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(56) Documents Cited

GB 2186727 A

US 5624044 A

US 4562927 A

US 3977521 A

(58) Field of Search

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(54) Abstract Title

Display assembly

(57) A merchandise display assembly comprising a support assembly 2, perhaps a track with horizontal grooves 3, adapted to be fitted with one or more spacer bars 4, the distal end 6 of the bars 4 supporting a hoarding 8 having at least one aperture 9 through which merchandise display trays 13 can be viewed. First end 5 of bars 4 may have engagement means, perhaps hooks, for attachment to assembly 2 and at the distal end 6 means for connecting with the hoarding 6, perhaps apertures 7. The length of the bars 4 may be equal to or less than the length of the trays 13. The trays 13 may be extendable to ease product loading and may have a longitudinal arm that fixes on to assembly 2, a groove in which the tray 13 is slidably mounted, and a product pusher biased towards the front of the tray 13. Two or more trays 13 may be joined together using resilient clips. The assembly may come in kit form.

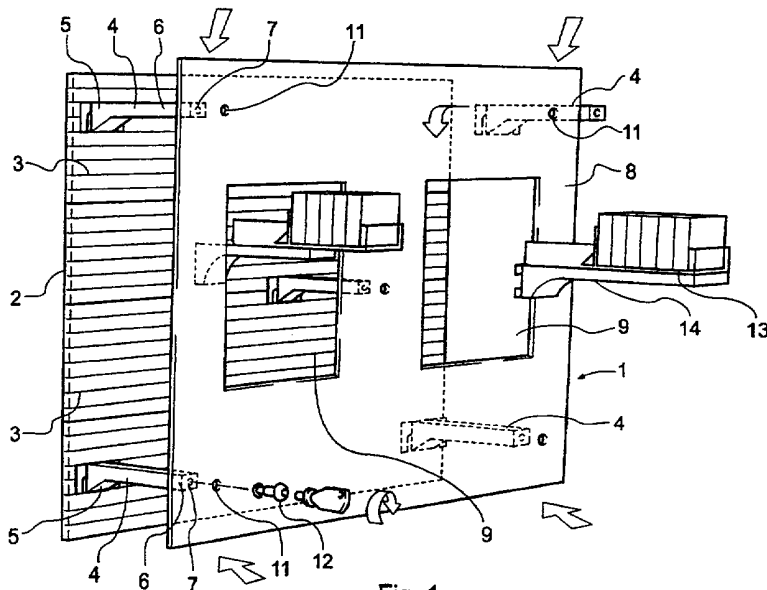


Fig. 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

This print takes account of replacement documents submitted after the date of filing to enable the application to comply with the formal requirements of the Patents Rules 1995

GB 2 359 405 A

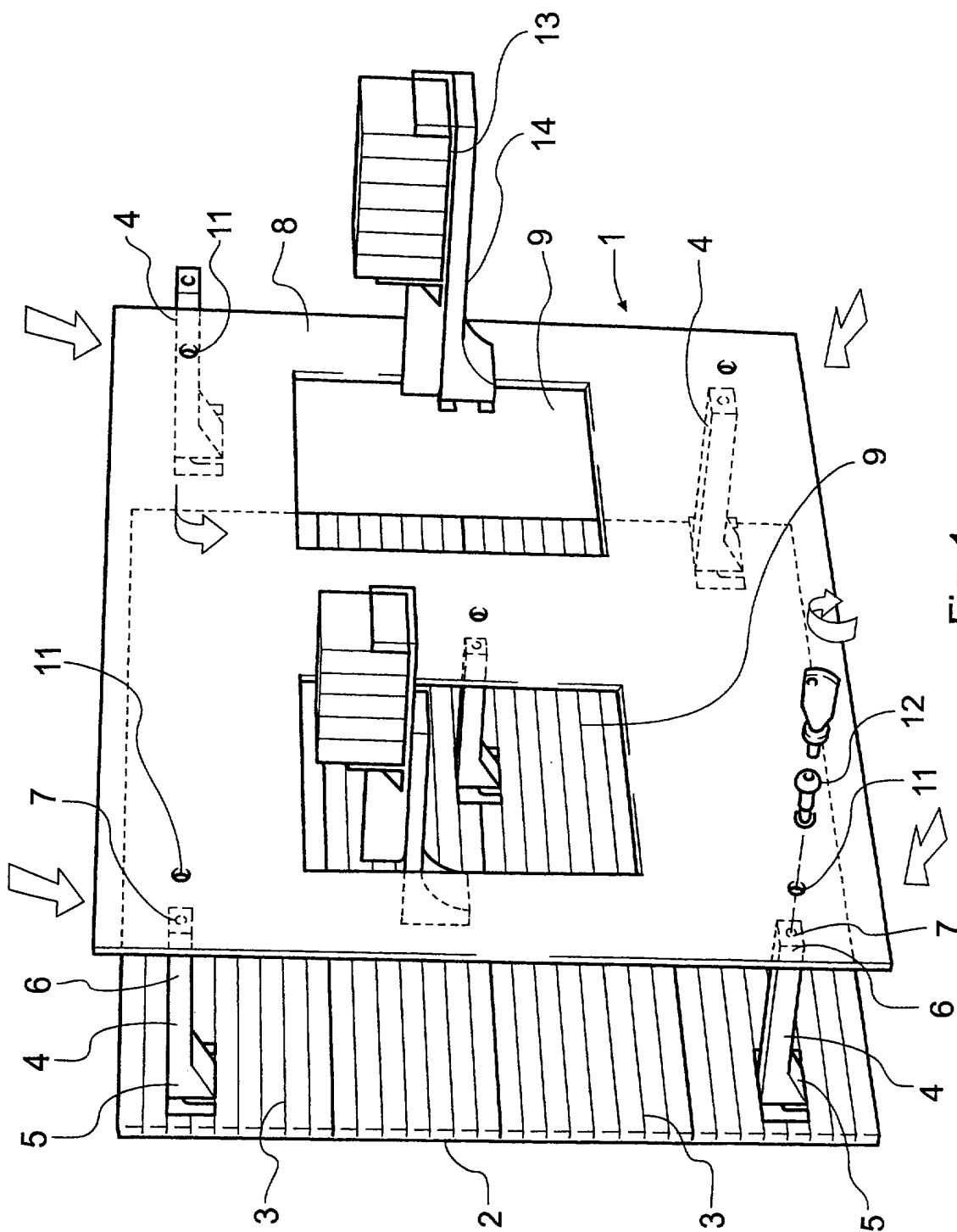


Fig. 1

DISPLAY ASSEMBLY

This invention relates to a novel merchandise display assembly for use in conjunction with merchandising and merchandising display stands.

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Merchandising display stands conventionally comprise a merchandise tray optionally provided with a product pusher to urge merchandise to the front of the tray. More recently slidable merchandise trays have been developed, such a tray is described for example in UK Patent No 2290077. A slidable merchandise tray is also described in
10 co-pending UK Patent application (as yet unpublished) which describes an assembly for fitting to a merchandising display stand comprising a longitudinal arm provided with means for attaching the arm to the display stand, the longitudinal arm comprising an at least one groove in which a merchandising holding tray is slidably mounted and moveable from a retracted to an extended position, the tray being
15 provided with a slidably mounted product pusher which is resiliently biased towards the front of the tray and the arm is provided with means for engaging with the product pusher.

The development of slidable merchandise trays has now enabled us to produce a
20 display matrix which is advantageous over prior art systems.

Thus according to the invention we provide a merchandise display matrix which comprises a support assembly adapted to be fitted with one or more spacer bars, the distal end of the spacer bar being capable of supporting a hoarding provided with at
25 least one display aperture wherein one or more merchandise holding trays may be arranged to be visible through the display aperture.

The support assembly may comprise a conventionally known assembly. Thus, the assembly may be a track assembly or it may comprise, for example, a peg board. A
30 preferred assembly is a track assembly and especially one which comprises a plurality of grooves or apertures, eg slots, into which one or more spacer bars may be fitted.

The grooves or apertures may be horizontal, vertical or angled grooves or apertures, or a mixture thereof. However, the preferred support assembly comprises a plurality of horizontal grooves or apertures and especially a plurality of horizontal grooves. The track assembly may be free standing or may be provided with legs to enable it to be free standing or it may be adapted to be wall mounted.

It is preferred, although not essential, that all of the spacer bars used are the same. Thus, the spacer bars may be in the form of a buttress. The end of the spacer bar adjacent the track assembly is provided with means for engaging the track assembly, such means may be, but is not limited to, a hook or a plurality of hooks. Preferably, such engaging means will be the same as the engaging means used in the merchandise display tray. The distal end of the spacer bar is provided with means for connecting to the hoarding. Any conventional means may be included at the distal end of the spacer. Preferably, the hoarding connection means will comprise an aperture, which may correspond to an aperture positioned in the hoarding. The aperture may, optionally be screw threaded, but is at least capable of receiving a connection member, such as a screw.

The dimensions of the spacer bar may vary, but preferably the length of each of the spacer bars will be the same and will be substantially the same as the length of the merchandise tray, enabling the display tray to be readily visible through the display aperture of the hoarding. Preferably, the length of each of the spacer bars will not be greater, and more preferably will be slightly less than the length of the merchandise display tray so that the merchandise display tray, carrying merchandise, will slightly protrude through the display aperture of the hoarding.

The hoarding may comprise any material conventionally used as an advertising material, eg plastics, metal, cardboard, laminate, glass or any combination thereof. The hoarding allows an advertising display to be placed upon it (or within it, if it has a laminar structure), thus allowing a manufacturer or retailer to carry promotional material adjacent the product display. An essential feature of the hoarding is that it is

provided with at least one display aperture, but preferably a plurality of display apertures, eg two or three, allowing the merchandise to be visible. Each of the display apertures may be dimensioned to allow more than one merchandise tray to be visible. The hoarding may be provided with integral means for engaging with the
5 spacer bars. Alternatively, the hoarding may simply be provided with one or more apertures positioned so as to correspond with the engaging means or the aperture in the end of the spacer bar adjacent the hoarding (ie distal to the support display).

The merchandising display tray may be any conventionally known such tray.
10 However, preferentially the tray is one which is capable of being extended to facilitate filling of the tray. Most preferentially, the tray is one which is described in co-pending UK Patent application No GB 9929911.7. Thus, the merchandise display tray may comprise a longitudinal arm provided with means for attaching the arm to the support assembly, the longitudinal arm comprising at least one groove in which a
15 merchandise holding tray is slidably mounted and moveable from a retracted to an extended position, the tray being provided with a slidably mounted product pusher which is resiliently biased towards the front of the tray and the arm is provided with means for engaging with the product pusher.

20 Thus the merchandise holding tray is provided with a longitudinal aperture to facilitate the sliding of the product pusher. The base of the tray may preferably be provided with means for engaging with the longitudinal arm. This engaging means should be such that the tray is capable of sliding freely in the arm. However, preferentially, the engaging means should restrict the vertical movement of the tray.
25 This is particularly advantageous in that when the tray is in an extended position the tray is hindered from tilting, e.g. under the weight of any loaded merchandise. Thus, the arm is preferably provided with one or more longitudinal grooves which engage with a hook member in the base of the tray. The hook member may be a conventionally known 'L' shaped hook, or an inverted T-shaped hook. In the most
30 preferred embodiment, the base of the tray is provided with a pair of L-shaped hooks

e.g. opposite facing hooks. In such a case the arm is provided with a pair of longitudinal grooves e.g. a groove at either side of the arm.

5 The resilient biasing means preferably comprises a spring. The spring means can take any convenient form such as a coil or leaf spring. The biasing means for the product pusher conveniently comprises a coiled flat spring, the free end of which is attached to the tray, e.g. adjacent the front of the tray and the remainder of the spring is coiled and mounted on the rear face of the product pusher.

10 The longitudinal arm is provided with means for engaging the product pusher. Preferentially, this engaging means is also adapted to engage the merchandise tray e.g. the base of the tray. The engaging means is preferably a lip which engages with the base of the product pusher. Thus, when the base of the product pusher engages with the lip of the arm, the product pusher cannot be drawn further towards the front
15 of the merchandise tray. Furthermore, when the merchandise tray is withdrawn from the arm to enable it to be restocked, the product pusher remains stationary, thus, effectively moving it adjacent the rear of the merchandise tray. In one embodiment, the product pusher is simply prevented from sliding out of the tray by the rear wall of the tray.

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Furthermore, the “underneath” of the merchandise tray may be provided with a ridge which is also capable of engaging with the lip of the arm. Thus, the ridge acts to prevent the merchandise tray from easily sliding back in to the arm of the assembly. In use, an operator must therefore lift the merchandise tray, allowing the ridge to pass
25 back over the lip, before the merchandise tray can slide back into its position in the arm assembly. In a preferred embodiment the ridge is provided with a sloping surface to facilitate the outward sliding of the ridge over the lip of the arm assembly.

30 The product pusher may comprise a conventionally known assembly. Preferably, the product pusher is an L-shaped piece of plastics material which is provided with a hook in its base as hereinbefore described.

The merchandise display matrix of the invention may comprise an individual unit which may be attached to a track assembly. As previously mentioned, such track assemblies are already known.

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The merchandise display trays may optionally be joined together, eg two or more merchandise trays, allowing them to be extended from their respective arm assemblies together. This may be achieved using a resilient clip as described in co-pending UK Patent application No GB 9929911.7.

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We also provide a kit comprising a support assembly, one or more spacer bars, a hoarding provided with a display aperture and one or more merchandise display trays as hereinbefore described.

15 The invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which Figure 1 is a perspective view of the merchandise display assembly.

Referring to Figure 1, a merchandise display matrix (1) comprises a track assembly
20 (2) provided with a plurality of longitudinal horizontal grooves (3). Attached to the track assembly are a plurality of spacer bars (4). Each spacer is provided with means (not shown) at a first end (5) for engaging with the track assembly (2). At the second, distal end (6) each spacer bar (4) is provided with an aperture (7). The display matrix (1) is provided with a display hoarding (8) which comprises a pair of
25 display apertures (9 and 10). The hoarding (8) is also provided with attachment apertures (11) positioned so as to correspond with apertures (7) in the spacer bars (4). The hoarding (8) is held in place against the spacer bars (4) by a snap fit screw (12) which passes through the attachment aperture (11) of the hoarding (8) and snaps into the aperture (7) in the spacer bar (4).

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A merchandise display tray (13) rest on a tray support (14) comprises a longitudinal L-shaped arm provided with hooks (not shown) which engage with the grooves (3) of the track assembly(2)

- 5 In use, the merchandise display tray (13) is visible through the display apertures (9 and 10) of the hoarding (8) or alternatively, protrudes through the display apertures (9 and 10). The hoarding (8) may carry advertising or promotional or other material.

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CLAIMS

1. A merchandise display matrix which comprises a support assembly adapted to be fitted with one or more spacer bars, the distal end of the spacer bar being capable
5 of supporting a hoarding provided with at least one display aperture wherein one or more merchandise display trays may be arranged to be visible through the display aperture.
2. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the
10 support assembly comprises a track assembly.
3. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 2 characterised in that the track assembly comprises a plurality of horizontal grooves.
- 15 4. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the end of the spacer bar adjacent the support assembly is provided with means for engaging the support assembly.
5. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 4 characterised in that the
20 engaging means comprises a plurality of hooks.
6. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the distal end of the spacer bar is provided with means for connecting to the hoarding.
- 25 7. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 6 characterised in that the hoarding connection means comprises an aperture.
8. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the dimensions of each of the spacer bars is such that the length of the spacer bar is
30 substantially the same as the length of the merchandise display tray.

9. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the length of each of the spacer bars is slightly less than the length of the merchandise holding tray.
- 5 10. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the hoarding comprises a plurality of display apertures.
11. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that the merchandise holding tray is capable of being extended to facilitate filling of the tray.
- 10 12. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 11 characterised in that the merchandise display tray comprises a longitudinal arm provided with means for attaching the arm to the support assembly, the longitudinal arm comprising at least one groove in which a merchandise holding tray is slidably mounted and moveable
15 from a retracted to an extended position, the tray being provided with a slidably mounted product pusher which is resiliently biased towards the front of the tray and the arm is provided with means for engaging with the product pusher.
13. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1 characterised in that at
20 least two of the merchandise display trays are joined together.
14. A merchandise display matrix according to Claim 13 characterised in that the merchandise display trays are joined by a resilient clip.
- 25 15. A method of displaying merchandise which comprises the use of a merchandise display matrix according to Claim 1.
16. A kit comprising a support assembly, one or more spacer bars, a hoarding provided with a display aperture and one or more merchandise display trays.

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17. A merchandise display matrix substantially as described with reference to the accompanying description and drawings.

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Application No: GB 0031050.8
Claims searched: 1 to 17

Examiner: Andrew Hole
Date of search: 18 June 2001

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:
UK CI (Ed.S): A4L (LAAA, LAAT, LAF, LSA, LSHC, LSJ, JSX); G5C (CER, CES, CKA)
Int CI (Ed.7): A47B; A47F; G09F 15/00, 19/22, 23/06
Other: Online: WPI, EPODOC, PAJ

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	GB 2186727 A (FRONTLINE) See Figs 1 & 4, and page 2, lines 2 to 20.	
A	US 5624044 A (BLACK, Jr.) See Figs 1 & 2.	
A	US 4562927 A (FREDRICKSON) See Figs 1 & 2.	
A	US 3977521 A (MURPHY) See Figs 1 & 3.	

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.