ARRAY OF COLORED PACKAGES FOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Inventors: Mark Anthony Mercurio, Cincinnati, OH (US); Amy Schroeder Kelly, Cincinnati, OH (US); Melanie M. Fairchild, Burlington, KY (US); John Clement Kuchenmeister, Cincinnati, OH (US); Kathleen Ashley Granzow, Cincinnati, OH (US)

Correspondence Address:
THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY
Global Legal Department - IP
Sycamore Building - 4th Floor, 299 East Sixth Street
CINCINNATI, OH 45202 (US)

ABSTRACT
An array of packages. Each package has a different primary color, a common secondary color and a tertiary color matching the respective primary color of that package. The packages in the array may further have a common quaternary color.
ARRAY OF COLORED PACKAGES FOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to packages for mutually related consumer products and more particularly to packagers which are used in both upright and inverted orientations.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Consumer products having related variant options are well known in the art. One non-limiting example is found in the Swiffer WetJet system sold by the instant assignee. The Swiffer WetJet system comprises three components: a floor sheet for cleaning debris from a floor or similar target surface, a liquid cleaner for solubilizing debris on the floor and an implement for carrying/dispensing the liquid cleaner and holding the cleaning sheet.

The implement may distribute liquid cleaner from a reservoir onto the floor. The distribution of the liquid cleaner may utilize a battery powered pump, as occurs with the Swiffer WetJet implement sold by the instant assignee and illustrated by commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,960,508; 6,579,023 and 6,722,806. Or the liquid cleaner may be distributed using gravity flow, as illustrated by U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,540,424; 6,893,180; 6,899,485; 6,986,819; 6,964,535; 6,976,802; 6,986,619; 7,004,658 and 7,048,458. Or the liquid cleaner may be pneumatically pumped as illustrated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,555,861 B1. A suitable implement may be made according to the teachings of commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,328,543; 6,386,392; 6,427,730; 6,722,806; 6,910,823 and/or application Ser. No. 12/229,487, filed Aug. 22, 2008 (P&G Case 11137).

The cleaning sheet may be removably attached to the implement using means well known in the art. One suitable means is grippers as set forth in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,305,046 or 6,651,290. When attached to the implement, the sheet/implement are then moved relative to the floor to remove debris therefrom. When soiled, the sheet may be laundered and reused or may be discarded after a single use. A suitable cleaning sheet may be made according to the teachings of commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,960,508; 6,003,191; 6,048,123; 6,101,661; 6,766,552; 6,797,357; 6,936,330 and/or D489,537.

The liquid cleaner may comprise surfactants, disinfectants, perfumes, etc., as are well known in the art. The liquid cleaner may be made according to the teachings of commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,380,151 and/or 6,386,392.

The user may prefer to use different liquid cleaners on different surfaces. For example, a liquid cleaner suitable for use on a wood floor may not be suitable for use on a linoleum floor. Likewise an antibacterial liquid cleaner may not be suitable for use where a less aseptic or different scent is desired. Accordingly, the user may have a plurality of different liquid cleaners, depending upon the desired task.

The liquid cleaner may be stored in a reservoir, until distributed on the floor and the reservoir depleted. The reservoir may be refilled or replaced when depleted, or when a new cleaner is desired for a particular task. A suitable reservoir may be made according to the teachings of commonly assigned U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,386,392; D484,804 and/or D485,178.

The reservoir may be disposed upright in the shelf or while in transit, inverted for use with the implement and stored in yet a third position. The differing orientations of the reservoir presents problems for the user trying to know which particular liquid cleaner is contained therein.

For example, the label may not always be visible. The label may be obscured by the sleeve of the implement into which the reservoir is inserted and inverted. One attempt to overcome this problem is found by Anway L.O.C.TM. Plus cleaning products. Some of these products are sold in identically sized and shaped containers, having slightly different labels. The containers are translucent. Color differentiation occurs by providing different colors of liquids within the otherwise identical containers.

However, this attempt at a solution has not proven entirely satisfactory. When the container is inverted and partially emptied, the bottom of the container will appear simply translucent and the user may, again, have trouble distinguishing the liquid cleaner therein from other liquid cleaners. Adding different dyes and colorants to the liquid cleaners for purposes of visual differentiation increases production costs. Furthermore, certain dyes and colorants may be incompatible with the desired cleaning formulation, leading to less desirable formulations.

Therefore, there is a need in the art to help the user select the desired cleaner for a particular task, know which cleaner is in use with an implement and be able to identify the cleaner independent of the orientation of the reservoir. Except as specifically claimed hereunder, the implement, sheet and liquid cleaner form no part of the claimed invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention comprises an array of packages. Each package has a different primary color, a common secondary color and a tertiary color matching the respective primary color. The packages in the array may further have a common quaternary color.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The FIGURE is a frontal view of an exemplary array of consumer products according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the FIGURE, the present invention comprises an array of consumer products 10. The array may comprise at least two, three, four, five, six or more individual packages 12 containing the consumer product. As the number of packages 12 in the array 10 increases, the benefits of the present invention may likewise increase. An individual packages may comprise plastic bottles, as shown, bag-in-box configurations, glass bottles, cans, or any other liquid tight container.

The packages 12 may have a consumer product therein and dispensable therefrom or the consumer product may later be added to the packages 12. The consumer product may be farinaceous, liquid, pellets, semi-liquid/solid, etc and forms no part of the claimed invention, except as set forth in the appended claims. The consumer product may particularly comprise a liquid cleaning product. The liquid cleaning product may be clear, tinted to match the package 12, tinted to match the package label, etc.

The packages 12 may be related by containing associated products which are used mutually exclusively or are
used in association. For example, one package 12 may contain a liquid cleaner usable for carpet, another package 12 may contain a liquid cleaner usable for linoleum, and yet another package 12 may contain liquid cleaner usable for tile/grout. The consumer would not use more than one of these liquid cleaners on a given floor, but the liquid cleaners could still be related through a common trademark 30 and/or used with a common dispensing implement.

(0017) Each package 12 may have a visually discernable and distinct color. The color may be provided by pigment dispersed in the blow molding process, paint, dyes, etc. The color may be dispersed throughout the entire package 12 as formed. The package 12 as formed does not include closures such as screw-on caps 14, snap lids, or other seals independently formed and later attached to the package 12.

(0018) An individual package 12 will be exemplarily described herein as a blow molded container for holding a liquid, although one of skill will recognize the invention is not so limited, except as specifically set forth in the attached claims. The package 12 may comprise a longitudinal axis, as is known in the art.

(0019) One exemplary package 12 according to the present invention is made by blow molding a polyolefinic material, as is known in the art. The polyolefinic material may have the primary color 20 molded therein as part of the manufacturing process. The amount of colorant may be adjusted by adding or removing more pigment from the manufacturing process.

(0020) As the wall thickness of the package 12 increases, the color thereof becomes darker, deeper and/or brighter. The opacity of the wall likewise increases. The package 12 may have constant opacity or variable opacity while retaining the primary color 20 throughout. The constant primary color 20 throughout the package 12 allows for easy identification of the package 12, and contents therein, independent of the orientation of the container, e.g. upside-down for use, right-side for display, sideways during shipping, etc. However, it is to be recognized that variations in color due to corresponding variations in wall thickness or ordinary manufacturing variations are not considered when looking for color differences under the present invention.

(0021) Furthermore the uniform color of a package 12 of sufficient opacity, provides for obscuring of the contents in that respective package. Therefore, chemically and visually different materials can be disposed in the packages 12 while preserving the appearance on a retail shelf or while in use. Such a constant color, of sufficient opacity, provides the benefit of a like appearance through a family of products placed in such packages 12.

(0022) Particular colors selected for the package 12 may include those colors normally associated with a perfume, benefit or other attribute associated with the liquid cleaner, or other product, contained in and dispensed from the package 12. With continuing and non-limiting reference to the FIGURE, for example, the package 12/primary color 20 may be brown if an association or use with wood is desired. The package 12 may be orange if an association or use with citrus is desired. The package 12 may be purple if an association or use with like products/impliment, also having purple packaging or purple colored implements, is desired. The package 12 may be white if a scent free or bleach association is desired, etc.

(0023) The color provided throughout the package 12 may be thought of as a primary color 20. Each package 12 may further comprise a secondary color 22 and even a tertiary color 24. Colors may be considered primary 20, secondary 22, tertiary 24 and quaternary 26, etc. if such colors 20, 22, 24, 26, etc. occupy at least 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 or 100 visible and contiguous square centimeters on the package 12, without regard to whether the visible region is on the front, back, top, bottom, side, etc. of the package 12. Discrete regions of the same color are not aggregated for purposes of determining a primary color 20, secondary color 22, tertiary color 24 or quaternary color 26. However, different regions of a primary color 20 are considered contiguous if such color is dispersed throughout a package 12 underneath a label. Further, colors found only within a trademark 30 or other indicium of origin are not considered when determining the primary color 20, secondary color 22, tertiary color 24 or quaternary color 26.

(0024) A primary color 20 has immediately more contiguous area than the secondary color 22 (i.e. there is no color with more contiguous area than the secondary color 22 and less than that of the primary color 20). The secondary color 22 has immediately more contiguous area than the tertiary color 24 (i.e. there is no color with more contiguous area than the tertiary color 24 and less than that of the secondary color 22) and so on.

(0025) The array of packages 10 may comprise a plurality of packages 12 with each package 12 having a mutually different primary color 20. The packages 12 may further comprise a secondary color 22. The secondary color 22 may be disposed on a label. The label may overlay part of the package 12 and may even circumscribe the package 12.

(0026) The secondary color 22, and tertiary color 24, may be longitudinally disposed intermediate two portions of the primary color 20 as shown. Alternatively, the secondary color 22 and/or tertiary colors 24 may be longitudinally disposed on either side (above or below in the example shown in the FIGURE) of the primary color 20 or be wholly enveloped by the primary color 20.

(0027) A plurality of the packages 12 may comprise a common secondary color 22. A color is considered common among plural packages 12 if such color is generally visually indistinguishable, allowing for ordinary variations in wall thickness of the package 10, texture of the wall, gloss, lume, and other manufacturing tolerances.

(0028) If present and desired, the secondary color 22 may be disposed on a label, which, in turn, is disposed on an exterior surface of the package 12 or visible through a transparent wall of the package 12. The secondary color 22 may comprise substantially all of the label, or just a portion thereof having a contiguous area with a value intermediate the areas of the primary color 20 and tertiary colors 24.

(0029) If present and desired, the tertiary color 24 may also be disposed on the label, instead of or in addition to the secondary color 22. The package 12 may comprise two or more labels, with a tertiary color 24 alternatively disposed on a different label than the label on which the primary color 20 or secondary color 22 is disposed.

(0030) The tertiary color 24 may identically match the primary color 20 of that respective package, as shown. However the tertiary color 24, and primary color 20 or secondary color 22, are not contiguous, otherwise there would only be one color region under consideration.

(0031) The tertiary color 24 may be wholly enveloped by, and in a degenerate case, generally centered within the secondary color 22. The tertiary color 24 may envelop one or more indicia which indicate properties of the material con-
tained by the package. The tertiary color 24 may be circumscribed by a border, which border is common to all packages 12 in the array 10.

If desired, each package 12 may further comprise a quaternary color 26. A quaternary color 26 is the largest area of color immediately after the tertiary color 24 is considered and the fourth largest area of color within the package. The array of packages 10 may have a common quaternary color 26.

If desired, the package 12 may further comprise one or more indicia related to products commonly used with the product contained in the package 12. For example, a cleaning pad, cleaning sheet or other cleaning implement may be used with liquid cleaner in the package. The package 12 may comprise an indicium relating to or illustrating such cleaning implement. The indicium may be substantially visually identical on all of the packages 12 in the array 10.

Alternatively or additionally one or more common trade names, trademarks 30, or other common identifications of origin, brand, etc. may be superimposed on the common secondary color 22 and/or the common primary color 20. Trademarks 30, trade names, and other identifications of origin are not considered when evaluating an area for consideration as a primary color 20, secondary color 22, tertiary color 24 or quaternary color 26.

It is believed that by combining the features of a common secondary color 22 across a plurality of packages 12 in an array 10, optionally a common quaternary color 26 across a plurality of packages 12 in that array 10, with primary and tertiary colors 24 are unique to an individual package 12 within that array 10, and optionally which primary color 20 and tertiary color 24 are identical on a respective package 12, the benefits of identification and differentiation when the packages 12 are upright on a shelf, inverted during use and in other positions during storage may occur.

The dimensions and other values disclosed herein are not to be understood as being strictly limited to the exact numerical values recited. Instead, unless otherwise specified, each such value is intended to mean both the recited value and a functionally equivalent range surrounding that value. For example, a dimension disclosed as “40 mm” is intended to mean “about 40 mm.”

Every document cited herein, including any cross referenced or related patent or application, is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety unless expressly excluded or otherwise limited. The citation of any document is not an admission that it is prior art with respect to any invention disclosed or claimed herein or that it alone, or in any combination with any other reference or references, teaches, suggests or discloses any such invention. Further, to the extent that any meaning or definition of a term in this document conflicts with any meaning or definition of the same term in a document incorporated by reference, the meaning or definition assigned to that term in this document shall govern.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it would be obvious to those skilled in the art that various other changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to cover in the appended claims all such changes and modifications that are within the scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An array of packages for consumer products, said array comprising a plurality of blow molded packages invertible in use and for containing a liquid cleaner therein, and having an indicium indicating a particular liquid cleaning product is to be contained therein, each said package having a primary color throughout the package, a secondary color and a tertiary color, said colors being exclusive of any closure on the package:

   said primary colors of said packages being mutually visually different from each other throughout a plurality of said packages and present on the bottom of the packages;

   said secondary colors of said packages being substantially visually identical; and

   said tertiary colors of said packages visually matching the respective primary color of the respective said package.

2. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 1, said array comprising more than two packages in said plurality.

3. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 2, said array further comprising a trademark or tradename indicium.

4. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 3, wherein said indicium is disposed within said secondary color.

5. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of packages in said array are substantially identical in size and shape.

6. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 5, wherein each said package of said plurality of packages in said array has a longitudinal axis, and said secondary color is longitudinally interposed between two portions of said primary color on said longitudinal axis.

7. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 6, wherein said tertiary color is contiguous said secondary color on each said package.

8. An array of packages for consumer products, said array comprising a plurality of blow molded packages for holding consumer products therein, each package being for containing a liquid cleaner therein, and having an indicium indicating a particular liquid cleaning product is to be contained therein in each said package having a primary color, secondary color, tertiary color and quaternary color, said colors being exclusive of any closure on the package:

   each said package comprising a primary color permanently associated with and dispersed throughout said package by blow molding and present on the bottom of said package; said primary colors of said packages being mutually different from each other throughout a plurality of said packages;

   each said package comprising a label disposed thereon, said secondary color being disposed on said label, said secondary colors of said labels of said packages being substantially visually identical throughout said array of packages;

   said tertiary color being disposed on said label, said tertiary colors of said packages matching the respective primary color of that said package; and being contiguous said secondary color; and

   a quaternary color disposed on each said package of said array, said quaternary color being substantially visually identical throughout said array of packages.

9. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 8 wherein each package comprises a polyolefinic material having said primary color molded therein.
10. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 9 wherein each package has an opening for dispensing a liquid therefrom, and a closure for making said package watertight.

11. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 10 wherein each package has a longitudinal axis extending through the center of said dispensing opening, and said label of said package being disposed on said package so that said label is longitudinally disposed between two portions of said primary color.

12. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 11 wherein each said label and secondary color circumscribe said package.

13. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 8 further comprising a trademark or trade name, which trademark or trade name is substantially visually identical on all of said packages of said array.

14. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 13 wherein said trademark or trade name is at least superimposed on said common quaternary color.

15. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 14 further comprising a second trademark, trade name, or sub-nomen, said second trademark, trade name or sub-nomen being superimposed on said primary color.

16. An array of packages for consumer products according to claim 13 further comprising an indicium on all of the packages of said array, said indicium relating to a product used with the contents of said package, wherein all said indicia are substantially visually identical.

17. An array of packages according to claim 11 wherein said secondary color and said quaternary color are substantially visually identical.

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