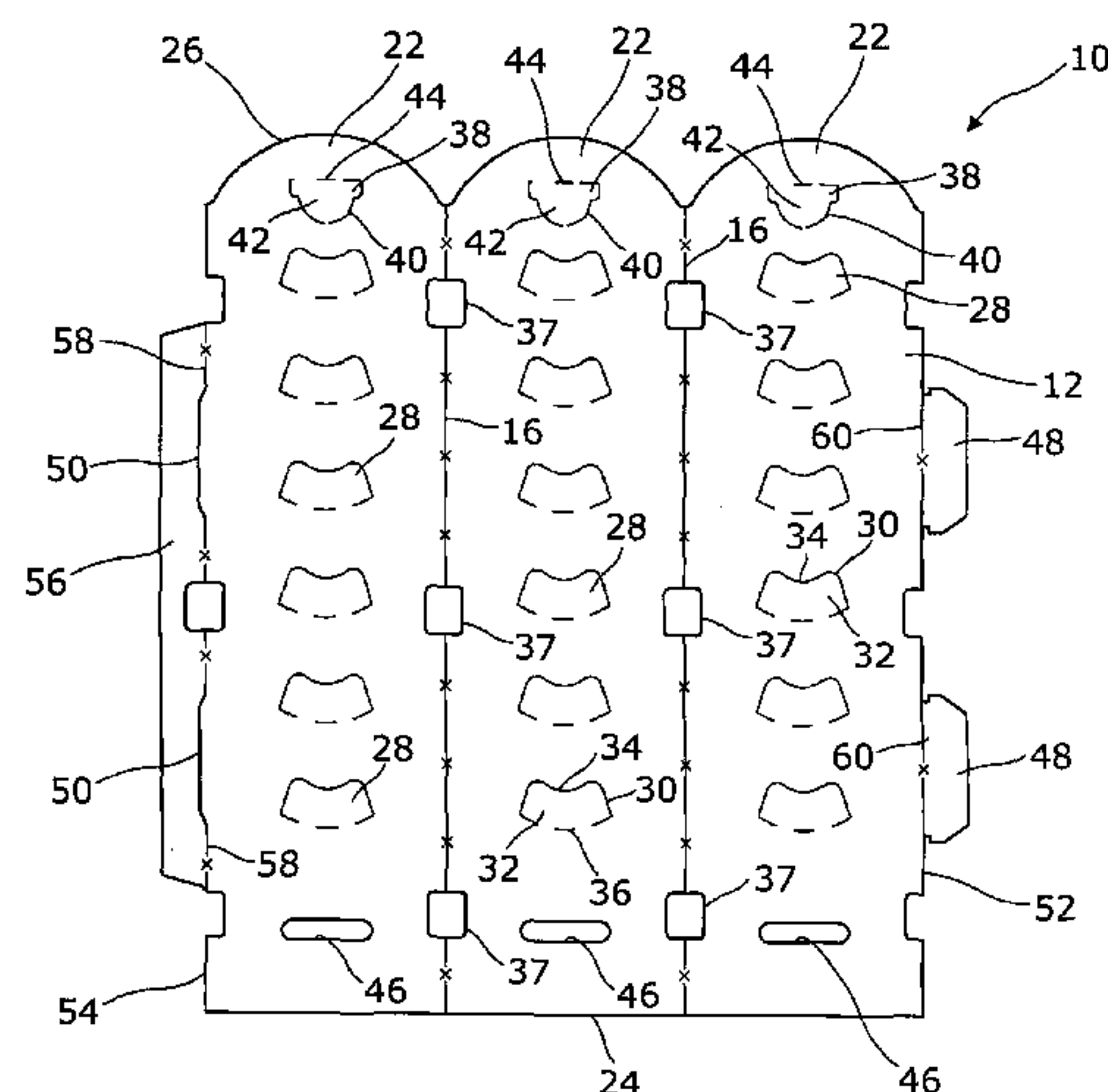


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: The device (10) is in the form of a planar sheet (12) of material divided by means of vertical crease lines (16) into panel portions (22). The sheet is foldable about the crease lines to configure the panels to form a self supporting display stand (Figure 3). At least some of the panel portions have package supporting formations (28) for mounting packages (14) to the panel portions for display. For display purposes, the device can be hung in its planar configuration or folded to form a display stand. The device (10) can also be folded inside out into a transport configuration in which product containing packages mounted to the sheet are located internally (Figure 4).

Merchandising Display Device and Method

Technical Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a merchandising display device and to a
5 method of transporting and displaying a plurality of product containing packages
using such a device.

Background to the Invention

Various arrangements are known for displaying packaged products,
particularly at a point of sale such as at a checkout in a shop, cafe, bar or other retail
10 outlet and the like. In some cases, permanent or semi-permanent display stands are
provided onto which the packaged products are loaded for display. The packaged
products can be selected from the display and removed for purchase. Known display
stands may have shelves onto which the packaged products are placed or rows of
hooks from which the packaged products are suspended, for example.

15 A drawback with some of the known arrangements involving permanent or
semi-permanent display stands is that the products may have to be unloaded from
packaging in which they are transported and placed on the stands. This is time
consuming and adds to the cost for the retailers. As a result, efforts have been made to
produce display ready packaging that enable products to be packaged as a
20 merchandisable unit for transport to a retail outlet and which can be placed on display
with the minimum of effort. In one known example, products packaged in bags are
mounted to a display card which is shipped to and subsequently hung for display at
retail outlet. The packages can be removed individually from the card for purchase. A
display card for transporting and displaying snack foods packaged in bags is described
25 in Canadian patent number 1 189 488.

Other display ready types of packaging include cartons in which packaged
products are placed for transport and which are designed to be opened and placed
directly on a shelf or display stand so that the packaged products can be viewed and
removed for purchase.

It is also known to provide point of sale display stands that are erected from one or more panels of cardboard or the like. These are transported in a flat configuration and later assembled to form a self-supporting display stand for placement on a counter. WO 2007/103936 A2 discloses a combined display unit and shipping
5 enclosure, in which at least some of the panels which form the display unit also form part of the shipping enclosure for the display unit.

Whilst each of the known arrangements for transporting and displaying packaged products are effective, they are not particularly versatile. Whilst one retailer may wish to display products by means of a display card which can be hung, another
10 may prefer to be able to display products by means of a display stand on a counter. Even the same retailer may wish to alternate between different methods of displaying the same products depending on the space available at any given time. The known arrangements do not provide retailers with many options as to how the packaged products are displayed and a retailer may be disinclined to order certain packaged
15 products if they are not provided in a manner which suits their requirements for display. To overcome this problem, a manufacturer could package their products in a range of different manners so that retailers can select the display option they prefer but this would add significantly to the costs of manufacture, packaging and transport.

There is a need then for a device for transporting and displaying packaged
20 products which overcomes, or at least mitigates, the drawbacks of the known devices.

There is a need for a device for transporting and displaying packaged products which is more versatile than the known devices.

There is need in particular for a transport and display device for packaged products which can be used to display the packaged products in a variety of different
25 ways without the need to remove them from the device.

Summary of the Invention

In accordance with a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a merchandising transport and display device comprising a substantially planar sheet of material divided by means of a plurality of vertical crease lines into a plurality of
30 panel portions, the sheet being foldable about the crease lines so as to configure the

panels relative to one another to form a self supporting display stand, at least some of the panel portions comprising a plurality of package supporting formations for supporting packages containing products to the panel portions for display.

5 In an embodiment, each of the panel portions comprise a plurality of package supporting formations for supporting packages containing products to the panel portions for display. The package supporting formations in each panel may be arranged in a column. The panel portions may be substantially identical to one another.

10 At least some of the panel portions may be angled relative to each other to form the sheet into a self supporting display stand.

A number of openings through the sheet may be provided in spaced relation along at least some or all the vertical crease lines to divide the sheet into a number of discrete hinge portions interconnecting adjacent panel portions. In an embodiment, three openings are formed through the sheet of material spaced along each of the
15 vertical crease lines.

The supporting formations may be configured to secure the product containing packages to the panel portions for display.

The supporting formations may comprise a plurality of slots defining tabs for securing product containing packages to the panel portions. The slots may be
20 configured for securing product containing bags or pouches to the panel portions. Each of the slots may be generally "M" shaped so as to define an upwardly extending movable tab and a downwardly directed fixed tab in the sheet of material. In the embodiment, the movable tabs may be foldable about a lower hinge line so that they can be moved out of the plane of the sheet.

25 The sheet of material may have opposed upper and lower edges and opposed side edges, and the sheet may be provided with corresponding formations on the opposed side edges that can be inter-engaged to hold the sheet in a folded configuration with the opposed side edges adjacent one another so as to define a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section.

The sheet may have a front, display face, to which the product containing packages are mounted in use, and a rear face, and the sheet may be foldable in a second, display configuration in which it defines a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section and the front face is outermost to form a self supporting display stand, the sheet also being foldable in a third, transport configuration in which it defines a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section with the front face innermost. Where the sheet has corresponding formations, the corresponding formations may be inter-engagable to hold the sheet in either of the display and transport folded configurations.

10 The sheet may also have at least one display hanging formation by means of which the sheet can be hung for display purposes.

The panel portions may be separable from one another. A line of weakness may be provided along each of the vertical crease lines to allow the panel portions to be separated.

15 Each panel portion may have an upper display hanging formation proximal an upper end by means of which it can be hung for display purposes. The upper display hanging formation may comprise a tab proximal to an upper end by means of the panel portion can be hung for display purposes.

20 Each panel portion may have corresponding upper and lower display hanging formations configured such that the upper display hanging formation of one panel portion can be engaged with the lower display hanging formation of another of the panel portions in order to hang said one panel portion from the other. Each upper display hanging formation may comprise one of a tab and a slot and each lower display hanging formation may comprise the other of a tab and a slot.

25 The device further comprises a plurality of product containing packages mounted to the panel portions by means of the package supporting formations.

In accordance with a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of transporting and displaying a plurality of product containing packages, the method comprising;

- a. providing a merchandising transport and display device according to the first aspect of the invention;
- b. mounting a plurality of product containing packages to the sheet of material using the package supporting formations whilst the sheet is in a substantially planar condition;
- c. transporting the merchandising transport and display device with the attached product containing packages to a retail outlet;
- d. using the device to display the product containing packages at the retail outlet.

10 The loaded merchandising transport and display device may be transported to the retail outlet with the sheet of material in a substantially planar configuration. Alternatively, where the sheet is foldable in a third, transport configuration, the method may comprise folding sheet of material into the third, transport configuration after the product containing packages have been mounted and transporting the device
15 to a retail outlet in the third, transport configuration.

The step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet may comprise folding the sheet of material into a self supporting display stand and positioning it on a suitable surface for display.

20 The step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet may comprise hanging the sheet of material from a suitable support whilst in a substantially planar configuration.

Where the panel portions are separable, the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet may comprise separating at least one panel portion from the sheet. The step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet may comprise hanging the at least one separated panel portion from a support. The step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet may comprise hanging at least one panel portion from a support and hanging at least one further panel portion from said at least one panel portion by engaging the upper display hanging formation of the further panel portion with the lower display hanging
25 formation of said at least one panel portion.
30

Detailed Description of the Invention

Several embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a merchandising and transport device in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the merchandising and transport device of Figure 1 on to which a number of packages containing product have been loaded, showing the device in a first, substantially planar configuration;

Figure 3 shows the device of Figure 2 folded into a second configuration to form a self supporting display stand;

Figure 4 shows the device of Figure 2 folded into a third configuration for transport; and

Figure 5 is a partial view of the device of Figure 1, illustrating an arrangement for mounting product containing packages to the device.

15

A merchandising and transport device 10 in accordance with the invention comprises a substantially planar sheet of material 12 on to which a plurality of product containing packages 14 can be releasably mounted. The device can be hung for display in its first, planar configuration or it can be folded about vertical crease lines 16 into a second configuration in which it forms a self supporting display stand 18, as illustrated in Figure 3. In a third configuration illustrated in Figure 4, the device 10 can be folded inside out for transport.

The sheet 12 is formed of any suitable material which is sufficiently rigid that it can form a display stand 18 capable of supporting its own weight and that of the product containing packages 14 when in its second configuration but which is also manually foldable, at least along pre-defined crease lines 16. Typically, it is expected that the sheet 12 will be a sheet of card, which may be a corrugated cardboard, paperboard or the like. The sheet has a front, display face 19 on which the product containing packages 14 are mounted. The sheet 12 may be printed on its front face to

25

make an attractive display and/or to provide information relating to the products. A rear face 20 of the sheet, which is not usually visible when the device is on display, may not be printed on.

In the present embodiment, the sheet 12 is divided into three panel portions 22 by means of two, spaced vertical crease lines 16 which extend between a lower edge 24 and an upper edge 26. The panel portions are substantially of the same width and a column of package supporting formations 28 for releasably supporting the packages 14 on the device are formed within each panel portion 22. In the present embodiment, the package supporting formations 28 each comprise a generally "M" shaped slot 30 which defines an upwardly extending movable tab 32 and a downwardly directed fixed tab 34 in the sheet of material. The movable tabs 30 are foldable about a lower hinge line 36 so that they can be moved out of the plane of the sheet. To support a package 14 on the device 10, one of the movable tabs 32 is depressed inwardly and an upper portion of the package inserted between the movable tab 32 and the corresponding fixed tab 34. The movable tab 32 is resiliently biased back towards its "in plane" position and so when released clamps the upper portion of the package between itself and the fixed tab 34. The clamping force is sufficient to hold the package 14 in position but the package 14 can be removed easily by pulling it away from the device such that the upper portion is pulled out from between the movable and fixed tabs 32, 34. Alternatively, as illustrated in Figure 5, a package 14 can be secured by deflecting a movable tab 32 outwardly and folding an upper end portion of a package 14 downwardly and inserting it between the movable tab 32 and the fixed tab 34. The fixed tab is then extended over the package to secure it in position as can be seen in Figures 2 and 3. Often the package 14 will be sealed by means of a transverse seal along its upper edge which can conveniently be inserted between the movable tab 32 and the fixed tab 34.

Whilst the present embodiment has a single column of six package supporting formations 28 in each panel portion 22, it will be appreciated that the number and arrangement of package supporting formations 28 in each panel portion can be varied. For example, each panel portion 22 may have more or less than six formations 28 in a column and/or there may be more than one column of formations in each panel

portion 22. Indeed, whilst it is convenient to place the formations 28 in columns, this is not essential.

Whilst the device 10 in accordance with the invention is particularly suited for use in transporting and displaying product containing packages in the form of flexible bags 14, it can be adapted to display other forms of packaged products by suitable adaptation of the package supporting formations 28.

Three openings 37 are formed through the sheet of material 12 spaced along each of the vertical creases 16. The openings 37 divide each of the crease lines 16 into four hinge portions making it easier to fold the material along the crease lines 16. This enables use of a heavier grade of material whilst still being relatively easy to fold. The vertical crease lines 16 can be formed in any suitable manner but in the present embodiment also comprise perforations or other lines of weakness so that the sheet can be manually torn along the crease lines in order to separate each panel portion from its adjacent panel portion or portions 22.

At their upper ends, each panel portion 22 has an upper display hanging formation 38 in the form of a slot 40 which defines a movable, downwardly directed tab 42. The tab 42 is movable about an upper fold line 44 out of the plane of the sheet. Any one or more of the display hanging formations 38 can be used to hang the device 10 for display purposes. In addition, where a panel portion 22 has been separated from the remainder of the sheet 12, it can be individually hung for display using its display hanging formation 38. It will also be appreciated, that if one panel portion 22 is separated from the sheet 12, the remaining two panel portions could be hung together using one or both of the display hanging formations 38.

Towards their lower ends, each panel portion 22 has a lower display hanging formation 46. The upper and lower hanging formations 38, 46 are configured to be mutually engageable so that the upper display hanging formation 38 of one panel portion can be engaged with the lower display hanging formation 46 of another panel portion in order that one panel portion can be hung from another panel portion for display. In the present embodiment, each lower display hanging formation 46 comprises a slot in which the tab 42 of the upper display hanging formation 38 of another panel portion can be inserted. It will be appreciated that the upper and lower

display hanging formations 38, 46 could be reversed with slots being provided as the upper hanging formations and tabs as the lower hanging formations. Other suitable formations that would enable one panel portion 22 to be hung from another could also be used.

5 The sheet 12 has corresponding locking formations 48, 50 along opposite side edges 52, 54. The locking formations are configured to co-operate so as to hold the side edges 52, 54 in close proximity or abutment when the sheet 12 is folded to form a self-supporting display stand 18 or when folded inside out for transport. Any suitable locking formations can be used but in the present embodiment the formations
10 comprise a pair of locking tabs 48 on a first side edge 52 and a corresponding pair of locking slots 50 on the second side edge 54. A central locking flap 56 extends from the second side edge 54 and is pivotable about a vertical crease 58 which extends long the line of the second side edge. The slots 50 are formed between the second side edge and the locking flap 56. A vertical crease 60 is also formed where each of the locking
15 tabs 48 is attached to the first side edge 52 so that the locking tabs can also be pivoted about their respective creases 60.

To form the device 10 into a self-supporting stand 18, the sheet is folded about the vertical crease lines 16 between the panel portions 22 with the front display face 19, to which the product contain packages 14 are mounted, outermost until the side
20 edges 52, 54 are brought together. The locking flap 56 can be folded inwardly and the locking tabs 48 inserted through the slots 50. The locking tabs 48 have shaped heads which once engaged in the slots 50 resist being pulled back out so as to lock the sheet in the folded configuration. Once folded and the locking tabs 48 engaged in the slots 50, the device 10 defines a closed polygon, in this case a triangle, in cross-section and
25 forms a stable structure which can be stood upright on a suitable surface, such as a counter.

The vertical crease lines 58, 60 along which the locking tabs 48 and the locking flap 56 are attached to the side edges 52, 54 of the sheet 12 may be formed with perforations or other lines of weakness in order that the tabs and/or flap can be
30 removed if required. This might be desirable where the device 10 is to be hung for display rather than used as a stand.

The panel portions 22 are substantially identical so that the device forms a triangular self-supporting display stand 18 having three substantially identical sides that can be placed in any suitable orientation for display. Whilst the present embodiment has three panel portions 22 producing a triangular display stand, it will be appreciated that the device 10 could have more than three panel portions to produce a display stand having an alternative closed polygonal shape in cross-section. For example, the device could have four panel portions so as to form a display stand 18 having square or rectangular shape in cross-section. It will also be appreciated that in some embodiments, the panel portions 22 can be of different widths. Indeed it should be appreciated that whilst it can be advantageous for the device 10 to have a closed polygonal shape when formed into a self-supporting stand 18 with the opposite side edges 52, 54 locked together, this is not essential to the broadest scope of the invention. The device 10 could be configured so that the opposite sides 52, 54 of the sheet are not brought into contact when the sheet 12 is folded to form a display stand, provided that the device can be folded to form a stable, self-supporting structure. When the sheet is folded to form a self supporting stand, at least some of the panel portions 22 are angled relative to each other.

The device 10 can be manufactured from suitable material using known techniques for producing foldable blanks to form the various crease lines, slots and perforations as well as to define the outer shape of the sheet 12. The product containing packages 14 are mounted to the device whilst it is in its first, planar configuration. The device 10 with the mounted packages 14 in place can then be shipped to a retail outlet or other destination whilst flat. The device 10 might be packaged together with other similar devices in an outer container or wrapped in a suitable material to protect it and the packages 14 during transport.

At its destination, the device 10 can be used in a variety of ways to display the product containing packages 14 without removing them from the device 10. The device 10 can be hung in its planar condition as a single item, perhaps after removal of the locking tabs 48 and flap 50. One or more of the panel portions 22 could be separated to be hung individually or as a combination of two panel portions. Two or more of the panel portions 22 could be hung, one from another, to form a vertical

chain. Alternatively, the device can be folded to form a self-supporting stand 18 as described above and placed on a suitable surface for display. As a further alternative, the device could be folded into its second configuration but suspended rather than being placed on a surface.

5 Rather than shipping the device 10 flat, it could be folded inside out as illustrated in Figure 4. In this configuration, the product containing packages 14 are located inside the folded device and so are protected during transport. This may enable shipping with a reduced amount of outer packaging. The locking tabs 48 can be inserted in the slots 50 to hold the device in its third configuration. After shipping, the
10 device can be unfolded and used in any of the ways already discussed above for display.

It can be seen then that the device 10 provides a simple and easily manufactured display ready packaging which is highly versatile, allowing the packaged goods to be displayed in a variety of different ways.

15 It is of course to be understood that the invention is not intended to be restricted to the details of the above embodiments, which are described by way of example only.

Claims

1. A merchandising transport and display device comprising a substantially planar sheet of material divided by means of a plurality of vertical crease lines into a plurality of panel portions, the sheet being foldable about the crease lines so as to configure the panels relative to one another to form a self supporting display stand, each panel portion comprising a plurality of package supporting formations for mounting packages containing products to the panel portions for display, wherein lines of weakness are provided along each of the vertical crease lines configured to allow the panel portions to be separated from one another by manual tearing, the panel portions comprising corresponding and mutually engageable upper and lower display hanging formations configured such that the upper display hanging formation of one panel portion can be engaged with the lower display hanging formation of another of the panel portions in order to hang said one panel portion from the other.
2. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the package supporting formations comprise a plurality of slots defining tabs for securing product containing packages to the panel portions.
3. A merchandising display device as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the sheet of material has opposed upper and lower edges and opposed side edges, the sheet being provided with corresponding formations on the opposed side edges that can be inter-engaged to hold the sheet in a folded configuration with the opposed side edges adjacent one another so as to define a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section.
4. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the sheet has a front, display face and a rear face, the sheet being foldable in a display configuration in which it defines a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section with the front face outermost to form a self supporting display stand, the sheet also being foldable in a third, transport configuration in which it defines a substantially closed polygonal shape in cross section with the front face innermost.

5. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in claim 4 when dependent on claim 3, wherein the corresponding formations on the opposed side edges can be inter-engaged to hold the sheet in either of the second and third configurations.
- 5 6. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the upper display hanging formation comprises a tab proximal to an upper end by means of the panel portion can be hung for display purposes.
7. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in any one of claims 10 1 to 5, wherein each upper display hanging formation comprises one of a tab and a slot and each lower display hanging formation comprises the other of a tab and a slot.
8. A merchandising transport and display device as claimed in any one of claims 15 1 to 7, wherein the device further comprises a plurality of product containing packages mounted to the panel portions by means of the package supporting formations.
9. A method of transporting and displaying a plurality of product containing packages, the method comprising;
 - 20 a. providing a merchandising transport and display device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8;
 - b. mounting a plurality of product containing packages to the sheet of material using the package supporting formations whilst the sheet is in a substantially planar condition;
 - 25 c. transporting the merchandising transport and display device with the attached product containing packages to a retail outlet;
 - d. using the device to display the product containing packages at the retail outlet.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the loaded merchandising transport and display device is transported to the retail outlet with the sheet of material in a substantially planar configuration.
- 5 11. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the merchandising transport and display device is a device in accordance with claim 4 or claim 5, wherein the method comprises folding the sheet of material into the third, transport configuration after the product containing packages have been mounted to the front face and transporting the device to a retail outlet in the transport configuration.
- 10 12. A method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet comprises folding the sheet of material into a self supporting display stand and positioning it on a suitable surface for display.
- 15 13. A method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet comprises hanging the sheet of material from a suitable support whilst in a substantially planar configuration.
- 20 14. A method as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet comprises separating at least one panel portion from the sheet.
15. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet comprises hanging the at least one separated panel portion from a support.
- 25 16. A method as claimed claim 14, wherein the step of displaying the product containing packages at the retail outlet comprises hanging the at least one separated panel portion from a support and hanging at least one further panel portion from said at least one panel portion by engaging the upper display hanging formation of the further panel portion with the lower display hanging formation of said at least one panel portion.

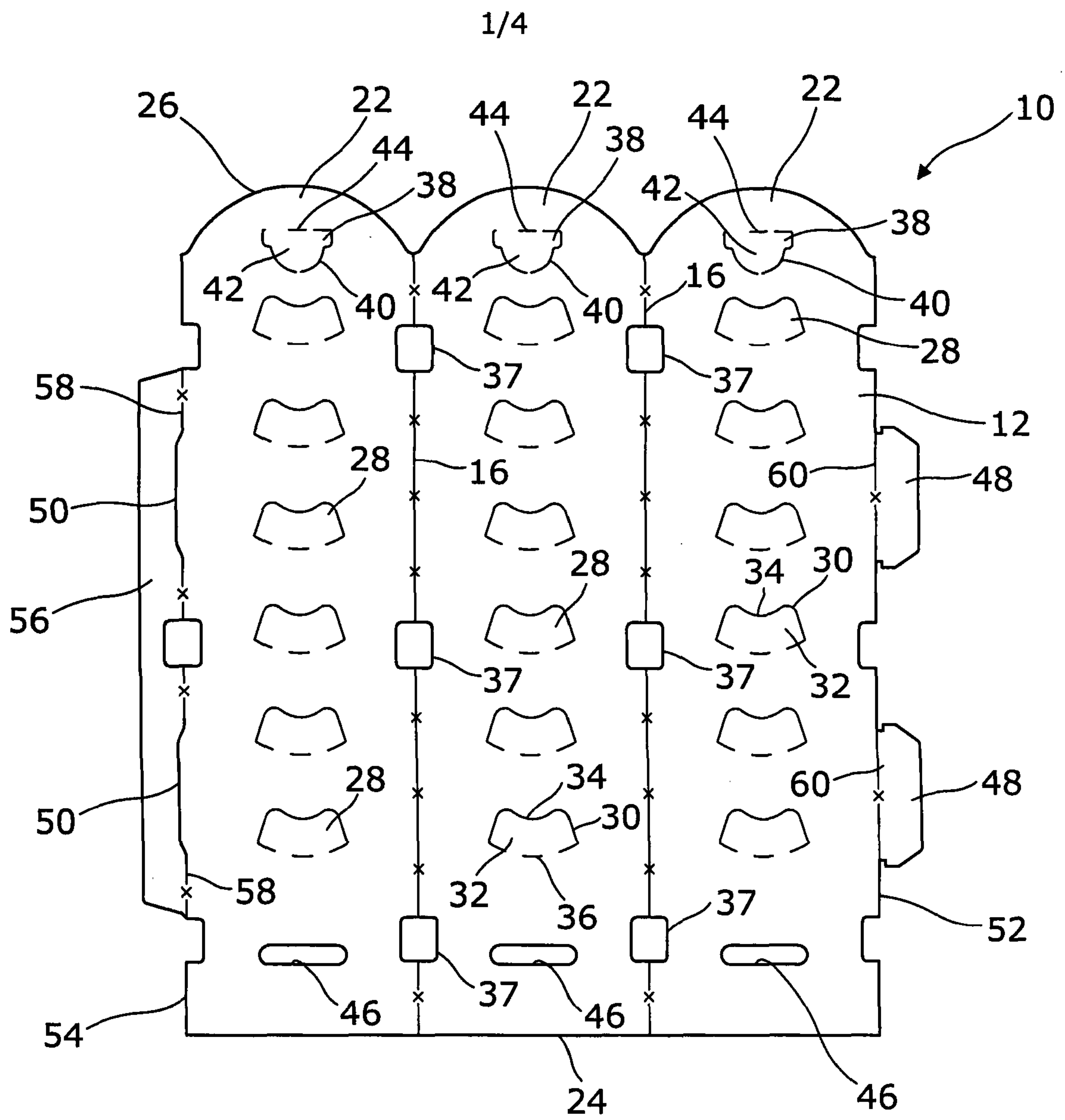


Fig. 1

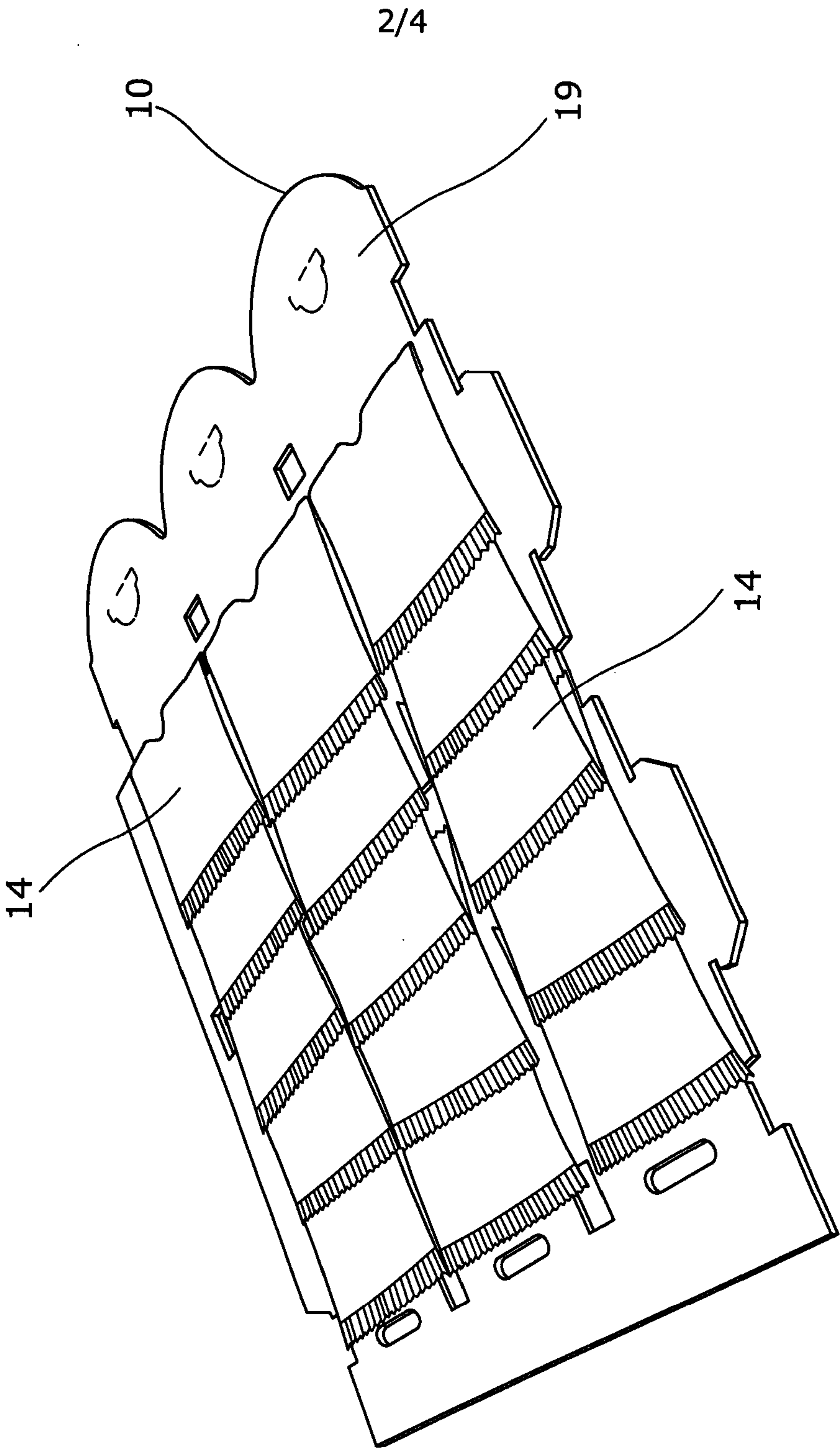


Fig. 2

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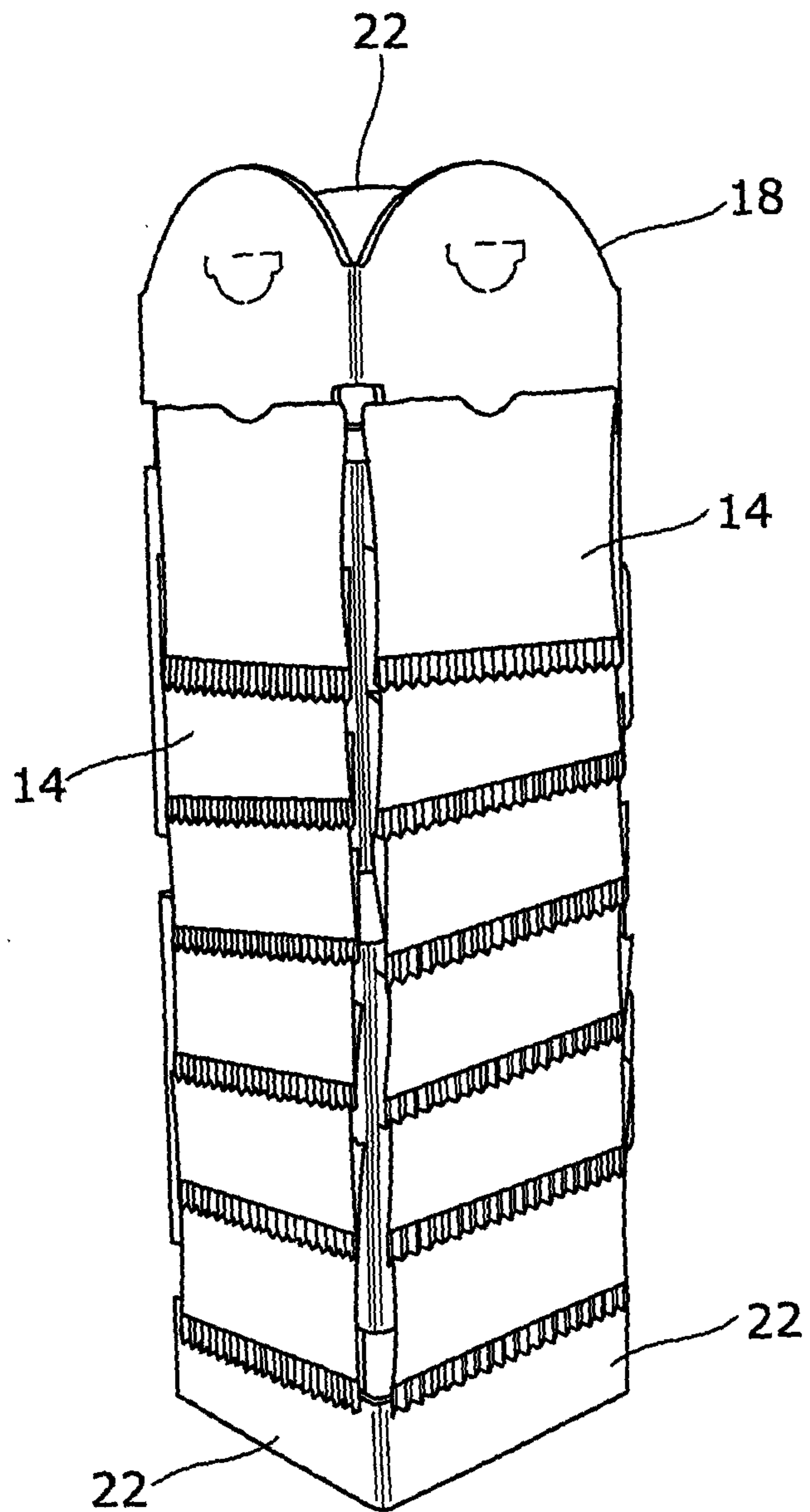


Fig. 3

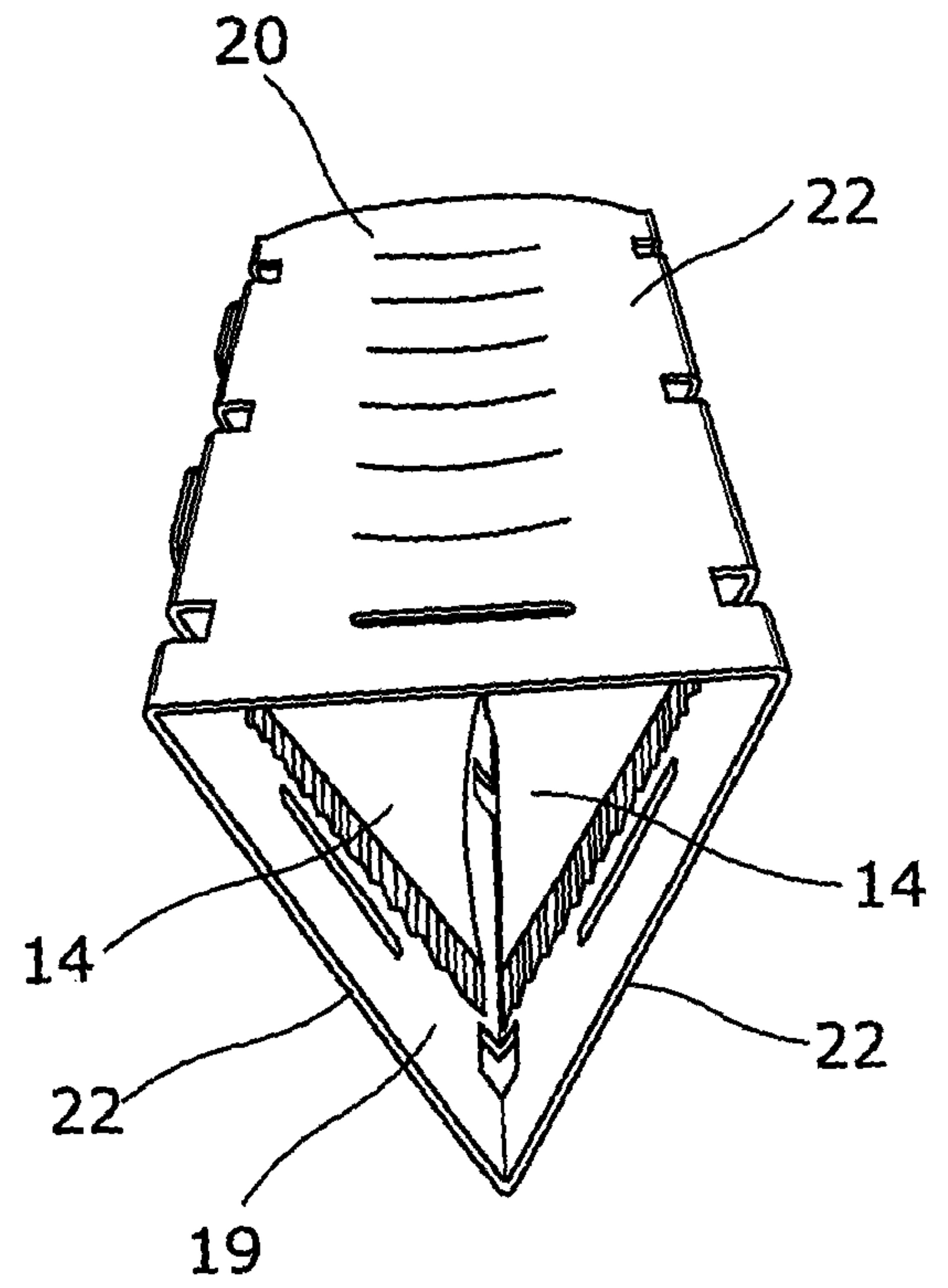


Fig. 4

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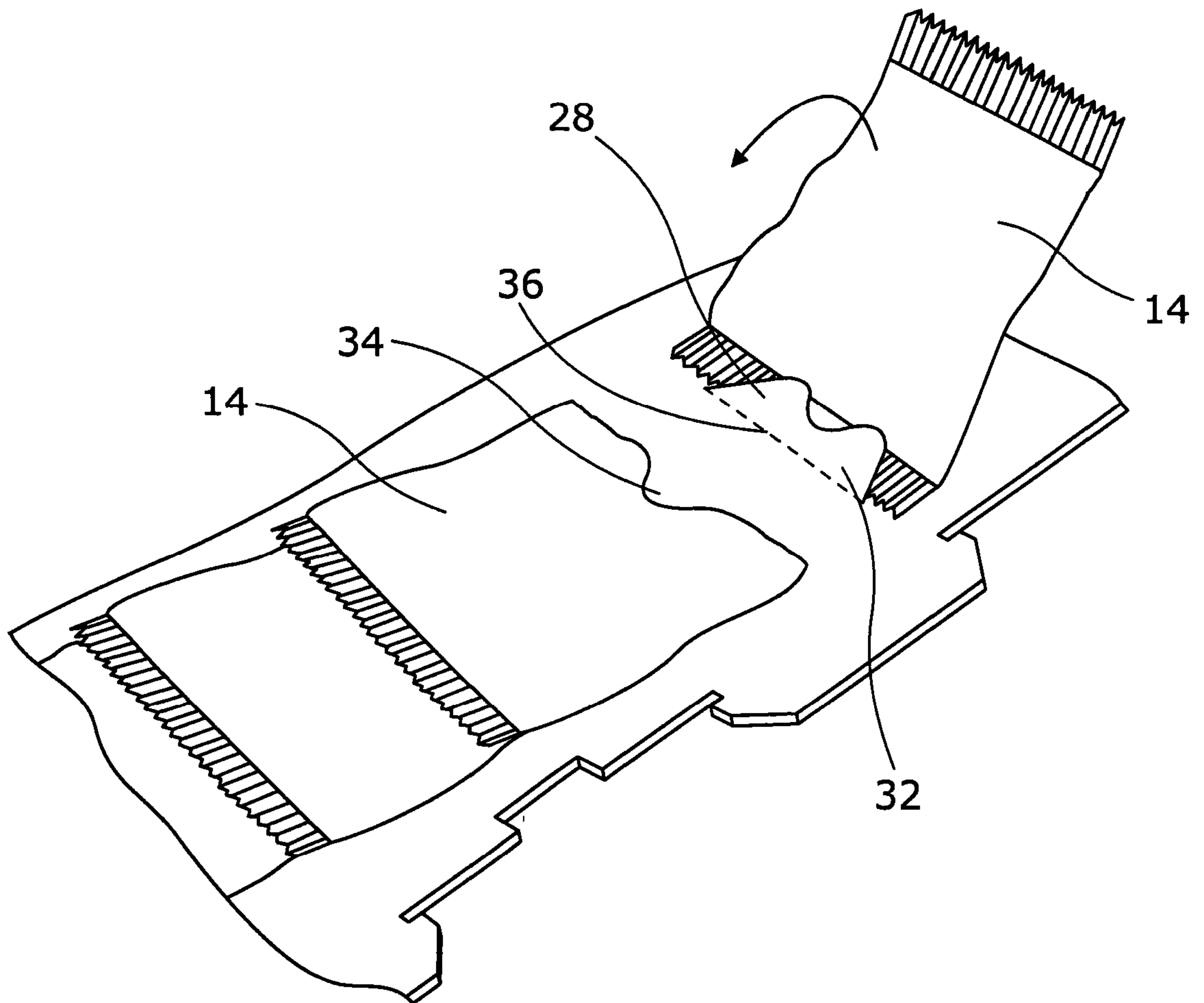


Fig. 5

