ATTENTION-DIRECTING PACKAGING WINDOW

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ABSTRACT

A package for personal care articles includes an interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the interior space, and a front panel including a feature bar that identifies an aspect of the personal care articles. The front panel also includes a window through the front panel, the window having a first end and a second end, wherein the window tapers from the second end to the first end, and wherein the second end is adjacent the feature bar.
FIG. 3
PRIOR ART
FIG. 5
PRIOR ART
ATTENTION-DIRECTING PACKAGING WINDOW

BACKGROUND

[0001] Absorbent and other personal care articles such as pads, pantiliners, tampons, and pessaries are often individually wrapped in a pouch or similar wrapper, or are wrapped as a group of articles. A plurality of such articles, whether or not individually wrapped, is also typically sold in bulk packaging, such as a bag or box. Changes in such articles intended to accommodate more individual consumers have resulted in a proliferation of sizes, shapes, structures, and article types and functionalities, including an expansion of brands covering such articles. As a result, consumers can find it difficult to determine which variant the consumer needs, or to simply find a specific variant, in a store aisle in which that consumer might endeavor to spend minimal time.

[0002] Attempts have been made to address these issues by providing a window in the article packaging in an attempt to provide the consumer with a means for inspecting the articles that are resident in the package without needing to open the package in the store. Such windows are described, for example, in U.S. Pat. No. 6,601,705 to Molina and in U.S. Pat. No. D612,234 to Westemeyer. It has been discovered, however, that while windows can be helpful, such windows do not always adequately communicate necessary product information such as absorbency level, size, or even product type, and do not always communicate key article features in a timely manner.

SUMMARY

[0003] As a result, the applicants have conducted extensive research to determine a better means for immediately communicating to a consumer the key aspects of an article to ensure that the consumer quickly finds the appropriate articles with minimal time spent examining packages of articles in the store aisle.

[0004] In one aspect, a package for personal care articles includes an interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the interior space, and a front panel including a feature bar that identifies an aspect of the personal care articles. The front panel also includes a window through the front panel, the window having a first end and a second end, wherein the window tapers from the second end to the first end, and wherein the second end is adjacent the feature bar.

[0005] In another aspect, a package for disposable absorbent articles includes an outer surface defining an interior space and a plurality of individually-wrapped disposable absorbent articles disposed in the interior space, wherein all of the disposable absorbent articles disposed in the interior space are structurally-identical. The package also includes a front panel including a brand identifier, a feature bar that identifies an aspect of the disposable absorbent articles, wherein the aspect is the absorbency or the size of the individually-wrapped disposable absorbent articles, and a window through the front panel, the window disposed vertically beneath the brand identifier and having a first end and a second end, wherein the window tapers from the second end to the first end, wherein the second end is adjacent the feature bar, and wherein the window is generally arcuate with a perimeter having a point defining a tangent that intersects the feature bar.

[0006] In still another aspect, an array of packages for personal care articles includes a first package having a first package interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the first package interior space, and a first front panel including a first package feature bar that identifies a first aspect of the personal care articles disposed in the first package interior space. The array also includes a second package having a second package interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the second package interior space, and a second front panel including a second package feature bar that identifies a second aspect of the personal care articles disposed in the second package interior space, wherein the second aspect is different from the first aspect. The first and second front panels further include a brand identifier, wherein the first front panel brand identifier is the same as the second panel brand identifier, wherein the first and second packages each include a window through the first and second front panels, respectively, each window having a first end and a second end, wherein each window tapers from the second end to the first end, and wherein each second end is adjacent the respective package feature bar.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The foregoing and other features and aspects of the present disclosure and the manner of attaining them will become more apparent, and the disclosure itself will be better understood by reference to the following description, appended claims and accompanying drawings, where:

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary article in a partially folded configuration;

[0009] FIG. 2 is a body-side plan view of another exemplary article with portions cut away to better illustrate underlying features;

[0010] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an exemplary article partially enclosed in an exemplary wrapper;

[0011] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of an article enclosed in a first exemplary wrapper;

[0012] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of an article enclosed in a second exemplary wrapper;

[0013] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a first package of the present application used to contain articles of FIGS. 1-5; and

[0014] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a second package of the present application used to contain articles of FIGS. 1-5, where the second package forms an array of packages with the first package of FIG. 6.

[0015] Repeat use of reference characters in the present specification and drawings is intended to represent the same or analogous features or elements of the present disclosure. The drawings are representational and are not necessarily drawn to scale. Certain proportions thereof might be exaggerated, while others might be minimized.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] As used herein, the term “article” or “article component” is used to describe an item that is to be used by a consumer. For example, articles include, without limitation, diapers, pull-up type training pant garments, adult incontinence garments, male incontinence products, tampons, vaginal suppositories, pantiliners, female incontinence pads, sanitary napkins, and pessaries. These are sometimes referred to as “personal care articles” or “absorbent personal care articles.” For the purposes of this patent, a separate or indi-
individual peel strip that protects the adhesive is considered to be a part of the article. If the peel strip also serves as a wrapper, then the peel strip/wrapper is considered as a packaging component.

[0017] As used herein, the term "packaging" or "packaging component" is used to describe any items that are associated with the article, but not used within the absorbency or other functional purpose of the article. Packaging can be any items that are used to transport, store, protect or hide the article. Examples of packaging include, without limitation, wrappers, pouches, bags, boxes, and the like. Typically, boxes or bags are placed on store shelves. Generally, these boxes or bags contain a plurality of absorbent personal care articles. These items can be referred to as an "outer packaging component." In addition, packaging can include an inner wrapper or pouch in which one or more absorbent personal care articles are placed. Wrappers and pouches can be referred to as an "inner packaging component." The wrappers or pouches can be placed into a second packaging component, such as the outer packaging described above. The terms "wrapper" and "pouch" are used interchangeably herein.

[0018] As used herein, the term "element" is used to describe a separate or individual component of a product or packaging. Product elements can include, for example, a liner, an absorbent core, an outer cover, an attachment system, etc. Packaging elements can include wrapper materials, pouch materials, bag materials, bag handles, wrappers, pouches, bags, and the like.

[0019] The term "body side" means the side that would face toward the body of the user, regardless of whether an undergarment is actually being worn by the user and regardless of whether there are or might be intervening layers between the component and the body of the user. Likewise, the term "garment side" means the side that faces away from the body of the user, and therefore toward any outer garments that can be worn by the user, regardless of whether the undergarment is actually being worn by a user, regardless of whether any such outer garments are actually worn, and regardless of whether there might be intervening layers between the component and any outer garment.

[0020] Disposable absorbent articles such as, for example, feminine care and incontinent absorbent articles, generally include a liquid pervious topsheet, a substantially liquid impervious backsheet, and an absorbent core positioned and held between the topsheet and the backsheet. The topsheet is generally operatively permeable to the liquids that are intended to be held or stored by the absorbent article, and the backsheet can be substantially impermeable or otherwise operatively impermeable to the liquids intended to be held or stored. Disposable absorbent articles can also include other optional components or layers, such as liquid wicking layers, liquid distribution layers, barrier layers, and the like, as well as combinations thereof, which can improve the fluid handling and storage properties of the disposable absorbent article. Generally, disposable absorbent articles and the components thereof provide a body-facing surface and a garment-facing surface. As an alternative, the substantially liquid impervious backsheet can be replaced with a liquid pervious backsheet. When a liquid pervious backsheet is used, generally the absorbent personal care article can be used in conjunction with another liquid impervious layer or article, such as liquid impervious pants.

[0021] To obtain a better understanding of the personal care articles of the present disclosure that can be present in a wrapper/pouch component as the packaging component, attention is directed to FIGS. 1 and 2. Specifically, FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary article in a partially folded configuration and FIG. 2 is a body-side plan view of another exemplary article with portions cut away to better illustrate underlying features. In FIGS. 1 and 2, exemplary personal care articles 10 are shown as including an outer cover 46 (otherwise referred to as a bailie or backsheat), an absorbent core 48, an optional tissue layer 26, an optional surge layer or optional distribution layer 24 and a body-side liner 44 (also referred to as the top sheet). The personal care articles 10 also have a first side 16 and a second side 18. The first and second sides 16, 18, respectively, are the longitudinal sides of the elongated personal care articles 10. The sides can be contoured, for example in a concave shape, or they can be linear. The sides can further include flaps (not shown) that extend laterally outward. Flaps are known in the art and are shown in, for example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,387,084 issued to VanCionep et al., which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent it does not conflict herewith. In some aspects (not shown), one or more elastic elements can be disposed along the sides to form a gasket with the body of the user. Elastic sides are known in the art and are shown in, for example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,315,765 issued to Datta et al. In some aspects, the elastic elements can be disposed between the body-side liner 44 and the outer cover 46.

[0022] The personal care articles 10 have a body facing surface 20, which usually includes the outer surface of the body side liner 44, and a garment facing surface 22, which usually contains an outer portion of the outer cover 46. Applied to at least a portion of the garment-facing surface 22 can be a garment attachment adhesive. In various aspects, the garment attachment adhesive is configured as a single band of adhesive or as two or more spaced-apart strips. Alternatively, the garment attachment adhesive includes a swirl pattern of adhesive that encompasses a major portion of the garment facing surface 22 of the personal care articles 10.

[0023] A release strip 28, also known as a releasable peel strip, can be removably secured to the garment attachment adhesive and serves to prevent premature contamination of the garment attachment adhesive before the absorbent article 10 is secured to the crotch portion of an undergarment. In various aspects, the garment attachment adhesive is designed to be secured to the inner crotch portion of an undergarment so as to keep the absorbent article 10 in register with the body of the user. The release strip 28 can extend beyond one or both of the ends 12, 14 of the outer cover 46, as shown in FIG. 2. As an alternative, the release strip can be shorter than the ends of the outer cover 12 and 14, as shown in FIG. 1.

[0024] The body side liner or topsheet 44, which is preferably liquid permeable, can be formed from one or more materials, can include a layer constructed of any operative material, and can be a composite material. For example, the body-side liner 44 can include a woven fabric, a nonwoven fabric, a polymer film, a film-nonwoven fabric laminate or the like, as well as combinations thereof. Examples of a nonwoven fabric useable in the body-side liner or topsheet 44 include, for example, an airlaid nonwoven web, a spunbond nonwoven web, a meltblown nonwoven web, a bonded-carded-web, a hydroentangled nonwoven web, and spunlace webs or the like, as well as combinations thereof. Other examples of suitable materials for constructing the body-side liner or topsheet 44 can include rayon, bonded carded webs of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene, nylon, or other heat-
bondable fibers, finely perforated film webs, net-like materials, and the like, as well as combinations thereof. These webs can be prepared from polymeric materials such as, for example, polyolefins, such as polypropylene and polyethylene and copolymers thereof, polymers in general including aliphatic esters such as polyactic acid, nylon or any other heat bondable materials. In a desired arrangement, the body-side liner or body contacting layer 44 can be configured to be operatively liquid-permeable with regard to the liquids that the article is intended to absorb or otherwise handle. In some aspects, the operative liquid-permeability can be provided or enhanced by a plurality of pores, perforations, apertures or other openings, as well as combinations thereof, that are present or formed in the liner or body contacting layer.

[0025] The baffle or backsheet (outer cover) 46 can include a layer constructed of any operative material, and might or might not have a selected level of liquid-permeability or liquid-impermeability, as desired. In a particular configuration, the baffle or backsheet 46 can be configured to provide an operatively liquid-impermeable baffle structure. The baffle or backsheet 46 can, for example, include a polymeric film, a woven fabric, a nonwoven fabric or the like, as well as combinations or composites thereof. For example, the baffle can include a polymer film laminated to a woven or nonwoven fabric. In a particular feature, the polymer film can be composed of polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester or the like, as well as combinations thereof. Additionally, the polymer film can be micro-embossed, have a printed design, have a printed message to the consumer, and/or can be at least partially colored. Bicomponent films or other multi-component films can also be used, as well as woven and/or nonwoven fabrics that have been treated to render them operatively liquid-impermeable. Other suitable baffle materials include closed cell polyolefin foams. For example, a closed-cell polyethylene foam can be employed. Suitably, the baffle or backsheet 46 can operatively permit a sufficient passage of air and moisture vapor out of the article, particularly out of an absorbent (e.g., storage or absorbent core 48) while blocking the passage of bodily liquids. An example of a suitable baffle material can include a breathable, microporous film, such as those described in, for example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,045,900 to McCormack et al.

[0026] The liquid permeable body side liner 44 and the liquid-impermeable baffle 46 can be peripherally sealed together to enclose the absorbent core 48 to form the absorbent article 10. Additionally, the body-side liner or topsheet 44 can be wrapped around both the absorbent core 48 and the baffle or backsheet 46 to form a wrapped pad. The body-side liner 44 and the baffle 46, and other components of the absorbent article 10, can be joined for example with adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermal bonds, pinning, stitching, or any other attachment techniques known in the art, as well as combinations thereof.

[0027] The absorbent core 48 is designed to absorb body exudates, including menstrual fluid, blood, urine, and other body fluids. The absorbent core 48 can contain one or more layers of absorbent material. The layers can contain similar materials or different materials. Suitable materials for the absorbent core 48 include, for example, cellulose, wood pulp fluff, rayon, cotton, and meltblown polymers such as polyester, polypropylene or coform. Colform is a meltblown air-formed combination of meltblown polymers, such as polypropylene, and absorbent staple fibers, such as cellulose. A preferred material is wood pulp fluff for its low cost, relative ease of formation, and good absorbent properties.

[0028] The absorbent core 48 can also be formed from a composite including a hydrophilic material that can be formed from various natural or synthetic fibers, wood pulp fibers, regenerated cellulose or cotton fibers, or a blend of pulp and other fibers. A desired material is an airland material.

[0029] In some aspects, the absorbent core 48 can also include a superabsorbent material, in addition to or in place of the hydrophilic material, that increases the ability of the absorbent core 48 to absorb a large amount of fluid in relation to its own weight. Generally stated, the superabsorbent material can be a water-swellable, generally water-insoluble, hydrogel-forming polymeric absorbent material that is capable of absorbing at least about 15, preferably at least about 30, and possibly about 60 times or more its weight in physiological saline (e.g., saline with 0.9 wt % NaCl).

[0030] Additional layers or substrates, including for example, the liquid acquisition and distribution layer 24, also referred to as a surge or transfer layer, and an optional tissue layer 26, are also incorporated into the absorbent article 10, for example, between the body-side liner or topsheet 44 and the absorbent core 48. The distribution layer 24 can be shorter than the absorbent core 48 or have the same length as the absorbent core 48. The distribution layer serves to temporarily hold an insulting fluid to allow the absorbent core 48 sufficient time to absorb the fluid, especially when a superabsorbent material is present. In one aspect, the absorbent core, distribution layer, and other components, such as tissue layers, are free floating (unattached) between the outer cover 46 and the liner 44, which are secured along only the peripheral edges thereof. Alternatively, the absorbent core 48, transfer layer, and other components are attached to one or both of the outer cover 44 and liner 46 and/or to each other.

[0031] Referring to FIG. 1, the absorbent article 10 is shown in a partially folded configuration. Specifically, the absorbent article 10 is shown folded along a fold line 30. Additionally, the absorbent article 10 can be folded along a pair of fold lines 30, 32 (FIG. 2) to form a tri-fold configuration as illustrated in FIG. 3. In other aspects, the absorbent article 10 can be bi-folded, flattened, rolled, or otherwise suitably configured. The absorbent article 10 is then inserted into a wrapper or pouch 50, otherwise referred to as an inner wrapper component 50. A plurality of pouches containing personal care articles 10 can then be disposed in a package otherwise referred to as an outer packaging component. One article/packaging configuration is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,601,706 to McManus, which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent it does not conflict herewith. The articles 10 can be oriented in various ways within the individual packaging component, for example, with the fold lines 30, 32 running parallel or perpendicular to the sides of the individual packaging component 68, 70.

[0032] Referring now to FIGS. 3-5, the wrapper/pouch component 50 can be formed from a strip or web 52 of material having a first end and a second end having free edges 54, 56 respectively. In various aspects, the wrapper/pouch component 50 can have different configurations or can be prepared in other ways without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. The wrapper/pouch component 50 can be formed from a strip or web 52 of material having a first end and a second end having free edges 54, 56 respectively. It should be understood that the term “free edge” refers to an edge that is unattached after the package component is
opened, regardless of whether the free edge is attached when the package component is closed. Accordingly, one or both of the free edges can be formed along a perforation line, or can be adhered to an underlying layer, with the edge defined by the perforation line being a “free edge” after the perforation line is broken. The free edge can be a single layer cut or formed edge, can include a double-layer folded edge, or can include an edge formed by a plurality of layers.

[0033] The pouch material can be formed from any suitable material such as non-woven material, films, paper, laminates, and/or cloth (including woven) materials, and combinations thereof. For example, the pouch 50 can be made as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,716,203, to Sonebo et al., the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent it does not conflict herewith. In one aspect, the pouch 50 is made of a film/spunbond laminate material available from Kimberly-Clark Corp., and known as HBSTL ("highly breathable stretch thermal laminate"), and which material is further disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,276,032, to Nortman et al., which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent it does not conflict herewith. Various aspects of a non-woven pouch material can have a basis weight less than about 50 gsm, or alternatively between about 10 gsm and about 40 gsm. In some aspects, the pouch material can be a film made of polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, and combinations thereof. In some aspects, the pouch material can be a spunbond-meltblown-spunbond (SMS) laminate having a basis weight of 20 to 40 grams per square meter (gsm). In some aspects, the basis weight can be 20 to 30 gsm, 22 to 28 gsm, or 22 to 24 gsm. In a particular aspect, the wrapper/pouch material is an SMS having a basis weight of 22 gsm. In various aspects, the wrapper/pouch material can have any suitable translucency.

[0034] Each of the first and second ends is folded along fold lines 58, 60 that define the top and bottom edge of the pouch respectively. The folded pouch has a back panel 62, a first panel 64, and a second panel 66. The first panel 64 and the back panel 62 are secured along the side edges 68, 70 thereof to form a pocket shaped to receive the absorbent article 10 therein. In one aspect, the pocket and pouch are shaped and dimensioned to receive a single absorbent article component, which is individually wrapped in the pouch. The second panel 66 is folded over the first panel 64 such that the free edge 54 of the second panel 66 overlies the first panel 64. In this configuration, the second panel 66 acts as a flap. The first panel 64 has a covered or overlapped portion 57 (FIG. 4) extending between the free edge 54 (exterior) and the free edge 56 (interior), which covered or overlapped portion 57 underlies the second panel 66. In one aspect, there is no overlap, rather, the free edges 54, 56 abut or are separated by a small distance. In one example, the portion 57 has a length of about 1-50 mm, generally about 2-22 mm, and typically about 4-10 mm between the free edges 54, 56. The first panel 64 further includes an uncovered second portion 59 (FIG. 4) extending between the free edge 54 and the fold line 58. Of course, it should be understood that the length and width of the article and packaging components can vary according to the type of article and the size of the article.

[0035] As an alternative to having the free edge 54 of the second panel 66 overlap the first panel 64, the wrapper component can be designed such that there is no overlap between the free edge 54 and the first panel 64, without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. For example, the free edges 54, 56 can abut each other or are separated by a small distance such that there is a gap between the free edges (not shown). As such, in this alternative, the second panel 66 is defined merely as another panel.

[0036] A pair of side seals 74 secures the first panel 64 to the back panel 62, and the second panel 66 to the back panel 62 and to the first panel 64. The side seals 74 are desirably formed after the first panel 64 is folded over the back panel 62 and the second panel 66 is folded over the back panel 62 and the first panel 64. It is possible that the first panel 64 could first be sealed to the back panel 62, and the second panel 66 then sealed to one or both of the back panel and first panel 62, 64.

In an alternative configuration, the second panel 66 is not sealed at the side edges 68, 70 of the first panel 64 and back panel 62. The sides can be sealed by any suitable method. Exemplary sealing methods include, for example, adhesive sealing, bonding by the application of heat and pressure, ultrasonic bonding, or any other known bonding methods. In one aspect of the present disclosure, the side seals 74 can be frangible, meaning they can be easily broken such that the second panel 66 can be separated from the first panel 64 and back panel 62, and such that the first panel 64 can be easily separated from the back panel 62, wherein the article 10 is exposed for removal from the pouch by the user.

[0037] In one optional aspect, the second panel 66 is releasably secured to the first panel 64. For example, a fastening element 72, shown as a tab in FIGS. 4 and 5, is secured across the free edge 54 of the second panel 66 to secure the second panel 66 to the first panel 64. The fastening element 72 can be releasably secured to both of the second panel 66 and first panel 64, or it can be fixedly secured to one of the second panel 66 and first panel 64 and releasably secured to the other. Another possible configuration includes the fastening element 72 fixedly secured to both panels 64, 66 and one or both of the panels 64, 66 are provided with an area of weakness, such as a perforated area, which allows a portion of one or both of the panels 64, 66 to be removed or damaged when the wrapper is opened. The fastening element 72 can be formed as adhesive tape, a snap, a button, a mechanical fastener (e.g., hook and loop), a tie, or as any other suitable device. The fastening element 72 can have various alternative shapes, including but not limited to a square, rectangle, triangle, circle, oval, obround, oblong, or diamond shape, or any other irregular shape or pattern. In an alternative aspect, the fastening element 72 is formed on the inside of the second panel 66 such that the fastening element 72 engages the first panel 64 as the second panel 66 is folded thereafter and is not visible to the user. The adhesive can be applied as a ribbon, dot, a swirl pattern, or any other pattern that effectively adheres the second panel 66 to the first panel 64. In another alternative method of fastening the second panel 66 to the first panel 64, the second panel 66 is simply sealed to the first panel 64 with a heat seal or other weld, with the weld defining the fastening element 72. In another aspect, the second panel 66 is not sealed or otherwise attached to the first panel 64, but rather is simply folded thereafter. Alternatively, the sides of the second panel 66 are sealed to the back panel 62 and to the first panel 64, with the side seals 74 being breakable in response to a user grasping and lifting the second panel 66.

[0038] In some aspects, the second panel 66 is refastenably secured to the first panel 64. In other aspects, the second panel 66 is not intended to be secured to the first panel 64 once the packaging component is opened. For example, in one aspect, the free edge 54 of the second panel 66 is defined by a line of
perforation, with the second panel 66 not being refastenable after the perforation is broken.

[0039] A plurality of personal care articles 10, whether individually wrapped or pouched as shown in FIGS. 3-5, or otherwise wrapped, can be packaged in an outer packaging or bulk packaging component 100, 200, meaning a component capable of holding two or more personal care articles 10, as illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 7. The outer or bulk packaging component 100, 200 is typically the packaging used to provide the personal care articles 10 to consumers on store shelves. The outer or bulk packaging 100, 200 typically provides consumers with a convenient means to transport the personal care articles 10 from the retailer to their home or other place of use. In one aspect, the packaging component 100, 200 is formed as a bag having at least one side seal securing a pair of edges of the bag together. In other aspects, the plurality of personal care articles 10 is packaged in a box or carton. The bags can be prepared from a non-woven material, polymer film, paper, laminated, and/or cloth (including woven) materials, and combinations thereof. Boxes or cartons can be prepared from materials such as cardboard, paperback, and the like.

[0040] The illustrated package 100, 200 is a rectangular box, although any suitable shape and type of packaging including boxes and bags can be used. The package 100, 200 includes an outer surface 104, 204 including a front panel 110, 210, a rear panel (not shown), two end panels (not shown), a top 114, 214, and a bottom (not shown). The panels together define an interior space 118, 218 in which articles 10 can be disposed. While illustrated as a rectangular polyhedron, the package 100, 200 can be any suitable shape. The package 100, 200 can include any suitable sealing and opening means, including a reclosing means such as a tab and slot.

[0041] Articles 10, whether or not individually wrapped, are disposed in the interior space 118, 218. The articles 10 in one package 100, 200 can all be of the same type, absorbency, style, or structure, or the articles 10 in one package 100, 200 can represent two or more variants. In addition, the articles 10 and/or the article wrapper 50 can be uniform in color or graphic, or can display two or more colors and/or graphics up to and including each article 10 and/or article wrapper 50 having a different color and/or graphic.

[0042] The package 100, 200 includes a brand identifier 120, 220, a window 140, 240, and a feature bar 160, 260, along with other descriptors that can include number of articles, size of articles, sub-brands, article ingredients, aesthetic designs, instructions, contact information, and any other suitable descriptor. The brand identifier 120, 220, window 140, 240, and feature bar 160, 260 are preferably on the front panel 110, 210 of the package and are co-planar as the packaging type allows. For example, a paperboard package will generally allow the front panel 110, 210 to be more planar than will a polymer film bag because of the differences in flexibility.

[0043] In one aspect, the brand identifier 120, 220 is disposed prominently near the center of the front panel 110, 210. The brand identifier 120, 220 can be offset from the center point in any direction, but is preferably offset, if at all, to the left of and above the center point. The window 140, 240 is preferably disposed directly below the brand identifier 120, 220. In one aspect, the window 140, 240 is disposed below the transverse centerline of the brand identifier 120, 220.

[0044] The feature bar 160, 260 is also disposed on the front panel 110, 210. The feature bar 160 can be highlighted from or contrasted to the background of the front panel 110, 210 by color, graphics, a combination of these, or by any suitable means. In one aspect, the feature bar 160, 260 is a color different from that of the background, and can also include an outline to provide a contrast to the background. The feature bar 160, 260 can include one or more descriptions of one or more features of the articles 10, including the level of absorbency of the articles 10, the size of the articles 10, the type of article 10, the intended use of the articles 10, any other suitable feature, or a combination of these. The description(s) of the feature(s) can be textual, graphic, photographic, any other suitable description, or a combination of these.

[0045] Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, one or more windows 140, 240 can be disposed on the package 100, 200. The window 140, 240 can be any suitable shape in any shape such as circles, parallelepipeds, and the like. The window 140, 240 can be open between the outer surface 104, 204 and the interior space 118, 218, or the window 140, 240 can be closed or sealed with a pane such that the contents of the package 100, 200 can be seen but not touched. In this respect, the window pane can be any suitable material including any suitable translucent film.

[0046] The window 140, 240 can be shaped and positioned to enhance a consumer’s viewing and understanding of the package 100, 200 and articles 10. A window 140, 240 that in essence points to the feature bar 160, 260 directs a consumer’s attention to the feature bar 160, 260. The window 140, 240 has a first end 144, 244, a second end 148, 248, and a window perimeter 150, 250, where the second end 148, 248 is disposed adjacent to or in the vicinity of the feature bar 160, 260. The second end 148, 248 can also subt the feature bar 160, 260. In some aspects, the window 140, 240 or a portion of the window 140, 240 defines a window longitudinal centerline 152, 252, where the window longitudinal centerline 152, 252 is the centerline taken along the long axis of the window 140, 240. The feature bar 160, 260 has a feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264, where the feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264 is the centerline taken along the long axis of the feature bar 160, 260. In one aspect, the window longitudinal centerline 152, 252, if taken beyond the extent of the window 140, 240, will intersect the feature bar 160, 260. In another aspect, the window longitudinal centerline 152, 252, if taken beyond the extent of the window 140, 240, will intersect the feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264. In still another aspect, the window longitudinal centerline 152, 252, if taken beyond the extent of the window 140, 240, will be parallel to or co-extensive with the feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264.

[0047] In another aspect in which the window 140, 240 has an arcuate portion 154, 254, a tangent 156, 256 to the window perimeter 150, 250 taken at some point on the window perimeter 150, 250 can intersect the feature bar 160, 260. In yet another aspect, a tangent 156, 256 to the window perimeter 150, 250 taken at some point on the window perimeter 150, 250 can intersect the feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264. In still another aspect, a tangent 156, 256 to the window perimeter 150, 250 taken at some point on the window perimeter 150, 250 can be parallel to or co-extensive with the feature bar longitudinal centerline 164, 264.

[0048] The features of the packages 100, 200 described herein can be used to differentiate articles 10 of different types, sizes, absorbencies, etc. sold under the same brand. While packaging as a whole for that brand can have similar features across the brand such that a general look of the
packaging can be attributed to a source, the packaging described herein allows for differentiation across the brand. Differentiating packaging features include having different articles 10 appear in the window 140, 240, having different aspects highlighted in the feature bar 160, 260, and depicting different article forms on the packaging, along with various sub-brands, contents information, and other features. Providing an array of packages 100, 200 allows the manufacturer to promote brand identity while at the same time differentiating articles 10 to allow for immediate recognition by a consumer.

In one aspect, an array of packages 100, 200 for personal care articles 10 can include a first package 100 having a first package interior space 118. A plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles 10 is disposed in the first package interior space 118. In addition, the first package 100 includes a first front panel 110 including a first package feature bar 160 that identifies a first aspect of the personal care articles 10 disposed in the first package interior space 118. In the array, a second package 200 has a second package interior space 218. A different plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles 10 is disposed in the second package interior space 218. In addition, the second package 200 includes a second front panel 210 including a second package feature bar 260 that identifies a second aspect of the personal care articles 10 disposed in the second package interior space 218.

In this example, the second aspect is different from the first aspect, and the first and second front panels 110, 210 further include a brand identifier 120, 220, wherein the first front panel brand identifier 120 is the same as the second panel brand identifier 220. The first and second packages 100, 200 each also includes a window 140, 240 through the first and second front panels 110, 210, respectively, each window 140, 240 having a first end 144, 244 and a second end 148, 248, wherein each window 140, 240 tapers from the second end 148, 248 to the first end 144, 244, and wherein each second end 148, 248 is adjacent the respective package feature bar 160, 260.

The aspects identified in the first and second feature bars 160, 260 include different absorbencies of the individually-wrapped personal care articles 10, different sizes of the individually-wrapped personal care articles 10 and/or different types of the individually-wrapped personal care articles 10. In another aspect, both pluralities of individually-wrapped personal care articles 10 are structurally identical except for the difference in the first and second aspects.

The first and second packages 100, 200 each include individually-wrapped disposable personal care articles 10 of at least two colors that are visible through the respective windows 140, 240 of the first and second packages 100, 200. In each of the first and second packages 100, 200, each window 140, 240 can be disposed vertically beneath a respective brand identifier 120, 220.

The functionality of the packaging arrangement described herein can be demonstrated by analyzing consumer reaction to such packaging including the points on the packaging to which the consumer’s attention is drawn. Package design analysis can be performed using a system such as the PRS Eye-Tracking system of Perception Research Services International of Fort Lee, N.J., U.S.A. Additional information regarding this system can be found at www.prsresearch.com, which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent it does not conflict herewith.

One might assume that a tapered window 140, 240 could be used to focus attention on a key packaging feature by using the narrower end of the window 140, 240 as a pointer, just as the head of an arrow points in the direction of its narrow end. Trying this arrangement, however, produced unexpected results in that attention was found to travel in the opposite direction toward the wider end of the window 140, 240 and, as a result, did not focus on key packaging features. This consequently resulted in changes in packaging of the kind described herein.

Analysis of packaging shows how a consumer’s attention focuses on various aspects of a package design, and how the consumer’s attention moves from one aspect to another. Analysis of the packaging described herein found that a consumer’s eye is drawn initially to the brand identifier 120, 220, which in this example is prominently displayed near the center point of the front panel 110, 210. Attention then moved to the window 140, 240 through which a variety of colored individually-wrapped articles 10 could be seen. Finally, attention moved along the window 140, 240 to the feature bar 160, 260 to which the window 140, 240 was pointing. In as little as a fraction of a second, a consumer can observe these three aspects and see the brand of articles 10 in the brand identifier 120, 220, the type and general appearance of the articles 10 in the window 140, 240, and a key feature of the articles (e.g., level of absorbency) in the feature bar 160, 260.

Without committing to a specific causality for this effect, it is theorized that, at least in part, the packaging arrangement described herein enhances the natural tendency for a person to read across and down as with a book or other written text. It was found that the packaging arrangement described herein allowed a consumer to immediately grasp the important aspects of the articles, and to immediately identify the appropriate article type needed by the consumer, thus minimizing the time spent examining products in the store aisle in which such products are sold.

While the disclosure has been described in detail with respect to specific aspects thereof, it will be appreciated that those skilled in the art, upon attaining understanding of the foregoing, will readily appreciate alterations to, variations of, and equivalents to these aspects. Accordingly, the scope of the present disclosure should be assessed as that of the appended claims and any equivalents thereto. Additionally, all combinations and/or sub-combinations of the disclosed aspects, ranges, examples, and alternatives are also contemplated.

1. A package for personal care articles, the package comprising:
   an interior space;
   a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the interior space; and
   a front panel including:
   a brand identifier;
   a feature bar that identifies an aspect of the personal care articles, and
   a window through the front panel, the window disposed vertically beneath the brand identifier and having a first end and a second end, wherein the window tapers from the second end to the first end, and wherein the second end is adjacent the feature bar.

2. The package of claim 1, wherein multiple individually-wrapped personal care articles are visible through the window.
3. The package of claim 2, wherein the multiple individually-wrapped personal care articles comprise at least two colors.

4. The package of claim 1, wherein the individually-wrapped personal care articles are structurally identical.

5. The package of claim 1, wherein the aspect is the absorbency of the individually-wrapped personal care articles.

6. The package of claim 1, wherein the aspect is the size of the individually-wrapped personal care articles.

7. (canceled)

8. The package of claim 1, further comprising a pane covering the window.

9. The package of claim 1, wherein the window is generally arcuate.

10. The package of claim 9, the window further comprising a midpoint, wherein the first end or the second end is vertically higher than the midpoint.

11. The package of claim 9, wherein the window has a perimeter, and wherein a point on the perimeter of the window defines a tangent that intersects the feature bar.

12. The package of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the window defines a longitudinal centerline that intersects the feature bar.

13. A package for disposable absorbent articles, the package comprising:

   an outer surface defining an interior space;

   a plurality of individually-wrapped disposable absorbent articles disposed in the interior space, wherein all of the disposable absorbent articles disposed in the interior space are structurally identical; and

   a front panel including

   a brand identifier,

   a feature bar that identifies an aspect of the disposable absorbent articles, wherein the aspect is the absorbency or the size of the individually-wrapped disposable absorbent articles, and

   a window through the front panel, the window disposed vertically beneath the brand identifier and having a first end and a second end, wherein the window tapers from the second end to the first end, wherein the second end is adjacent the feature bar, and wherein the window is generally arcuate with a perimeter having a point defining a tangent that intersects the feature bar.

14. The package of claim 13, wherein multiple individually-wrapped disposable absorbent articles comprising at least two colors are visible through the window.

15. An array of packages for personal care articles, the array comprising:

   a first package having a first package interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the first package interior space, and a first front panel including a first package feature bar that identifies a first aspect of the personal care articles disposed in the first package interior space; and

   a second package having a second package interior space, a plurality of individually-wrapped personal care articles disposed in the second package interior space, and a second front panel including a second package feature bar that identifies a second aspect of the personal care articles disposed in the second package interior space, wherein the second aspect is different from the first aspect, and

   wherein the first and second front panels further comprise a brand identifier, wherein the first front panel brand identifier is the same as the second panel brand identifier, wherein the first and second packages each include a window through the first and second front panels, respectively, each window disposed vertically beneath a respective brand identifier and having a first end and a second end, wherein each window tapers from the second end to the first end, and wherein each second end is adjacent the respective package feature bar.

16. The array of claim 15, wherein the first and second aspects are different absorbencies of the individually-wrapped personal care articles.

17. The array of claim 15, wherein the first and second aspects are different sizes of the individually-wrapped personal care articles.

18. The array of claim 15, wherein the individually-wrapped personal care articles are structurally identical except for the difference in the first and second aspects.

19. The array of claim 15, wherein the first and second aspects are different types of individually-wrapped personal care articles.

20. The array of claim 15, wherein multiple individually-wrapped disposable personal care articles comprising at least two colors are visible through the respective windows of the first and second packages.

21. (canceled)