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(54) Title: BEVERAGE DISPENSING SYSTEM WITH SOCIAL MEDIA CAPABILITIES

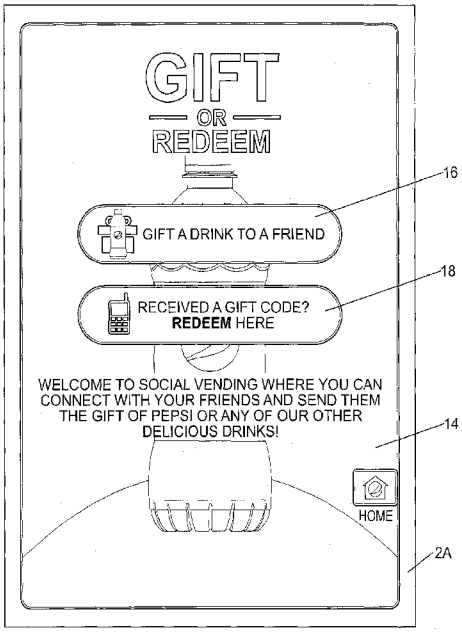

Figure 2

(57) Abstract: A method is provided comprising receiving instructions at a first device. The instructions may correspond to an item transaction. The item may be a food product. The item transaction may comprise an item gift. The method may comprise generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction. The method may comprise generating a message at the first device. The method may comprise transmitting the code and the message from the first device to a second device.

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BEVERAGE DISPENSING SYSTEM WITH SOCIAL MEDIA CAPABILITIES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[01] This application is a non-provisional of and claims priority to pending provisional US Application No. 61/478,425, filed April 22, 2011, and entitled "Beverage Dispensing System with Social Media Capabilities," the entire disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety and for all purposes.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[02] This disclosure relates generally to a beverage dispensing system with social media capabilities, e.g., for dispensing of beverages at restaurants, theatres, and other entertainment venues.

BACKGROUND

[03] Various beverage dispensers, such as those at restaurants, theatres and other entertainment venues, typically have either a "drop in" dispenser apparatus or a counter top type dispenser apparatus. In a drop in dispenser apparatus, the dispenser apparatus is self-contained and may be dropped into an aperture of a counter top. In a counter top type dispenser apparatus, the dispenser apparatus is placed on a counter top. In conventional beverage dispensers, a dispensing head is coupled to a particular drink syrup supply source via a single pipe dedicated to supply the particular drink syrup to that dispensing head, wherein the particular drink syrup supply source is typically located near the counter top, i.e., directly under the counter top, or directly over the counter top.

[04] A user will typically place a cup under the signage of the selected beverage and either press a button or press the cup against a dispensing lever to activate the dispenser so that

the selected beverage is delivered from the dispensing head corresponding to the selected beverage and into the cup until pressure is withdrawn from the button or lever.

[05] Conventional dispensing systems typically do not provide social media capabilities. For example, conventional dispensing systems are not configured to receive instructions in connection with a gift a beverage from one individual to another individual. Conventional dispensing systems typically do not provide an interface that allows a recipient of a gift, coupon, or promotion, to hear and/or see an audio, text, and/or video message, such as a message of the party who sent the gift, coupon, or promotion to the recipient.

[06] Conventional dispensing systems typically are not configured to assist users in making healthy lifestyle choices. For example, conventional dispensing systems typically are not configured to recognize that a customer is diabetic, and thus may offer the diabetic customer a product that is not appropriate for the customer's diabetic condition.

[07] Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to identify or recognize individuals. For example, conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured with telemetry capabilities to identify a mobile device of a customer. Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to receive from a mobile device of a customer a signal that identifies a customer and/or the beverage preference or beverage order of a customer. Thus, conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured communicate with a mobile device of a customer to determine which beverage or beverages a particular individual may want to order or has ordered.

[08] Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to communicate with a mobile device of a customer and/or a mobile software application used by a customer. Thus, conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to determine whether a particular customer has ordered and/or has paid for a particular beverage and/or has redeemed a coupon, promotion, etc., that entitles the customer to receive the beverage. Conventional dispensing systems typically do not enable

Alternative Reality Gaming (ARG) promotions and/or campaigns. Conventional dispensing systems typically do not enable detection of code(s), check-in(s), and/or other awareness of certain electronic device(s) of a user, e.g., a mobile communication device(s), and typically do not enable communication with such an electronic device(s). Conventional dispensing systems typically do not provide a system that can be used to create a partnership, including a campaign, with philanthropic organizations and/or activities.

[09] Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to automatically provide a beverage promotion or discount to a customer upon identification of the customer.

[10] Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to monitor ordering, filling and refilling activities of a particular customer.

[11] Conventional beverage dispensing systems typically are not configured to receive and process orders from mobile devices of customers, and thus are not configured to reduce or eliminate wait time by customers to receive ordered beverages.

[12] Conventional dispensing systems typically are not configured to automatically change their beverage offerings based on time of day and/or event at a venue.

[13] What is needed is a beverage dispensing system that does not have the limitations and disadvantages of conventional dispensing systems and methods.

SUMMARY

[14] Accordingly, there may be provided a processing or dispensing system with social media capabilities.

[15] In an aspect of the disclosure, a method is provided comprising receiving instructions at a first device. The instructions may correspond to an item transaction. The item may be

a food product. The item transaction may comprise an item gift. The method may comprise generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction. The method may comprise generating a message at the first device. The method may comprise transmitting the code and the message from the first device to a second device.

[16] The above and other aspects, features and advantages of the present disclosure will be apparent from the following detailed description of the illustrated embodiments thereof which are to be read in connection with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[17] FIG. 1 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[18] FIG. 2 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[19] FIG. 3 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[20] FIG. 4 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[21] FIG. 5 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[22] FIG. 6 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[23] FIG. 7 shows a user interface, including a screen display, and further shows a message received by a device, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[24] FIG. 8 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[25] FIG. 9 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[26] FIG. 10 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[27] FIG. 11 shows a user interface, including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[28] FIG. 12 shows a diagram of a system that may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

[29] FIG. 13 shows a simplified diagram of a system in accordance with various aspects of the disclosure.

[30] FIG. 14 shows a flowchart of a method in accordance with aspects of the disclosure.

[31] FIG. 15 shows a flowchart of a method in accordance with aspects of the disclosure.

[32] FIG. 16 illustrates a flowchart of a method in accordance with aspects of the disclosure.

[33] FIG. 17 illustrates a user interface including a screen display, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[34] The embodiments discussed below may be used to order, deliver and form a wide variety of food products, including but not limited to free-flowing food products, including cold and hot beverages, and including but not limited to beverages known under any PepsiCo branded name, such as Pepsi-Cola®.

[35] In an aspect of the disclosure, a method is provided comprising receiving instructions at a first device. The instructions correspond to an item transaction. The item is a food product. The item transaction comprises an item gift. The method comprises generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction. The method comprises generating a message at the first device. The method comprises transmitting the code and the message from the first device to a second device.

[36] In an aspect, a method may be provided comprising receiving at a device a code. The code may correspond to instructions for an item transaction. The item may be a food product. The item may be an item gift. Based on the received code, the method may comprise displaying a message and delivering the item gift.

[37] In an aspect, a method may be provided comprising the receiving a user preference at a social media computer. The method may comprise automatically generating a message and an associated code based on the user preference. The method may comprise automatically transmitting the message and the associated code to the user. The message and associated code may correspond to an item promotion.

[38] In an aspect, a device may be provided comprising a transmitter. The device may comprise a receiver. The receiver may be configured to receive instructions corresponding to an item transaction. The item may be a food product, and the item transaction may be an item gift. The device may comprise a memory. The device may comprise a processor. The processor may be coupled to the memory for executing instructions. The instructions may comprise generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction. The instructions may comprise generating a message at the device. The instructions may comprise transmitting the code and the message from the device to another device.

[39] In an aspect, a method is provided comprising receiving instructions at a device. The instructions correspond to an item transaction. The item is a food product. The item transaction is selected from the group consisting of an item purchase order, an item gift, an item redemption, and an item promotion. The method comprises generating a code

based on the instructions received at the device for the item transaction. The method comprises transmitting the code to a communications network. The method comprises receiving a message at the device. The message is selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message. The method comprises transmitting the message to the communications network.

[40] In an aspect of the disclosure, there may be provided a system with social media capabilities comprising at least one dispensing component, for example, a beverage dispensing head.

[41] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system with social media capabilities is provided. The processing or dispensing system may be used for the dispensing of beverages at any suitable venue, including restaurants, theatres, and other entertainment venues.

[42] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising a social media computer or server, and an interface. The social media computer may be configured to be operatively connected to the interface and receive from the interface instructions for a beverage purchase order, a beverage gift, a beverage redemption, or a beverage promotion, and generating a code based on the received instructions.

[43] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising at least one social media computer or server that may be configured to be operatively coupled to a communications network. The social media computer may be configured to generate instructions for transmitting and display of a message, the message selected from the group consisting of an offer, a gift, a promotion, and a discount associated with a beverage.

[44] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising at least one social media computer or server that may be configured to be operatively coupled to a communications network. The social media computer may be configured to receive a customer order from a mobile device of the customer through the communications network. The social media computer may be operatively coupled to a controller. The

social media computer may be configured to generate instructions in response to the customer order. The controller may be configured to receive instructions from the social media computer and to provide an appropriate beverage or amount of beverage ingredients to a dispenser, such as a dispenser having a dispensing head in response to the instructions.

[45] FIG. 1 shows a communication device or machine 2A, including a screen display 4, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Display 4 may comprise a glass surface. Display 4 may have a surface having a curvature to provide a premium appearance by adding fullness to a main surface of display 4. For example, display 4 may comprise a surface having a slightly convex surface. Thus, a slight curvature may be achieved by adding or otherwise providing slight convex surfacing to a main surface of display 4.

[46] Communication device 2A may be a user interface device. Screen display 4 may be any suitable display, such as a touch screen display or a gesture recognition display. Communication device 2A may be configured to recognize a communication device 130 or 132 of a user or consumer when such a device of the user or consumer is in close proximity to communication device 2A. As shown in FIG. 1, screen display 4 may provide a plurality of options. As shown, screen display 4 may provide a purchase order option 8 (e.g., "buy a drink" option). Screen display 4 may provide an option 10 for connecting with a web site 10 (e.g., a web site of PepsiCo). Screen display 4 may provide an option 12 for either gifting a gift or redeeming a gift (e.g., "gift a drink" or "redeem a gift").

[47] FIG. 2 shows a communication device 2A, including a screen display 14, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 14 may be the screen that is displayed after a user chooses option 12 in FIG. 1. Screen display 14 may provide an option 16 to gift a gift to another person, e.g., a friend, a family member, a colleague, etc., along with a message, such as a text, audio, graphic and/or video message. Screen display 14 may provide an option 18 to redeem a gift code.

[48] FIG. 3 shows a communication device 2A, including a screen display 20, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 20 may be the screen that is displayed after a user chooses option 16 in FIG. 2. Screen display 20 may provide a display for a user to enter information about themselves (e.g., their name), their friend's name, their friend's mobile number, and their message to their friend. Screen display 20 may provide a display of a beverage to be gifted to the friend, and a user can change the drink by selecting the "change drink" button. Screen display 20 may provide a "continue" button when the user is finished entering information and drink selection.

[49] FIG. 4 shows a communication device 2A, including a screen display 22, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 22 may be similar to the screen display 20 in FIG. 3, the addition that a user has now entered information about themselves (e.g., their name), their friend's name, their friend's mobile number, and their message to their friend. Screen display 22 may provide a display of a beverage to be gifted to the friend, and a user can change the drink by selecting the "change drink" button. Screen display 22 may provide a "continue" button when the user is finished entering information and drink selection.

[50] FIG. 5 shows a communication device 2A, including a screen display 24, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 24 may be the screen that is displayed after a user selects the "continue" button in screen display 22 shown in FIG. 4. Screen display 24 may provide a display for a user to select the "record" button to record a video message. Screen display 24 may provide a button to edit information. Screen display 24 may provide a button for a user to send the gift without a recorded video message.

[51] FIG. 6 shows a communication device 2A, including a screen display 26, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 26 may be the screen that is displayed after a user selects the "record" button in screen display 24 shown in FIG. 5. Screen display 26 may provide a stop button to stop the recording of a video message. Screen display 26 may provide a clock or stop watch in connection with the time corresponding to the recording time of the message.

[52] As shown in FIGs. 2-6, a "home" button may be provided so that a user may, if desired, return home to the screen display 4 shown in FIG. 1. Any of the screen displays 4, 14, 20, 22, 24, and 26 may have a "back" button (not shown), so that a user may, if desired, go back to the prior screen display.

[53] FIG. 7 shows a communication device or machine 2B, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Communication device 2B may be the same as or similar to communication device 2A shown in FIG. 1. Alternatively communication device 2B may be different than communication device 2A, that is, the communication device 2B may be a separate communication or interface device, such as a communication or interface device at a different location than communication or interface device 2A. FIG. 7 shows a mobile device 28, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Mobile device 28 may receive a message 30 in response to the information inputted by a user in screen display 22. As discussed below, a message 30, which may be the message inputted in message box 23 of screen display 22 of FIG. 4 or a variant thereof, may be transmitted from communication device 2A to a social media computer or server. Message 30 may be transmitted from the social media computer or server through a communications network to device of a recipient, such as a recipient's mobile device 28. Message 30 may advise a recipient that another person or entity has sent them gift. Message 30 may be received in any suitable form or transmission, including a text message, an e-mail, or a message on the recipient's social media page. Message 30 may provide a code that entitles the recipient to receive a gift. Alternatively, message 30 may provide a link to a code that entitles the recipient to receive a gift. Upon receipt of a code that entitles the recipient to receive a gift, the recipient may select option 12 at communication device 2B, e.g., a button to "redeem a gift."

[54] FIG. 8 shows communication device 2B having screen display 14, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 14 may be the screen that is displayed after a user chooses option 12 in FIG. 7. Screen display 14 may provide an option 18 to redeem a gift code.

[55] FIG. 9 shows communication device 2B having screen display 32, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 32 may be the screen that is displayed after a user chooses option 18 in FIG. 8. Screen display 32 may provide a box for a recipient to enter the gift code, and then select a "continue" button.

[56] FIG. 10 shows communication device 2B having a screen display 34, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 34 may be the screen that is displayed after a recipient has entered a valid gift code and has selected the "continue" button in FIG. 9. Screen display 34 may display message 23 that was entered in screen display 22 shown in FIG. 4. The recipient may select a "continue" button as shown in FIG. 10.

[57] FIG. 11 shows communication device 2B having a screen display 36, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Screen display 36 may be the screen that is displayed after a recipient has selected a "continue" button of screen display 34 as shown in FIG. 10. Screen display 36 may display a video playback of the video recorded of the gift giver (*see* screen interface 24 of FIG. 5). FIG. 11 shows a "done/exit" button that a recipient may select. FIG. 11 shows beverage 40, which has been gifted to the recipient.

[58] Beverage 40 may be dispensed by a dispenser, e.g., a dispenser 114 of a vending machine dispenser 42 shown in FIG. 12. Beverage 40 may be placed in a suitable container 43, such as a bottle, can, or pouch. Alternatively, beverage 40 may dispensed through a dispensing head 44 of dispenser 45 into a cup 46 as shown in FIG. 12.

[59] FIG. 12 shows a diagram of a processing or dispensing system that may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. A processing or dispensing system comprises a social media computer or server 102. Server 102 may be configured to be operatively coupled to a communications network 104. The social media computer 102 may be configured to receive customer orders from communication devices 2A and 2B through the communications network 104.

[60] A readable code 48 associated with a particular beverage and volume, such as a readable bar code, ultraviolet ink code or a RFID code, may be placed on a cup 50, such as the bottom 1206 of cup 50. Cup 50 may be provided to a user, including but not limited to a customer or recipient, and the user may then place the cup in manner for the code to be read by a detector or reader 1201, and an appropriate amount of beverage ingredients may be dispensed through a dispensing head 54 of dispenser 56 into cup 50. For example, see U.S. Serial No. 12/704,217, filed February 11, 2010, published on August 12, 2010 as U.S Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0200110, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. As shown FIG. 12, components 1202, 1203, 1204, and 1205 are various other components of dispenser 56.

[61] The social media computer 102 may be operatively coupled to a controller 112. The social media computer 102 may be configured to generate instructions in response to the customer orders made at communication devices 2A and 2B. The controller 112 may be configured to receive instructions from the social media computer 102, and to control the dispensing of a beverage 40 from a dispenser 42, such as a vending machine dispenser 114. Alternatively, beverage 40 may dispensed through a dispensing head 44 of dispenser 45 into a cup 46 as shown in FIG. 12. Controller 112 may be a central controller and/or may be a separate controller that is incorporated into each dispenser, such as dispensers 42, 45, 56, and/or 142.

[62] An interface or software application may be provided at devices 130 and 132, such as mobile devices. Social media computer 102 may be operatively connected to devices 130 and 132 through a communications network 140A. A user of device 130 may access an interface using device 130, such as an interface of communication device 2A as previously described, to gift a beverage. A user of device 132 may access an interface using device 132, such as an interface of communication device 2B as previously described, to receive information regarding a gift, as well as a message 30, and video playback of a recorded message from the giver of the gift, as previously described. Devices 130 and 132 may be mobile devices.

[63] Information received by social media computer 102 made be stored in a data repository 128.

[64] Social media computer 102 may be configured to generate instructions in response to the customer orders in connection with a beverage order placed by a customer using a communication device, such as a mobile device 134 while the customer is in a vehicle 136, or using a mobile device 138 when the customer is on foot at a location, which may be a location remote from a dispenser, e.g., a city block away from a dispenser. Social media computer 102 may be operatively coupled to communication devices 134 and 138 through network 140 or network 104.

[65] Server 102 may be configured to be operatively coupled to a dispenser 142 at drive through or pickup window (not shown). Dispenser 142 may be the same as or similar to dispensers 42, 45, and 56, as previously described.

[66] In one aspect of the disclosure, the interfaces and/or devices may be networked together through communications network 112, 140, or 140A. Communications network 112 may represent: 1) a local area network (LAN); 2) a simple point-to-point network (such as direct modem-to-modem connection); and/or 3) a wide area network (WAN), including the Internet and other commercial based network services. In one aspect, the interfaces and/or devices may be connected to social media computer 102 through communications network 104 or 140 using various well-known protocols, such as TCP/IP, Ethernet, FTP, HTTP, BLUETOOTH, Wi-Fi, ultra wide band (UWB), low power radio frequency (LPRF), radio frequency identification (RFID), infrared communication, IrDA, third-generation (3G) cellular data communications, fourth-generation (4G) cellular data communications, Global System for Mobile communications (GSM), or other wireless communication networks or the like may be used as the communications protocol. The interfaces and/or devices may be physically connected to each other or one or more networks via twisted pair wires, coaxial cable, fiber optics, radio waves or other media. In an aspect, known standard protocols may be used, including Flash, HTML5, etc.

[67] The term "network" as used herein and depicted in the drawings should be broadly interpreted to include not only systems in which remote storage devices are coupled together via one or more communication paths, but also stand-alone devices that may be coupled, from time to time, to such systems that have storage capability. Consequently, the term "network" includes not only a "physical network" but also a "content network," which is comprised of the data—attributable to a single entity—which resides across all physical networks. A "network," as used herein, may also include a network of "virtual" servers, processes, threads, or other ongoing computational processes which communicate with each other, some or all of which may be hosted on a single machine which may provide information to client servers, processes, threads or other ongoing computational processes on that same machine, other machines, or both.

[68] As further illustrated in Figure 12, a data repository 128 may be coupled to social media computer 102 for storage or retrieval of data, which may be used to implement various aspects of the disclosure. Such data may include customer identification information used to track customer purchases and activities. Such tracking may be performed upon approval of the customer. For example, information that may be stored by or retrieved from data repository 128 may track a code on a cup to track which beverage selection(s) are made through the use of the cup. The data repository 128 may physically be located in the social media computer or server 102, or in a separate machine in the same or separate location.

[69] The devices and machines described above may be operatively connected to each other through a communications network, such as communications network 104 and/or 140. FIG. 13 shows a simplified diagram of a processing or dispensing system in accordance with various aspects of the disclosure. Social media computer 102, communication devices 2A and 2B, mobile devices 134 and 138, and dispensers 42, 45, 56, and 142 may comprise non-transitory memories, processors, displays (which may include touchscreens), and communication interfaces. By way of example, as shown in FIG. 13, communication device 2A, social media computer 102, dispenser 42, and mobile device 134 may each comprise a non-transitory memory 1302, a processor 1308, a display 1310, and a communication interface 1312. The processors 1308 may execute computer-

executable instructions present in non-transitory memories 1302 such that, for example, the communication device 2A, dispenser 42, and mobile device 134 may each send and receive information to and from social media computer 102 via network 104.

[70] Processor 102 shown in FIG. 12 may be a processor 1308 as shown in FIG. 13. Processor 1308 shown in FIG. 13 may be processor 102 shown in FIG. 12. The processing or dispensing system may further include a system bus (not shown). A system bus may be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. The structure of system non-transitory memory is well known to those skilled in the art and may include a basic input/output system (BIOS) stored in a read only memory (ROM) and one or more program modules such as operating systems, application programs and program data stored in random access memory (RAM). The system may also include a variety of interface units and drives for reading and writing data.

[71] Those of skill in the art will recognize that, in accordance with the disclosure, any suitable network connections and other ways of establishing a communications link between the computers can be used. The existence of any of various well-known protocols, such as TCP/IP, Frame Relay, Ethernet, FTP, HTTP and the like, is presumed, and central processor unit or computer may be operated in a client-server configuration to permit a user to retrieve web pages from a web-based server. Furthermore, any of various conventional web browsers may be used to display and manipulate data on web pages.

[72] Those of skill in the art will recognize that, in accordance with the disclosure, a processing or dispensing system may include an associated computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling the computer system may be utilized to implement the exemplary embodiments that are disclosed herein. The computer system may include at least one computer such as a microprocessor, a cluster of microprocessors, a mainframe, and networked workstations.

[73] Social media computer 102, communication devices 2A and 2B, mobile devices 134 and 138, dispensers 42, 45, 56, and 142 may also include various input devices 1314. The input devices may include keyboards, track balls, mice, joy sticks, buttons, and bill and coin validators. Readers 1316, including but not limited to card readers, bar code readers, identification readers, credit card readers, ultraviolet ink readers, and RFID readers may be included in the system. For example, but not by way of limitation, mobile devices 134 and 138 may also include readers 1316 to enable users to identify themselves for tracking purposes. By way of example, as shown in FIG. 13, social media computer 102, communication device 2A, dispenser 42, and mobile device 134 may comprise input devices 1314. By way of example, as shown in FIG. 13, reader 1316 of communication device 2A may comprise a credit card reader.

[74] Thus, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising a social media computer and an interface, the social media computer configured to be operatively connected to the interface and receive from the interface instructions for a beverage purchase order, a beverage gift, a beverage redemption, or a beverage promotion, the social media computer configured to generate a code based on the received instructions.

[75] In one aspect, the social media computer may be configured to be operatively connected to a communications network. In one aspect, the social media computer may be configured to transmit the code through the communications network to an interface of a device, which may be a mobile device.

[76] In one aspect, the social media computer may be configured to transmit an electronic communication to the interface of the device, the electronic communication selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message. In an aspect, a system may be configured to receive content updates, replacement content, and/or additional content, wherein the content is selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message.

[77] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may comprise at least a first interface and second interface, and a social media computer configured to be operatively

connected to the first interface and the second interface. The social media computer may be configured to receive from the first interface instructions for a beverage purchase order, a beverage gift, a beverage redemption, or a beverage promotion. The social media computer may be configured to generate a code based on the received instructions. The social media computer may be configured to transmit the code through the communications network to a device. The social media computer may be configured to receive the code inputted at the second interface and process the code.

[78] In one aspect, the second interface may be configured to display an electronic communication. The first interface may be configured to receive a text message or a graphic message, record a video message and or record an audio message.

[79] In one aspect, the first interface and the second interface may be selected from the group consisting of a touch screen interface, a keyboard, and a voice recognition interface, and a gesture recognition interface. In an aspect, a system may be configured to support casual touch and/or gesture based gaming.

[80] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may comprise a dispenser, a reader or detector, and a social media computer. The social media computer may be operatively coupled to a communications network, the social media computer configured to receive an order from a device of a customer through the communications network. The social media computer may be configured to generate a code in response to the order. The code may be readable by a detector. The dispenser may be configured to dispense an item upon detection of the code by the detector. In one aspect, the dispenser and the detector may be integrated. In one aspect, the dispenser, the detector, and the social media computer may be integrated.

[81] In one aspect, the detector may be selected from the group consisting of a bar code reader, an ultraviolet ink code reader, and an RFID code reader.

[82] In one aspect, the code may be selected from the group consisting of a bar code, an ultraviolet ink code, and an RFID code.

[83] In one aspect, the item may be a consumable item. In a preferred embodiment, the consumable item may be a food product. In one embodiment, the food product may be a beverage.

[84] In one aspect, the beverage may be dispensed through a dispensing head. Any suitable dispensing head may be used. *See e.g.*, U.S. Patent 6,505,758, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[85] In one aspect, at least one controller or regulator may be configured to dose beverage ingredients to the dispensing head. In one embodiment, the controller may be configured to dose beverage ingredients to the dispensing head in accordance with instructions transmitted by the social media computer.

[86] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided that comprises at least one social media computer configured to be operatively coupled to a communications network. The social media computer may be configured to identify a customer preference from a mobile device of the customer through the communications network. The social media computer may be configured to automatically generate and transmit to the communications network a message addressed to the mobile device of the customer. The message may be selected from the group consisting of an offer, a promotion, and a discount associated with the customer preference. The customer preference may be a preference for a consumable item, for example a food product, including but not limited to a beverage.

[87] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided that comprises a social media computer and an interface. The social media computer may be configured (i) to be operatively connected to the interface. The social media computer may be configured to transmit instructions for a message display at the interface. The message display may comprise information relating to a consumable item and selected from the group consisting of a customer order, a customer preference, a redemption of a coupon, a redemption of a promotion, and a gift. The social media computer may be configured to transmit instructions to a controller for the dispensing of a consumable item. The

interface may be selected from the group consisting of a touch screen interface, a keyboard, and a voice recognition interface, and a gesture recognition interface.

[88] In one aspect, the controller may be configured to dispense an appropriate amount of at least two beverage ingredients to a dispensing head in response to the instructions from the social media computer.

[89] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided that recognizes an individual and makes determinations regarding what item or items to offer the individual.

[90] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising at least one social media computer or server that may be configured to be operatively coupled to a communications network. The social media computer may be configured to identify a customer beverage preference from a mobile device of the customer through the communications network. The social media computer may be configured to generate and transmit through the communications network a communication to the mobile device of the customer. The communication may be selected from the group consisting of an offer, a promotion, and a discount associated with a beverage.

[91] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising a social media computer or service, a touch screen interface, and a sanitizer. The social media computer may be configured to be operatively connected to the touch screen interface and receive from the touch screen interface a beverage order. The social media computer may be configured to generate and transmit instructions to the sanitizer for the sanitizing of the touch screen after the touch screen is touched by a user. The sanitizer may be any suitable sanitizer, including but not limited to a sanitizer that may provide a sanitizing puff of sanitizing agent or composition (e.g., a puff of steam), and/or sanitizing wiping motion display, and/or a sanitizing transmission of ultraviolet light to the touch screen.

[92] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be provided comprising an interface, the interface operatively connected to a social media computer or server. The interface may be configured to recognize a gesture of a user relating to a beverage order of a customer. The social media computer may be configured to receive a transmission

from the interface relating to the beverage order. The social media computer may be operatively coupled to a controller. The social media computer may be configured to generate instructions in response to the customer order and transmit the instructions to the controller. The controller may be configured to receive instructions from the social media computer and to provide an appropriate amount of beverage ingredients to a dispensing head in response to the instructions.

[93] In one aspect, the processing of dispensing system may be configured to permit the preparation of beverages with variable carbonation according to a customer order.

[94] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide beverages with customized ingredients, including juices, flavorings, sweetness, tartness, carbonation, etc., from a single dispensing head. Thus, a dispensing system may be configured, for example, to add a sweetener or reduce or eliminate the amount of sweetener from a typical beverage formulation, e.g., add an extra sugar to a sugared tea, or reduce or eliminate sugar from a sugared tea.

[95] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide beverages based on a gesture made at the dispensers. Thus, the dispensing system may be configured to have a gesture interface with a gesture interface reader or detector. A user may be able to gesture how much lemon or sugar to add to a beverage, and the gesture interface may provide a screen display that corresponds to the user's gesture movement. The interface may also display an icon, such as a teaspoon, to depict the amount of sugar or other ingredient to be included with, or reduced or eliminated from a beverage in accordance with the user's gesture(s) or other signals to the interface.

[96] A visual effect may be depicted by an interface to indicate for the user the product being selected.

[97] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide visual and/or audio feedback in response to a customer order.

[98] In one aspect, a dispenser of the system may be configured to provide for the automatic sanitizing of a screen interface for beverage ordering.

[99] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide a wide variety of beverages, including custom-ordered beverages, from a single dispensing head, e.g., a cola flavored with cherry, vanilla, lemon, or lime, etc., or a tea flavored with lemon, orange, peach, raspberry, etc., or a tea having one or more teaspoons of sweetener (sugar, or some other nutritive sweetener or non-nutritive sweetener).

[100] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to recognize that a customer is diabetic, and thus will offer the diabetic customer only beverages which are appropriate for the customer's diabetic condition.

[101] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to automatically change its offerings based on time of day and/or event at a venue.

[102] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to automatically provide a beverage promotion or discount.

[103] The processing or dispensing system may be configured to recognize the value paid for a beverage. The system may be configured to issue a cup to a user with a code corresponding to the size and the type of beverage ordered.

[104] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to receive a beverage order from a mobile device of a customer to reduce or eliminate wait time by the customer to receive an ordered beverage.

[105] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide variable pricing based on drink brands and/or cup size.

[106] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may provide a hot spot for Wi-Fi or other wireless communication technology. The processing or dispensing system may be configured to provide a login page.

[107] In one aspect, the system may provide an interactive experience through telemetry. Advantages of the system may include, but are not limited to the following.

[108] A user may gift another person a beverage using the system.

[109] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to allow users to vote on their favorite items, including but not limited to their favorite beverages.

[110] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to allow an operator of the system to update digital content easily online. Thus, an operator may change messaging and media content as desired.

[111] Operators of the system may easily, and remotely, monitor inventory levels, helping them to more efficiently plan for their business needs. In an aspect, a system may be configured to enable an operator to check an inventory level, either remotely or on location, without having to open a machine to visually inspect the inventory level. In an aspect, a system or may be configured to provide an inventory alert, e.g., provide an electronic message or other indication, such as an audible or visual alarm when an inventory level relating to product or item reaches a predetermined lower amount or limit.

[112] Using advanced telemetry, the system may enable any user to gift another person, e.g., a friend, family member, colleague, etc., by selecting a beverage and entering the recipient's name, mobile number and a personalized message, such as a text message. There may also be an option to further personalize the gift with an audio message and/or a video message recorded right at the machine and/or a photograph taken right at the machine. The gift may be delivered with a system code and instructions to redeem it at the system or linked system. When the recipient redeems their gift, they may be given the option of either thanking the original sender with a gift of their own or paying it forward and gifting a beverage to another person, e.g., another friend, family member, colleague, etc., along with a message, such as a text, audio, graphic and/or video message.

[113] The system may also enable a user to buy a drink for a complete stranger through any suitable social vending system in accordance with this disclosure. For example, a consumer may send a symbol of encouragement to a city that's experienced some challenging weather, or a congratulatory beverage to a university that just won a championship. The system may be configured to extend a user's digital and social programs beyond users' own devices all the way to the point of purchase.

[114] In one aspect, the use of telemetry with the dispensing or social vending system described above, may deliver operational benefits, allowing operators to closely manage inventory levels and delivery scheduling remotely, and easily update digital content online, enabling them to change messaging and media content as needed.

[115] In one aspect, the processing or dispensing system may comprise and/or communicate with a social media system or application. For example, when a mobile device of a consumer is within a predetermined distance from a sensor linked to the modular dispensing system, a message may be sent to the consumer's mobile device that queries the consumer whether the consumer would like to purchase a beverage. Alternatively, or at the same time, a message may appear at a counter location that queries the consumer whether the consumer would like to purchase a beverage. The social media system or application may download to the dispensing system the preference or preferences of a consumer based on the consumer's past purchases and/or identified preferences. Thus, the processing or dispensing system and/or the social media system or application may query a particular consumer when a mobile device of a consumer is within a predetermined distance from a sensor of the modular dispensing system.

[116] The processing or dispensing system may also receive a beverage order from a consumer via a social media system or application, including but not limited to the social media system or application of a seller of beverages, including but not limited to restaurants, theaters, other entertainment venues, and manufacturers and/or distributors of beverages. A consumer may order a beverage prior to arriving at counter so that the drink may be prepared and placed in a cup by the time or close to the time the consumer arrives at the counter. Alternatively, a cup bearing a bar code, an ultraviolet ink code, or a an RFID

code or identifier may be prepared and made available to the consumer for filling by the time or close to the time the consumer arrives at the counter. For example, see U.S. Serial No. 12/704,217, filed February 11, 2010, published on August 12, 2010 as U.S Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0200110, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. This system may save time for both consumers and beverage sellers by cutting down on wait time, ordering time, and beverage preparation time.

[117] Thus, the system may recognize an individual and make certain decisions regarding what beverage(s) or type of beverage(s) to offer the individual. The system may change what is offered to different individuals.

[118] In addition, the system may handle gifts or promotions given from one entity to another. By way of example, but not limitation, the system may recognize an individual, determine whether that individual has received a gift or is eligible for a promotion, and send a query to the individual as to whether the individual will accept the gift or promotion, such as a free beverage or a beverage at a reduced price. In an aspect, a system may be configured to accept a gift or promotional code for dispensing of free product or product at a reduced price.

[119] In an aspect, a dispensing system may be configured to accept a promotional code for dispensing of an item, including but not limited to a code for dispensing of a free item or code for dispensing of an item at a reduced price. In an aspect, a system may be configured to integrate communications and/or instructions between and/or among internal groups and/or individuals of an organization and/or groups and/or individuals external to the organization, such as internal and external marketing groups and/or individuals.

[120] In an aspect, a system may be configured to display advertising, including advertising for internal partnerships, e.g., advertising for "combo deal" of a snack product and a beverage product, wherein both the snack and the beverage are made by the same company. In an aspect, a system may be configured to display advertising, including advertising for external partnerships, e.g., advertising for "combo deal" of a snack

product and a beverage product, wherein the snack and the beverage are not made by the same company. In an aspect, a system may be configured to integrate cross-system communications for cross-promotion opportunities. For example, the system may be configured to cross-promote, at a kiosk or other interface, a free flowing food product, e.g., a beverage, with video rental.

[121] In an aspect, a system may comprise a system, wherein the system is configured to connect and/or communicate with another device, such as a companion device, including but not limited to a smartphone or tablet. The system may comprise a system that may be configured to enable a companion device, e.g., a smartphone or tablet, to communicate with the system, such as via a text entry. In an aspect, a system may be configured display local marketing messaging.

[122] In an aspect, a system may be configured to provide messaging customizable directly by an operator or user of the system. In an aspect, a system may be configured to validate operator- or user-programmed messaging to ensure brand alignment and proper operation.

[123] In an aspect, a system may be configured to provide real-time market intelligence and/or research on or relating to product preferences, advertising views, and purchases.

[124] In an aspect, a system may be configured to identify and differentiate customers for targeted marketing. For example, a system may be configured to identify and differentiate customers by gender, age, sport team allegiance, location, etc., and/or past or current purchases by and/or activities of each customer. By way of further example, a system may be configured to identify a particular customer, such as when a particular customer communicates with the system via the customer's smartphone or tablet, and then send a targeted and/or personalized offer to the customer based on the customer's past or current purchases and/or activities. Such identifying may be performed upon approval of the customer.

[125] In an aspect, a system may be configured to track how many users have viewed or communicated with each machine, the duration of each view, which screen(s) or product

offerings each user viewed, whether or not each user made a purchase, which item(s), if any, was purchased by each user, and/or the length of time of each user transaction. Tracking that may involve certain identification information of a particular user may be performed upon approval of the particular user.

[126] In an aspect, a system may be configured to generate a sales report by machine.

[127] In an aspect, a system may be configured to communicate a machine defect, malfunction, or maintenance need to a central location.

[128] The system may allow for a user to pull into a drive up location and through the user's mobile device (e.g., a personal digital assistant, cell phone, or smart phone), via telephone or Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or other suitable communication system, know where the user is located and shows the user a menu, and may also provide the user with a special drive up line to pick up an order.

[129] The system may allow for geolocation for advertising due to restricted street sign usage.

[130] The system may allow for custom made beverages, including but not limited to variable sweetness, juice, flavoring(s), and/or carbonation. For example, the system may query a user as to whether the user would like to order a beverage with a user specified level sweetness, juice, flavoring(s), and/or carbonation. The user may order a beverage having a user specified level of sweetness, juice, flavoring(s), and/or carbonation, for example, from communication devices 2A or 2B, and that user specified level of sweetness, juice, flavoring(s), and/or carbonation may be sent through communications network 104 to social media computer 102. Social media computer 102 may send instructions to controller 112 for an appropriate dosing so that a beverage is dispensed from a dispenser operatively connected to controller 112, such as dispensers 45, 56, and 142, in accordance with the user's specified sweetness, juice, flavoring(s), and/or carbonation.

[131] Controller 112 may control a dispensing system, including but not limited to a modular dispensing system disclosed in U.S Serial No. 13/116,247 (filed May 26, 2011) and/or a multi-tower modular dispensing system disclosed in U.S Serial No. 13/ 116,266 (filed

May 26, 2011), the disclosures of each of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties. As noted in these applications, those of skill in the art will recognize that control of delivery may be achieved through use of an intelligent device, such a computer or purpose embedded electronics.

[132] In an embodiment, a user or customer may login at a website, e.g., via manual login, auto login, near field communication (NFC) login or recognition login). The login may be for an account of the user or customer. In an aspect, a system may be provided, the system configured to accept a payment or redemption from a payment or redemption system, such as a smart or virtual wallet for in-store and/or online shopping. The system may be configured to communicate with a smart or virtual wallet, in connection with an item transaction. The system may be configured to accept payment or redemption by a credit card, a debit card, a top-up card, and/or a loyalty and/or reward card and/or an account of a user, including such cards or accounts of or in a smart or virtual wallet. The system may be configured to integrate with a rewards system. For example, the system may be configured to credit a loyalty and/or reward card or account of a user. The system may be configured to receive suggestions from a user regarding products to stock or provide at a location or dispensing machine. The system may be configured to receive such suggestions from multiple users and weigh or assign a weighting to the suggestions. Such weighing or weighting may be based, at least in part, according to past purchases of product, and/or trends of past purchases of product.

[133] The user or customer can order a beverage for themselves or another, including but not limited to a custom beverage according to inputs of the user or customer, and purchase the beverage. The user or customer may "build" or "construct" a beverage using a user interface device or machine 2A and/or through a website connected with a network, including but not limited to network 104, network 140, or network 104A. By way of example, but not limitation, a user or customer may build or construct a beverage using a smartphone and/or at an interface at a kiosk or table, and instructions are sent to controller 112, which may control a dispensing system, including but not limited to a modular dispensing system disclosed in U.S Serial No. 13/116,247 (filed May 26, 2011) and/or a multi-tower modular dispensing system disclosed in U.S Serial No. 13/ 116,266

(filed May 26, 2011) so that the ordered beverage is delivered to or made available at a dispenser, e.g., dispensers 42, 45, 56 and 142. A user or customer may go to the dispenser, such as at a banner area, and activate or pull down on an activation device to dispense the ordered beverage into a cup. In an embodiment, a code may be placed on a cup, and the dispenser may dispense an ordered beverage into a cup upon the detection of the code. The code may correspond to a particular user or customer, and/or correspond to a particular ordered beverage.

[134] In one aspect, a user or customer may set or select a color for drink. Thus, for example, controller 112 may control the color of a beverage in accordance with a user or customer color order. The final drink color may thus be modified to be more appealing to the user or customer, such as setting the color for certain events, teams or occasions.

[135] In one aspect, an individual may have a "preferred" beverage(s) posted on a website, such as a social networking website, and that individual and/or others may select that preferred beverage(s) for delivery of the beverage at a selected dispenser location. Thus, for example, an individual who wants a preferred beverage of a celebrity may order and purchase that beverage through a website and direct that the beverage be delivered to selected dispenser, e.g., a selected dispenser at a selected restaurant, theatre or other venue.

[136] In one aspect, a one touchscreen may be provided to drive multiple nozzles for the pouring of beverages.

[137] In one aspect, a smartphone application may be provided to find or locate specific equipment, e.g., a smartphone application to find or locate a particular kiosk, computer interface, and/or dispenser(s), such as an application for locating the nearest dispenser or equipment. In an aspect, an interface and/or dispenser may be configured to have a low profile, and thus allow for sight lines in specific channels, e.g., shopping malls.

[138] In one aspect, the dispenser may provide a WiFi hotspot. In an aspect, an apparatus or dispenser may be configured to provide access to an alternate current ("AC") power for recharging of devices, e.g., smartphones and tablets.

[139] In an aspect, a system may be configured to allow a user interface ("UI") to be updated remotely, e.g., a live update for software or hardware.

[140] In one aspect, a dispensing system may be provided comprising an interface, the interface operatively connected to a social media computer or server. The interface may be configured to recognize a gesture of a user, i.e., track three-dimensional (3D) head or body motions, in real-time relating to a beverage order of a customer. The social media computer may be configured to receive a transmission from the interface relating to the beverage order. The social media computer may be operatively coupled to a controller. The social media computer may be configured to generate instructions in response to the customer order and transmit the instructions to the controller. The controller may be configured to receive instructions from the social media computer and to provide an appropriate amount of beverage ingredients to a dispensing head in response to the instructions.

[141] In accordance with aspects of the disclosure, a dispensing system may be provided that has social media capabilities. For example, a dispensing system may be provided that is configured to receive instructions in connection with a gift a beverage from one individual to another individual. The dispensing system may provide an interface that allows a recipient of a gift, coupon, or promotion, to hear and/or see an audio, text, graphic, and/or video message, such as a message of the party who sent the gift, coupon, or promotion to the recipient.

[142] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to assist users in making healthy lifestyle choices. For example, the processing or dispensing system may be configured to recognize that a customer is diabetic, and thus not offer the diabetic customer a product that is not appropriate for the customer's diabetic condition.

[143] In an aspect, a system may be configured to communicate with and/or include a health-related computer application and/or equipment, e.g., automatic calorie tracking integration.

[144] In an aspect, a system may be configured to comprise a user interface (UI), wherein the user interface may provide a separate option for healthy food options or choices, including beverage options or choices. Such healthy food choices may include "better-for-you" (BFY) products, and having a separate healthy option at a user interface may make selection of healthy food products easier for a user. In an aspect, a system may be configured to display nutritional information for products, including products available at a dispenser that may correspond to the user interface.

[145] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to identify or recognize individuals. For example, a system may be configured to recognize when user, consumer, or customer is in close proximity to a machine. For example, a dispensing system may be configured with telemetry capabilities to identify a mobile device of a customer when the mobile device is a predetermined distance from the processing or dispensing system. A processing or dispensing system may be configured to receive from a mobile device of a customer a signal that identifies a customer and/or the beverage preference or beverage order of a customer. Thus, a processing or dispensing system may be configured communicate with a mobile device of a customer to determine which beverage or beverages a particular individual may want to order or has ordered. In an aspect, a system may be configured to receive user or consumer input of a product preference(s), including a product preference(s) that may not be typically available. In a further aspect, the system may be configured to provide information regarding the product preference to a central location, such as a non-transitory memory. In a further aspect, the system may be configured to provide build a free flowing product, e.g., a beverage, in accordance with the product preference to deliver the free flowing product to a dispenser, which may be configured to dispense the free flowing product to a container, e.g., a cup, upon activation of the dispenser by a user or the detection of a code on the cup.

[146] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to communicate with a mobile device of a customer and/or a mobile software application used by a customer. Thus, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to determine whether a particular customer has ordered and/or has paid for a particular beverage

and/or has redeemed a coupon, promotion, etc., that entitles the customer to receive the beverage. In an aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to enable Alternative Reality Gaming (ARG) promotions and/or campaigns. In an aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to enable detection of code(s), check-in(s), and/or other awareness of certain electronic device(s) of a user, e.g., a mobile communication device(s), and enable communication with such an electronic device(s). In an aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to create a partnership, including a campaign, with a philanthropic organization(s) and/or activity(ies). In an aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to accept change and/or direct donations to be applied to a charity or charitable organization.

[147] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to automatically provide a beverage promotion or discount to a customer upon identification of the customer.

[148] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to monitor ordering, filling and refilling activities of a particular customer.

[149] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to receive and process orders from mobile devices of customers, and thus are not configured to reduce or eliminate wait time by customers to receive ordered beverages.

[150] In one aspect, a processing or dispensing system may be configured to automatically change beverage offerings based on time of day and/or event at a venue.

[151] As shown in FIG. 14, in accordance of an aspect of the disclosure, a method 1400 may be provided comprising, in step 1402, receiving instructions at a first device. The instructions may correspond to an item transaction. The item may be a food product. The item transaction may be selected from the group consisting of an item purchase order, an item gift, an item redemption, and an item promotion. The method may comprise, in step 1404, generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction. The method may comprise, in step 1406, generating a

message at the first device. The method may comprise, in step 1408, transmitting the code and the message from the first device to a second device. The message may be selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message.

[152] As shown in FIG. 15, a method 1500 may be provided comprising, in step 1502, receiving at a device a code. The code may correspond to instructions for an item transaction. The item transaction may be selected from the group consisting of an item purchase order, an item gift, an item redemption, and an item promotion. The item may be a food product. The method may comprise, based on the received code, in step 1504, displaying a message, and, in step 1506, delivering the item, or item gift, item redemption, or item promotion.

[153] As shown in FIG. 16, a method 1600 may be provided comprising, in step 1602, receiving a user preference at a social media computer. The method may comprise, in step 1604, automatically generating a message and an associated code based on the user preference. The method may comprise, in step 1606, automatically transmitting the message and the associated code to the user. The message and the associated code may correspond to an item transaction, e.g., an item gift, and item promotion, and an item discount.

[154] FIG. 17 illustrates communication device 2B in accordance with an aspect of the disclosure. As previously disclosed, communication device 2B may be the same as or similar to communication device 2A. As shown in FIG. 17, communication device 2B may provide a screen display 4 that includes an icon 1700. Those of skill in the art will recognize that in accordance with the disclosure, icon 1700 may comprise one or more icons, each of which may provide a user with a touch screen icon that permits the user to choose a feature or features provided by the system as previously discussed. For example, but not by way of limitation, icon 1700 may comprise an icon indicating a "healthy" option or choice that a user may select if desired. Thus, communication device 2B may be configured to comprise a user interface (UI) comprising icon 1700, wherein the user interface may provide a separate option for healthy food options or choices,

including beverage options or choices. Such healthy food choices may include "better-for-you" (BFY) products, and having a separate healthy option at a user interface in the form of icon 1700 may make selection of healthy food products easier for a user. In an aspect, a system may be configured to display nutritional information for products, including products available at a communication device 2B or a dispenser that may correspond to the user interface, such as in the form of icon 1700.

[155] As another example, icon 1700 may comprise an icon that corresponds to a health-related computer application and/or equipment, e.g., automatic calorie tracking integration. Thus, if a user touches such an icon, the system will communicate with or allow the user to communicate with and/or open a health-related computer application and/or equipment, e.g., automatic calorie tracking integration. Thus, the user may send or instruct the communication device 2B to communicate with a health-related computer application and/or equipment, e.g., automatic calorie tracking integration, with respect to a beverage that the user has ordered or selected.

[156] As another example, icon 1700 may comprise an icon that corresponds to a "favorite," e.g., but not limited to a "favorite team" or "favorite celebrity" or "favorite movie." A user who touches a "favorite" icon may then be shown a screen wherein a user may select or type their "favorite," and then be taken to a webpage that may indicate information, news, and/or favorite food products, e.g., beverage(s), of the selected "favorite." An icon may be provided at the webpage wherein the user may select the favorite food product, e.g., a beverage, and thus order the food product.

[157] As another example, icon 1700 may comprise an icon that corresponds to a "Your favorite." A user who touches a "Your favorite" icon may then be shown a screen wherein a user can convey user identification information and/or may select a particular custom free-flowing food item, such as a beverage having a lemon flavoring and an orange flavoring. The user may then order the beverage from the system, gift the item to another person, and/or receive a receipt, e.g., an electronic receipt on their mobile device, or a printed receipt from the system.

[158] Those of skill in the art will recognize that, in accordance with the disclosure, a wide variety of icons 1700 may be provided as desired.

[159] The disclosure herein has been described and illustrated with reference to the embodiments of the figures, but it should be understood that the features of the disclosure are susceptible to modification, alteration, changes or substitution without departing significantly from the spirit of the disclosure. For example, the dimensions, number, size and shape of the various components may be altered to fit specific applications. Accordingly, the specific embodiments illustrated and described herein are for illustrative purposes only and the disclosure is not limited except by the following claims and their equivalents.

We claim:

1. A method comprising:

receiving instructions at a first device, the instructions corresponding to an item transaction, the item being a food product and the item transaction comprising an item gift;

generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction;

generating a message at the first device; and

transmitting the code and the message from the first device to a second device.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving at a third device the generated code, and based on receipt of the generated code displaying the message and delivering the item gift.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the third device is the first device.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first device is selected from the group consisting of a kiosk terminal, a social media computer, a computer terminal, and a mobile device.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the food product comprises a free-flowing food product.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the free-flowing food product comprises a beverage.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the code corresponds to instructions for dispensing of the item from a dispenser.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the code is selected from the group consisting of a number code, an alphanumeric code, and a code detectable by a scanner.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the first device comprises an interface, the interface selected from the group consisting of a touch screen interface, a keyboard interface, a voice recognition interface, and a gesture-recognition interface.

10. A method comprising:

receiving at a device a code, the code corresponding to instructions for an item transaction, the item being a food product and the item transaction being an item gift; and

based on the received code, displaying a message and delivering the item gift.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the device is selected from the group consisting of a kiosk terminal, a social media computer, a computer terminal, and a mobile device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the food product comprises a free-flowing food product.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the free-flowing food product comprises a beverage.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the code corresponds to instructions for dispensing of the item from a dispenser.

15. The method of claim 10, further comprising detecting the code by a scanner.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising dispensing of the item from a dispenser upon detecting of the code by the scanner.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein the received code is a first code, the method further comprising placing a second code on a cup, detecting the second code on the cup when the cup is placed under a nozzle of a dispenser, and dispensing into the cup an item corresponding to the second code.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the first code is the same as the second code.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the second code is selected from the group consisting of a bar code, an ultraviolet ink code, and an RFID code.

20. The method of claim 10, wherein the code is selected from the group consisting of a number code, an alphanumeric code, and a code detectable by a scanner.

21. The method of claim 10, wherein the device comprises an interface, the interface selected from the group consisting of a touch screen interface, a keyboard interface, a voice recognition interface, and a gesture-recognition interface.

22. The method of claim 10, further comprising placing the code on a cup, detecting the code on the cup by a scanner when the cup is placed under a nozzle of a dispenser, and dispensing into the cup an item corresponding to the code.

23. A method comprising:

receiving a user preference at a social media computer;

automatically generating a message and an associated code based on the user preference; and

automatically transmitting the message and the associated code to the user, the message and associated code corresponding to an item promotion.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the message is selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of automatically transmitting comprises transmitting the message when a mobile device of the user is detected within a predetermined distance of a predetermined location.

26. A device comprising:

a transmitter;

a receiver configured to receive instructions corresponding to an item transaction, the item being a food product and the item transaction being an item gift;

a memory; and

a processor, the processor coupled to the memory for executing instructions comprising:

generating a code based on the instructions received at the first device for the item transaction;

generating a message at the device; and

transmitting the code and the message from the device to another device.

27. An apparatus comprising a social media computer, the social media computer comprising a memory, and a processor, the processor coupled to the memory for executing instructions comprising:

receiving a user preference at the social media computer;

automatically generating a message and an associated code based on the user preference; and

automatically transmitting the message and the associated code to the user, the message and associated code corresponding to an item promotion.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the message is selected from the group consisting of a text message, an audio message, a graphic message, and a video message.

29. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the item is a food item.

30. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein food product comprises a free-flowing food product.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the free-flowing food product comprises a beverage.

32. The apparatus of claim 31, further comprising a controller, the controller configured to dispense an appropriate amount of at least two beverage ingredients to a dispenser head in response to the instructions from the social media computer.

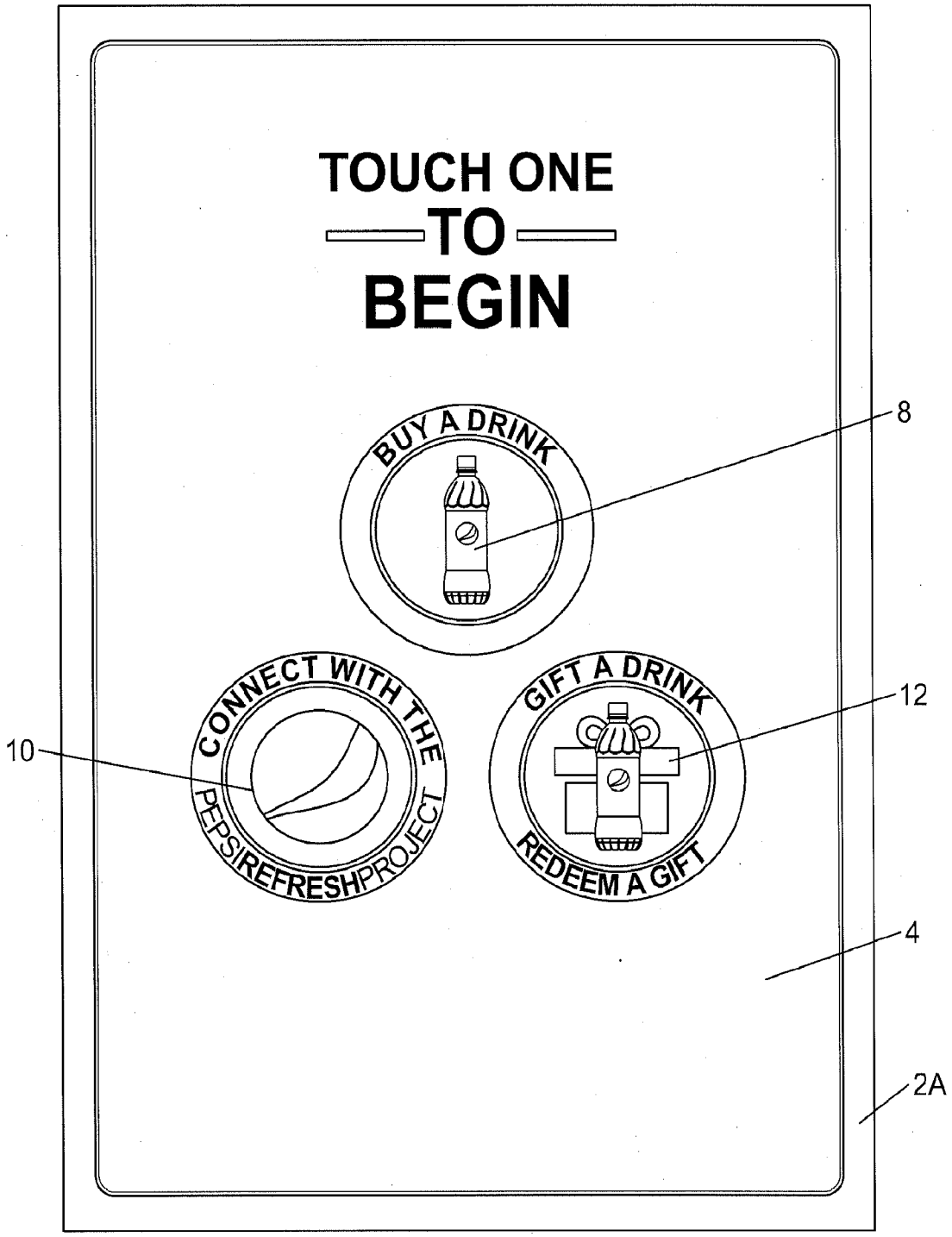
TOUCH ONE
TO
BEGIN
BUY A DRINK
CONNECT WITH THE PEPSIREFRESHPROJECT
GIFT A DRINK
REDEEM A GIFT
8
10
12
4
2A

Figure 1

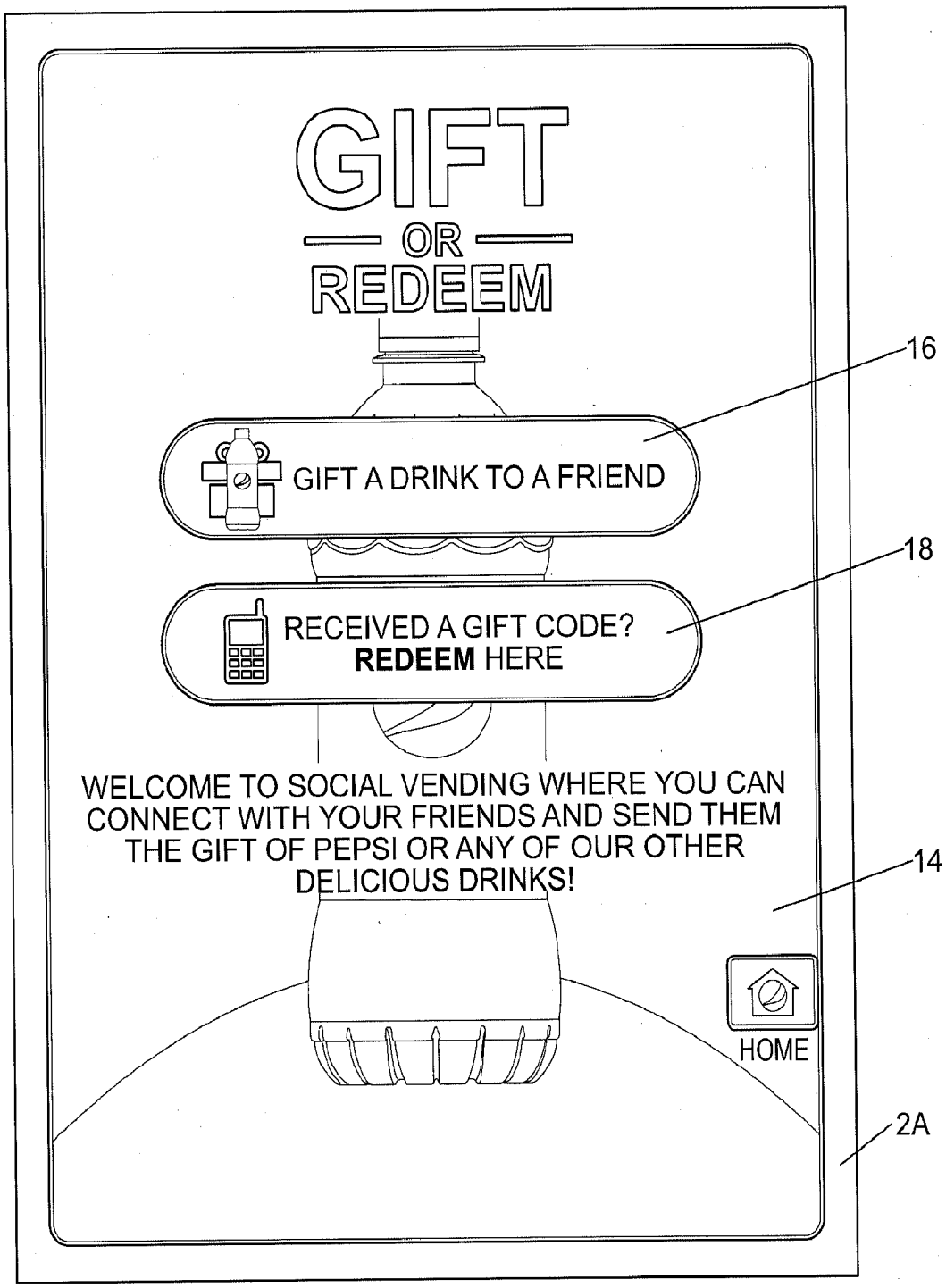
GIFT
OR
REDEEM
GIFT A DRINK TO A FRIEND
RECEIVED A GIFT CODE?
REDEEM HERE
WELCOME TO SOCIAL VENDING WHERE YOU CAN CONNECT WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND SEND THEM THE GIFT OF PEPSI OR ANY OF OUR OTHER DELICIOUS DRINKS!
HOME
16
18
14
2A

Figure 2

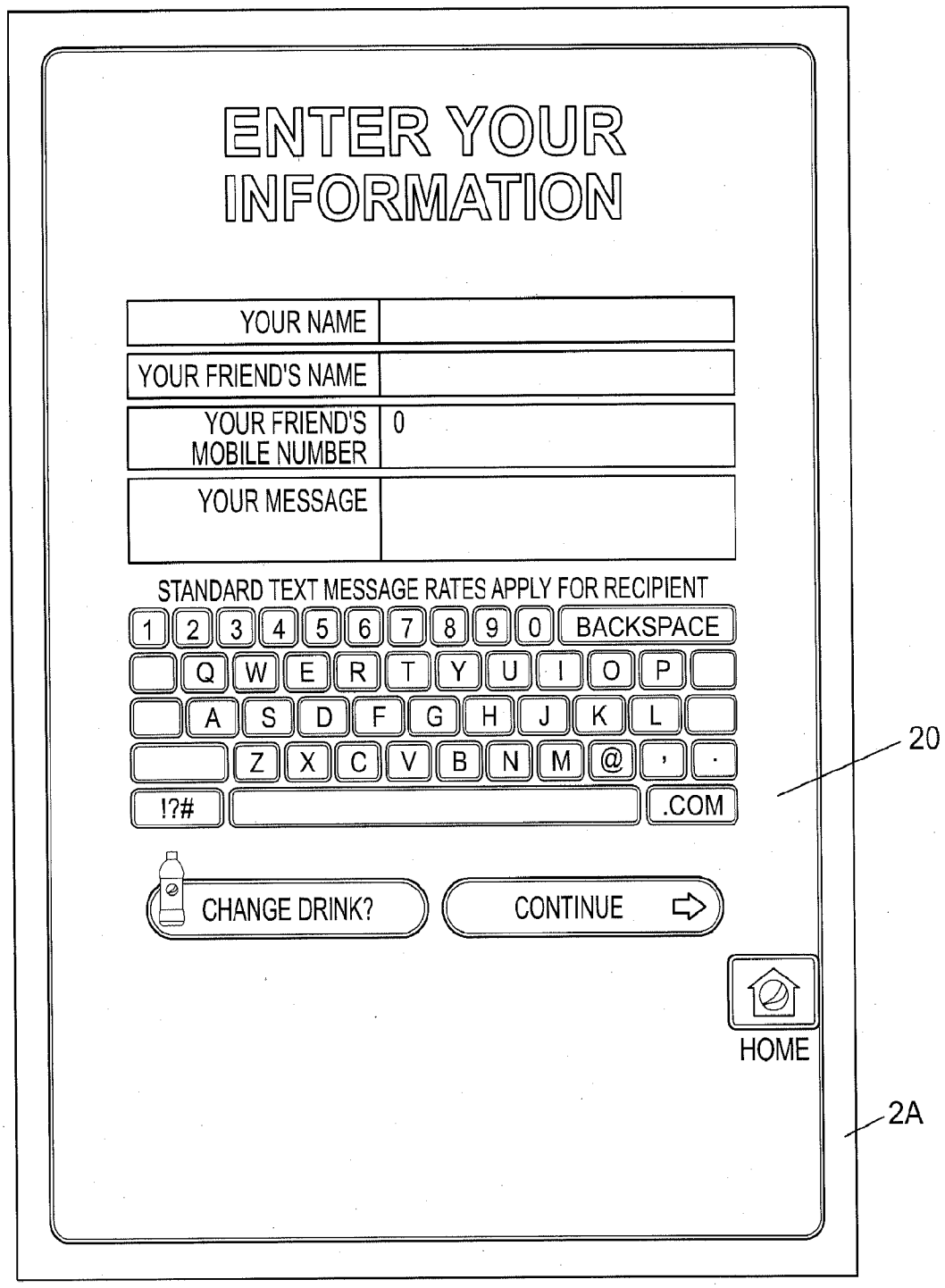
ENTER YOUR INFORMATION
YOUR NAME
YOUR FRIEND'S NAME
YOUR FRIEND'S MOBILE NUMBER
0
YOUR MESSAGE
STANDARD TEXT MESSAGE RATES APPLY FOR RECIPIENT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 BACKSPACE
Q W E R T Y U I O P
A S D F G H J K L
Z X C V B N M @ ' .
!?# .COM
CHANGE DRINK?
CONTINUE
HOME
20
2A

Figure 3

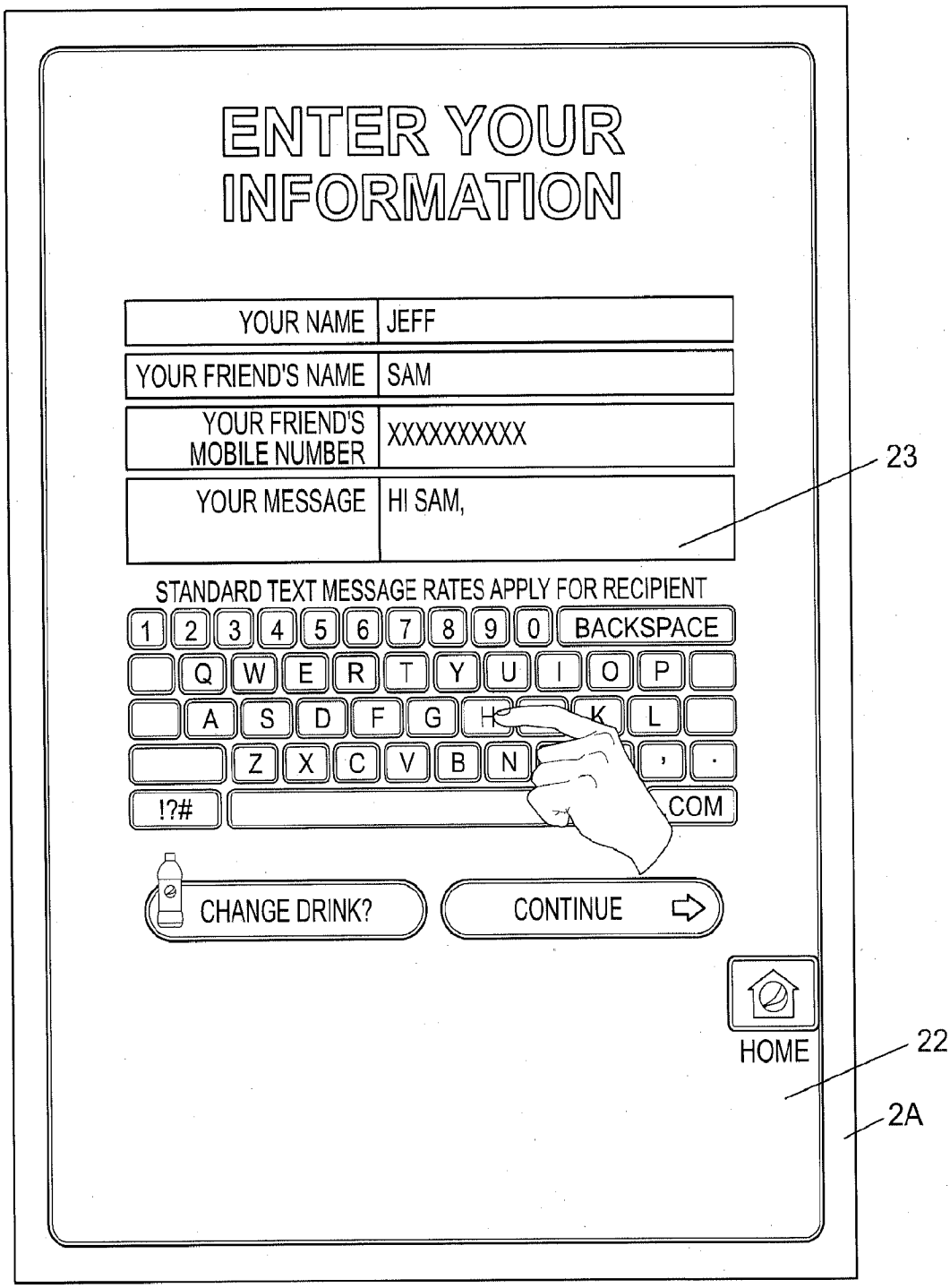
ENTER YOUR INFORMATION
YOUR NAME
JEFF
YOUR FRIEND'S NAME
SAM
YOUR FRIEND'S MOBILE NUMBER
XXXXXXXXXX
YOUR MESSAGE
HI SAM,
23
STANDARD TEXT MESSAGE RATES APPLY FOR RECIPIENT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 BACKSPACE
Q W E R T Y U I O P
A S D F G H K L
Z X C V B N , .
!?# COM
CHANGE DRINK?
CONTINUE
HOME
22
2A

Figure 4

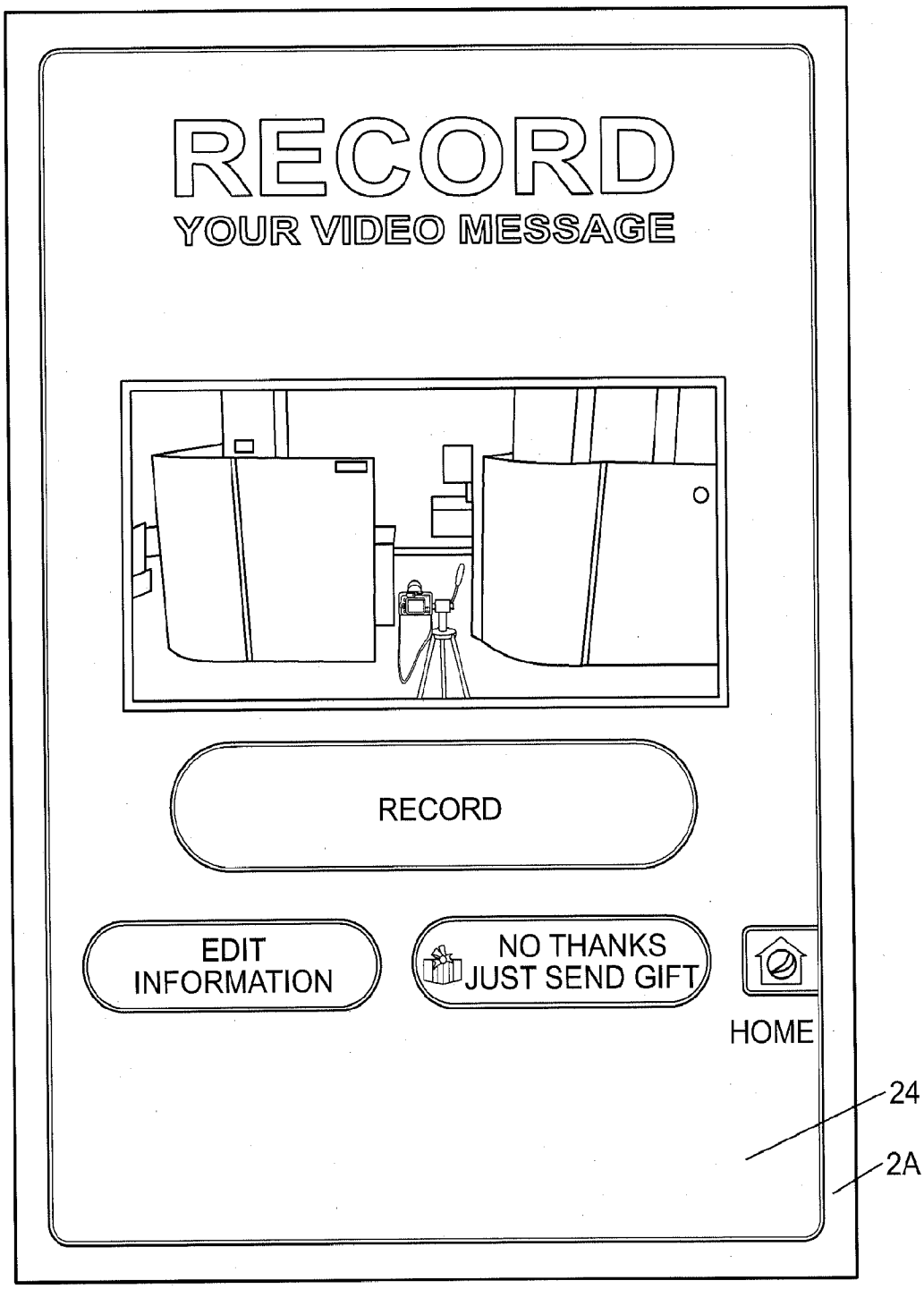
RECORD
YOUR VIDEO MESSAGE
RECORD
EDIT INFORMATION
NO THANKS JUST SEND GIFT
HOME
24
2A

Figure 5

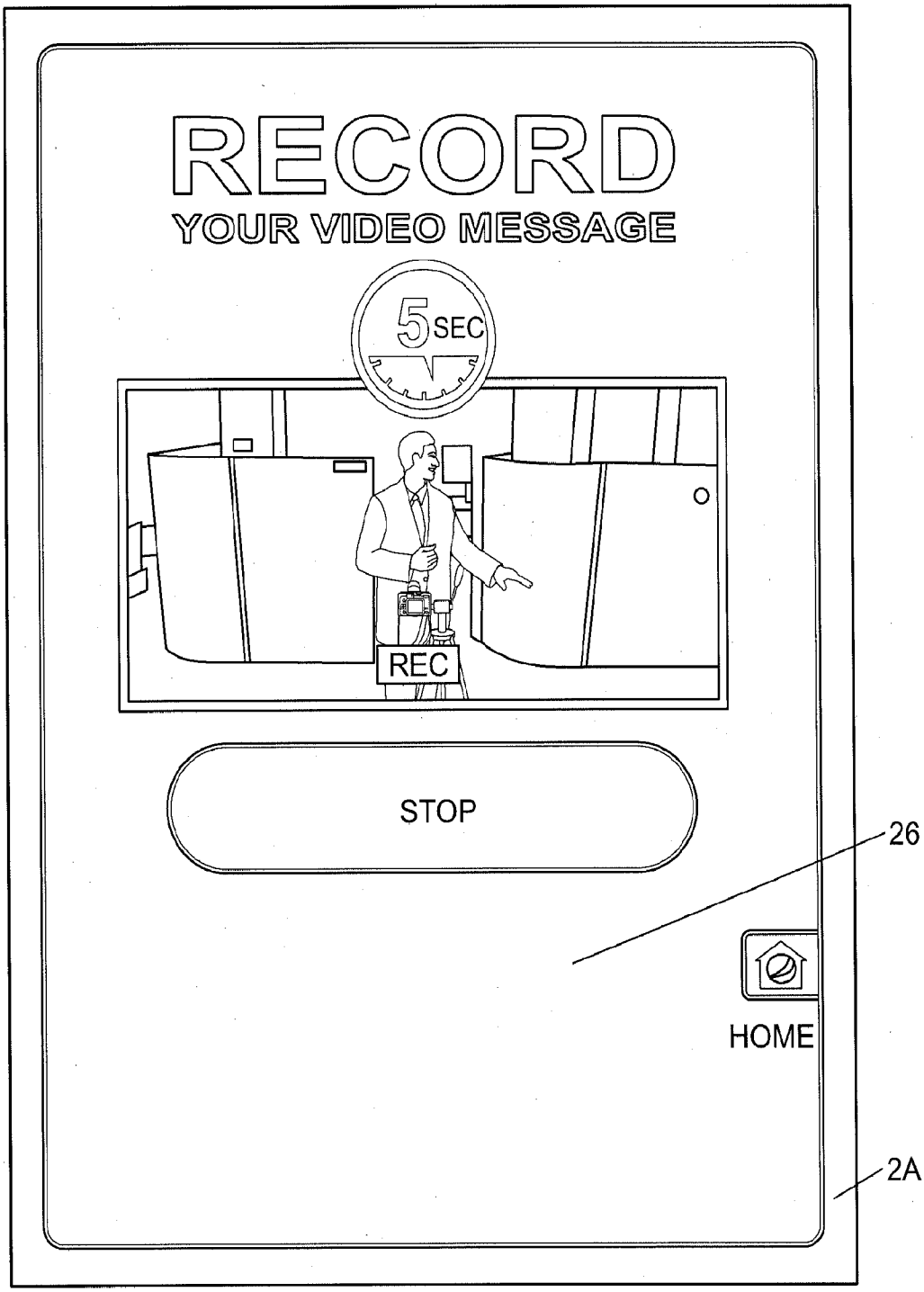

Figure 6

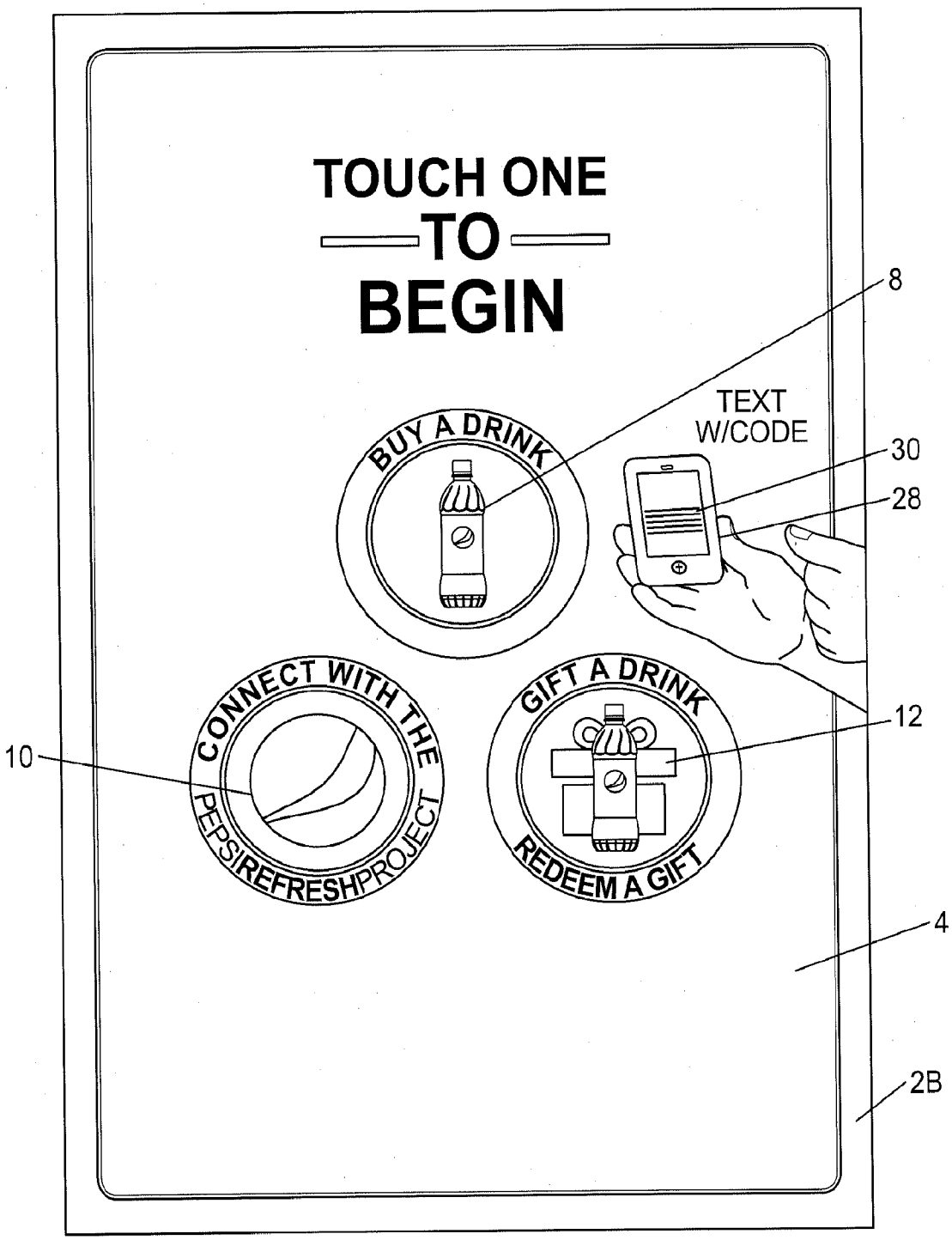
TOUCH ONE
TO
BEGIN
BUY A DRINK
TEXT
W/CODE
CONNECT WITH THE
PEPSIREFRESHPROJECT
GIFT A DRINK
REDEEM A GIFT
8
30
28
12
10
4
2B

Figure 7

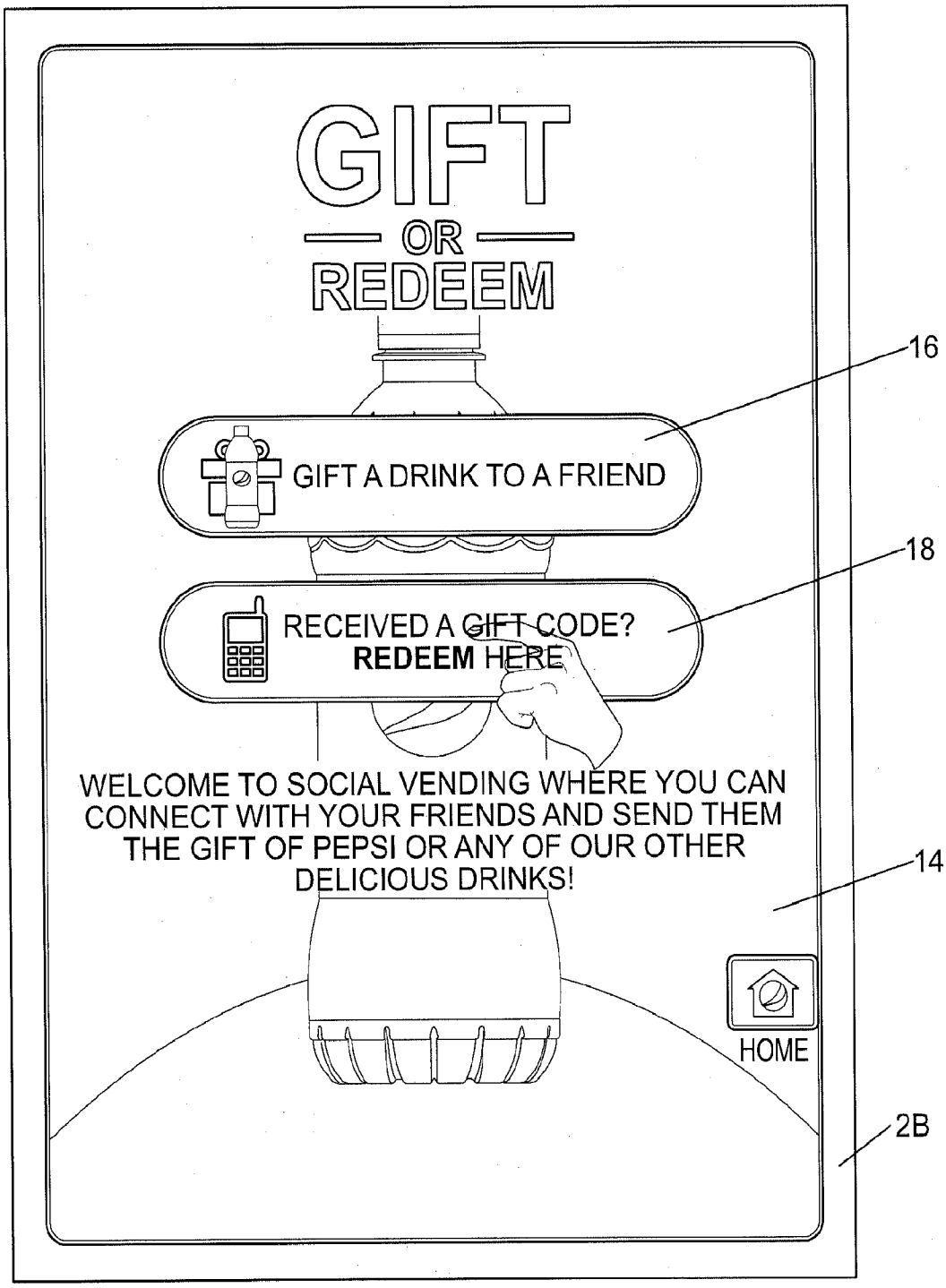
GIFT
OR
REDEEM
GIFT A DRINK TO A FRIEND
RECEIVED A GIFT CODE?
REDEEM HERE
WELCOME TO SOCIAL VENDING WHERE YOU CAN CONNECT WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND SEND THEM THE GIFT OF PEPSI OR ANY OF OUR OTHER DELICIOUS DRINKS!
HOME
16
18
14
2B

Figure 8

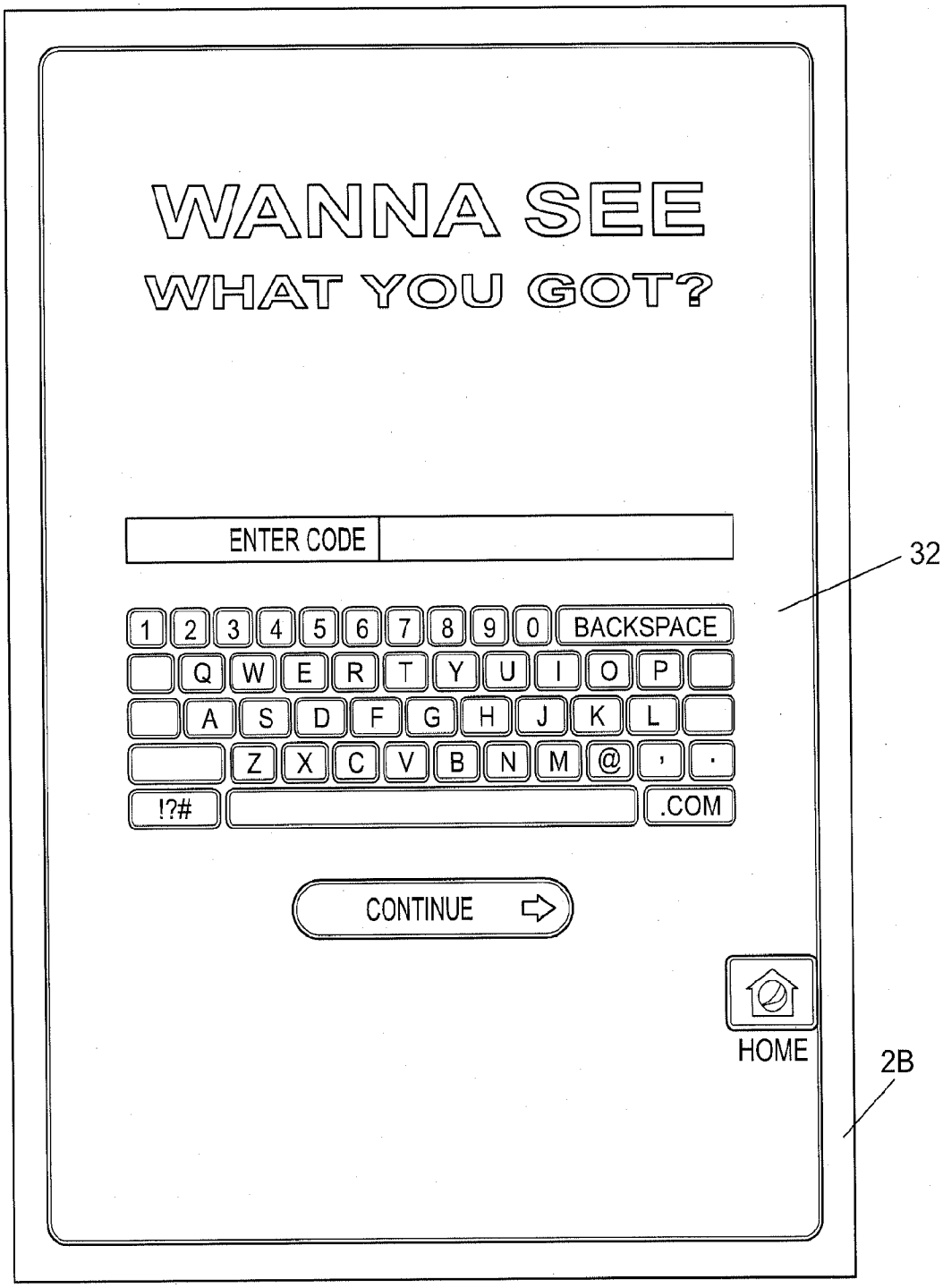
WANNA SEE
WHAT YOU GOT?
ENTER CODE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 BACKSPACE
Q W E R T Y U I O P
A S D F G H J K L
Z X C V B N M @ ' .
!?# .COM
CONTINUE
HOME
32
2B

Figure 9

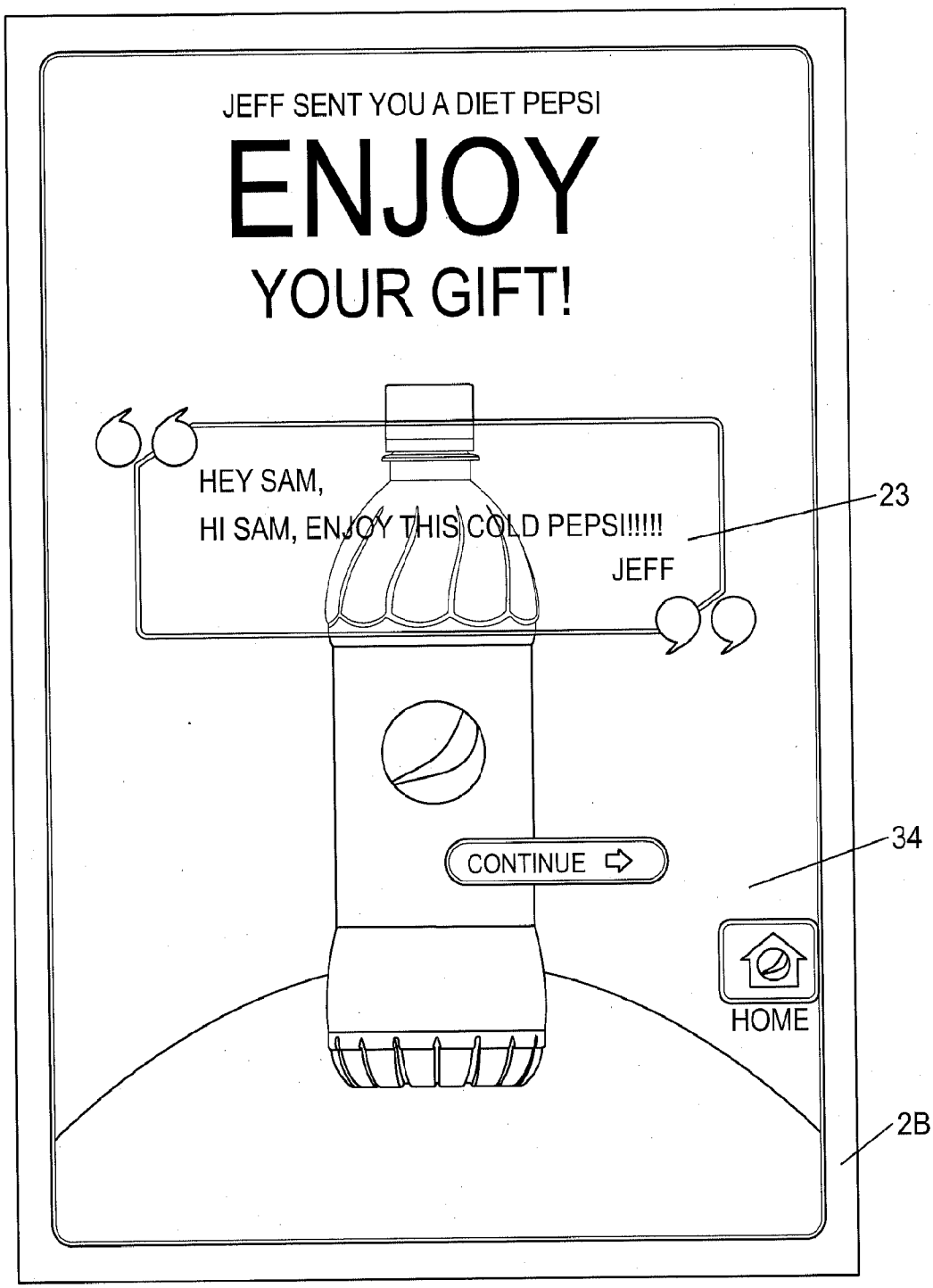
JEFF SENT YOU A DIET PEPSI
ENJOY
YOUR GIFT!
HEY SAM,
HI SAM, ENJOY THIS COLD PEPSI!!!!!
JEFF
23
CONTINUE
34
HOME
2B

Figure 10

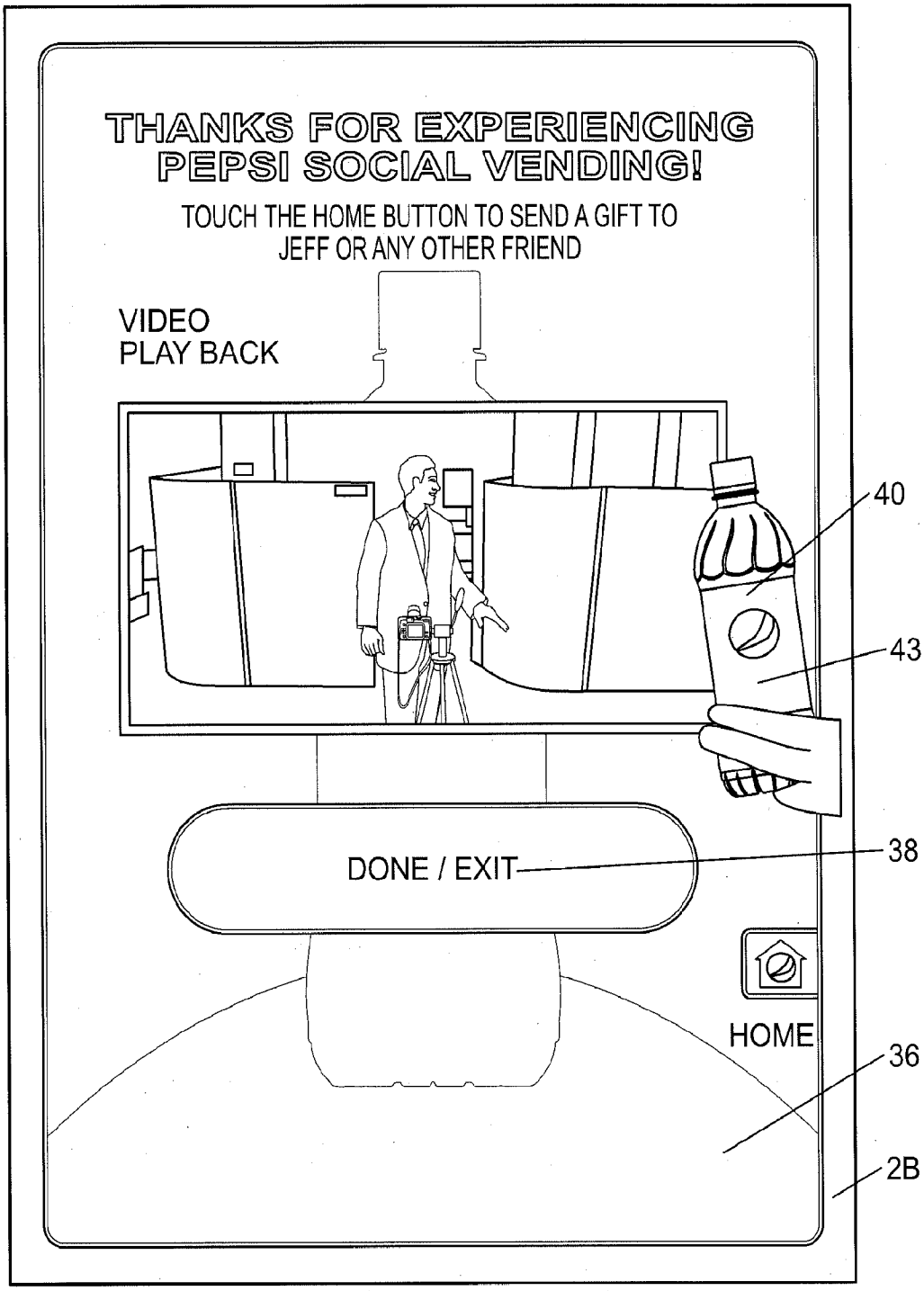
THANKS FOR EXPERIENCING
PEPSI SOCIAL VENDING!
TOUCH THE HOME BUTTON TO SEND A GIFT TO
JEFF OR ANY OTHER FRIEND
VIDEO
PLAY BACK
40
43
DONE / EXIT
38
HOME
36
2B

Figure 11

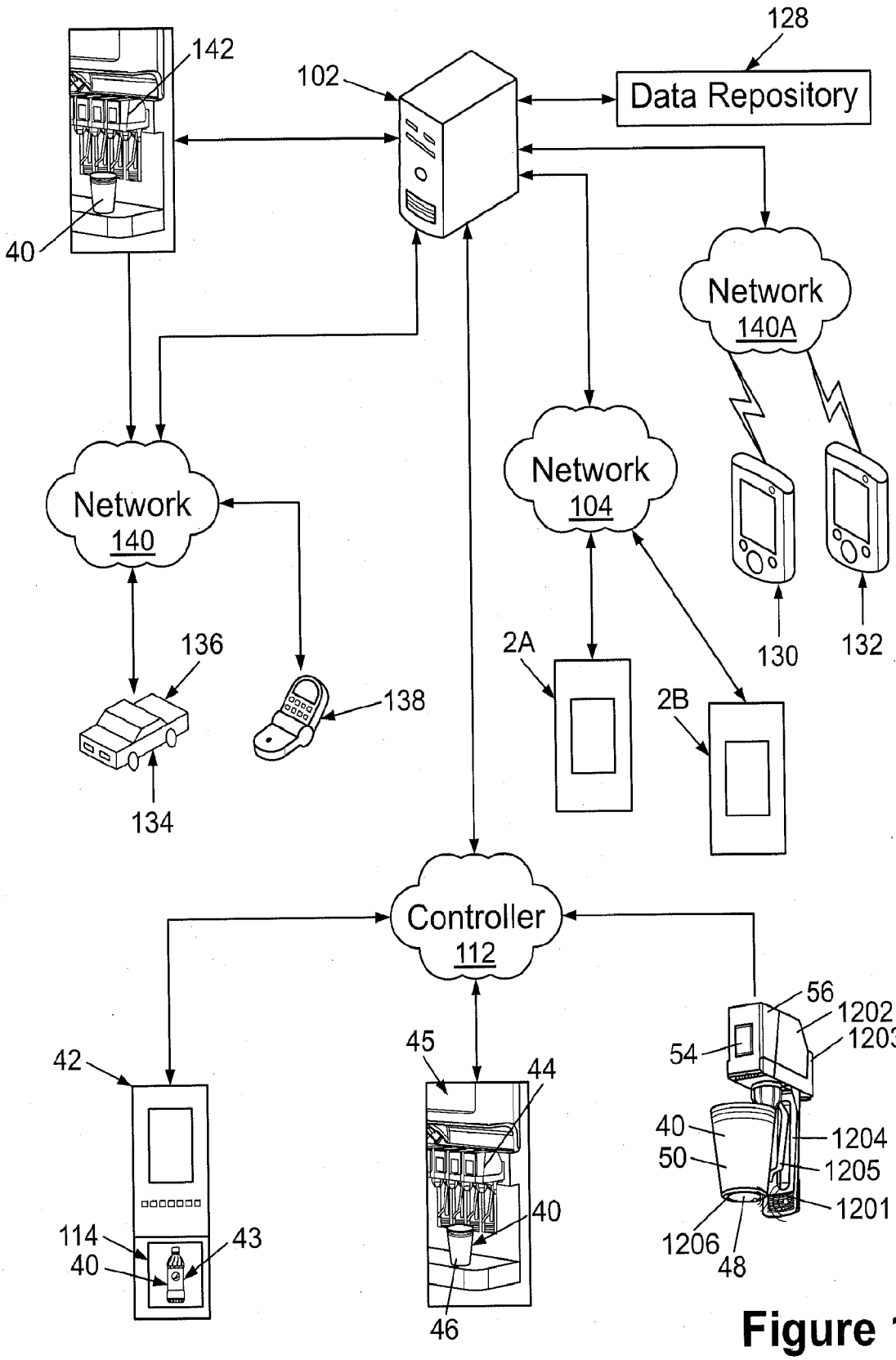
128
Data Repository
142
102
40
Network
140A
Network
104
Network
140
136
138
134
2A
2B
130
132
Controller
112
42
45
44
40
46
56
1202
1203
54
40
1204
50
1205
1201
1206
48
114
40
43

Figure 12

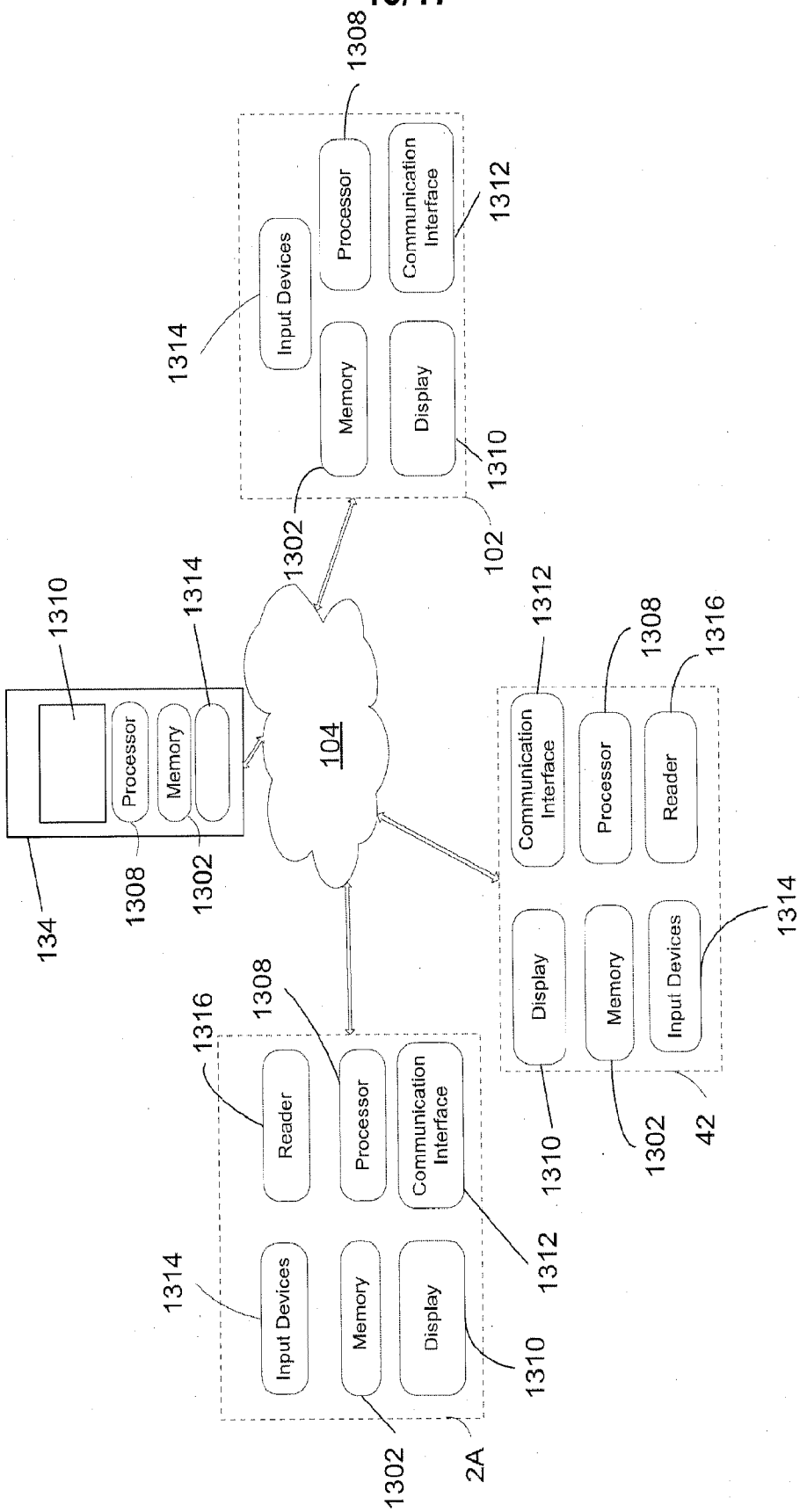
1308
Processor
Communication Interface
1312
Input Devices
1314
Memory
Display
1310
1302
102
1310
1314
Processor
Memory
1308
1302
134
104
1312
Communication Interface
1308
Processor
1316
Reader
Display
Memory
Input Devices
1314
1310
1302
42
1316
Reader
1308
Processor
Communication Interface
1312
Input Devices
1314
Memory
Display
1310
1302
2A

Figure 13

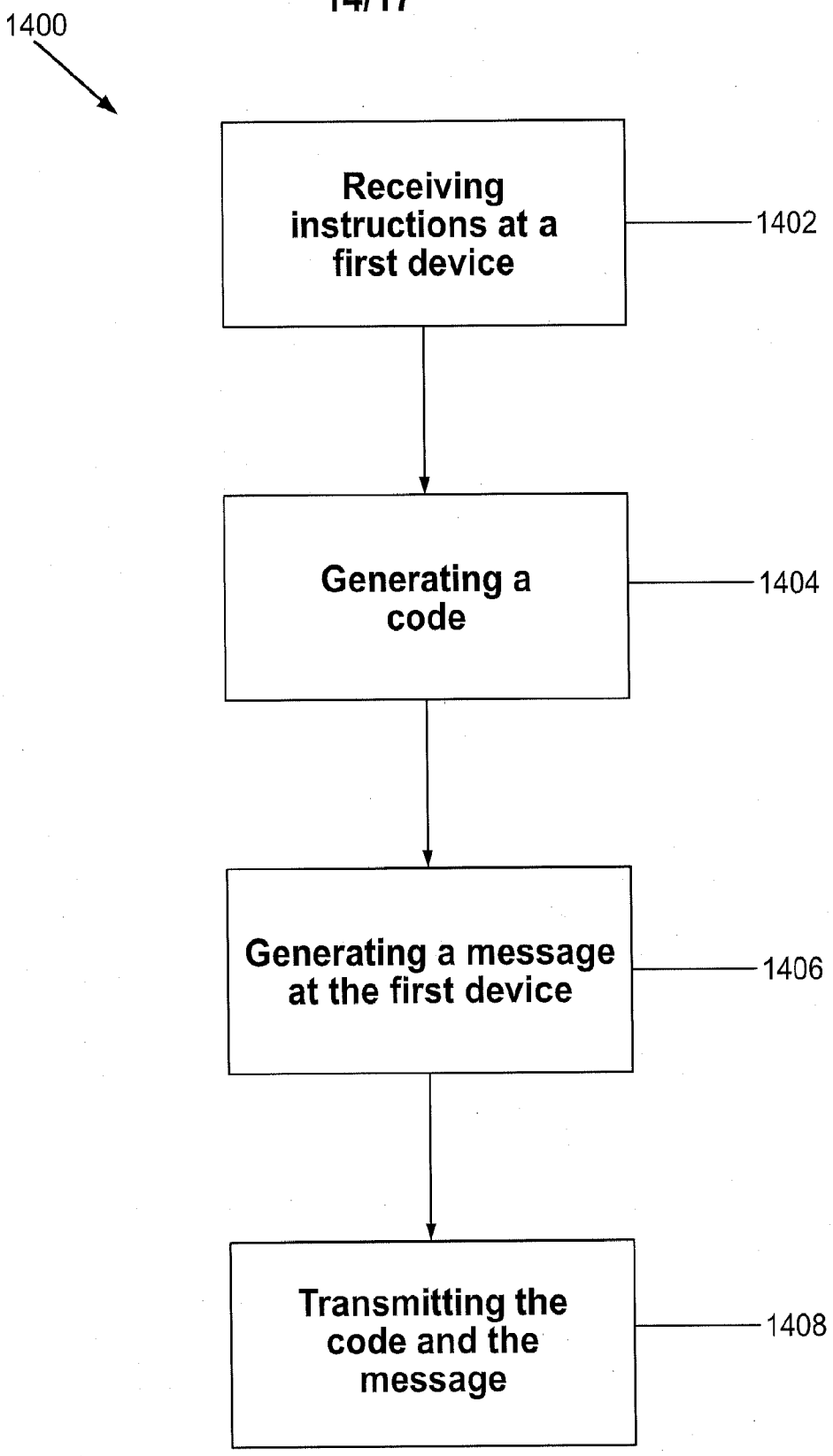
1400
Receiving instructions at a first device
1402
Generating a code
1404
Generating a message at the first device
1406
Transmitting the code and the message
1408

Figure 14

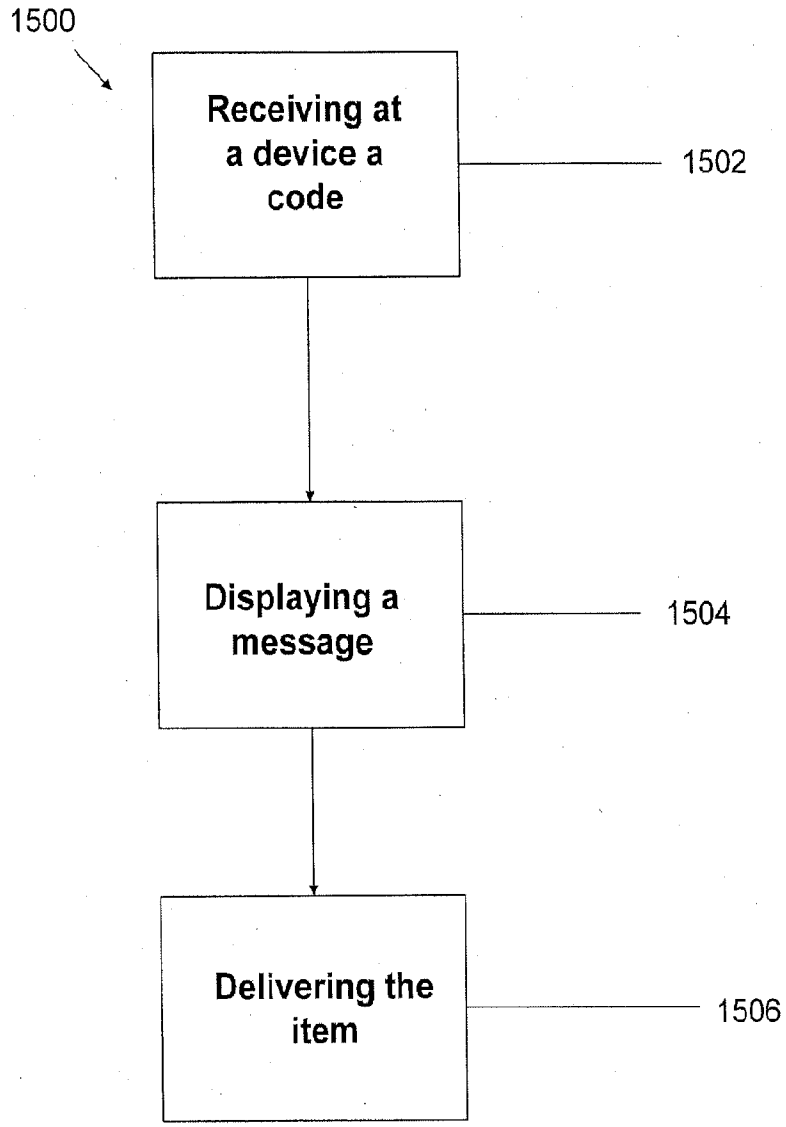
1500
Receiving at a device a code
1502
Displaying a message
1504
Delivering the item
1506

Figure 15

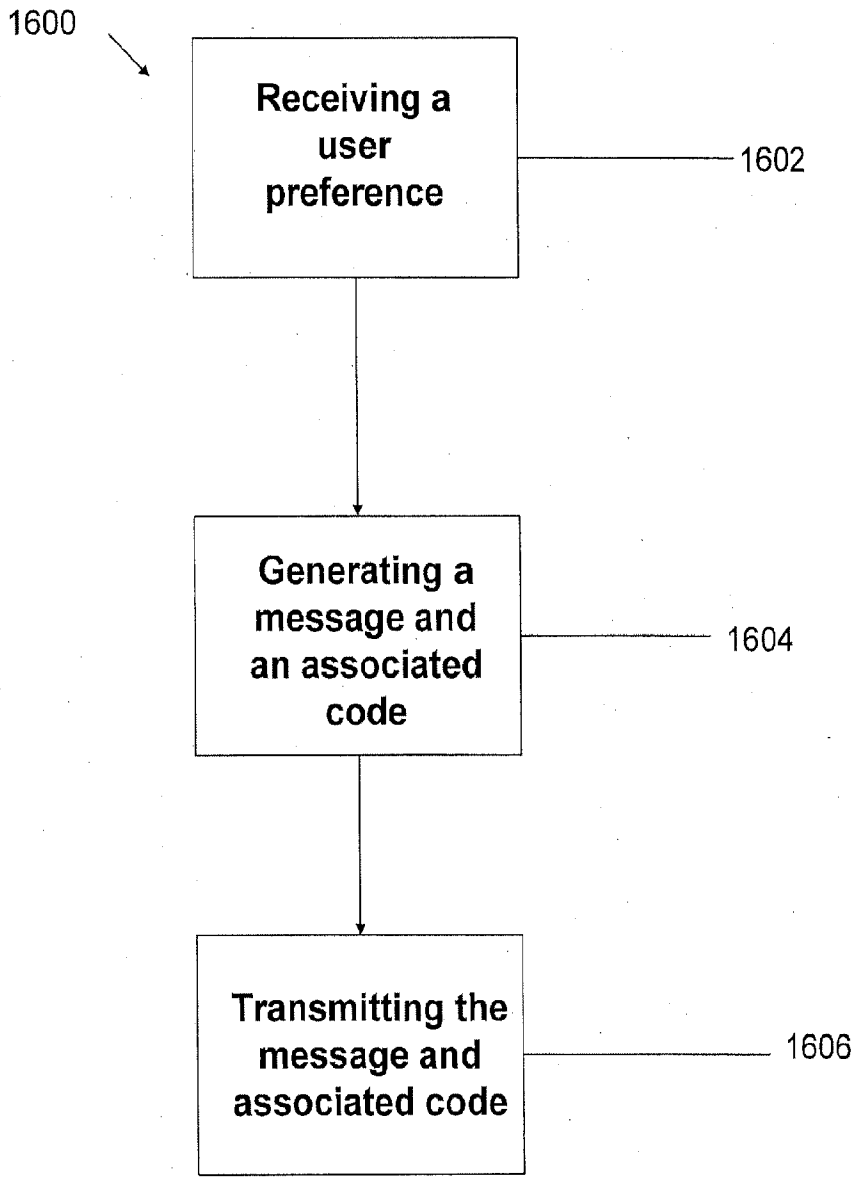
1600
Receiving a user preference
1602
Generating a message and an associated code
1604
Transmitting the message and associated code
1606

Figure 16

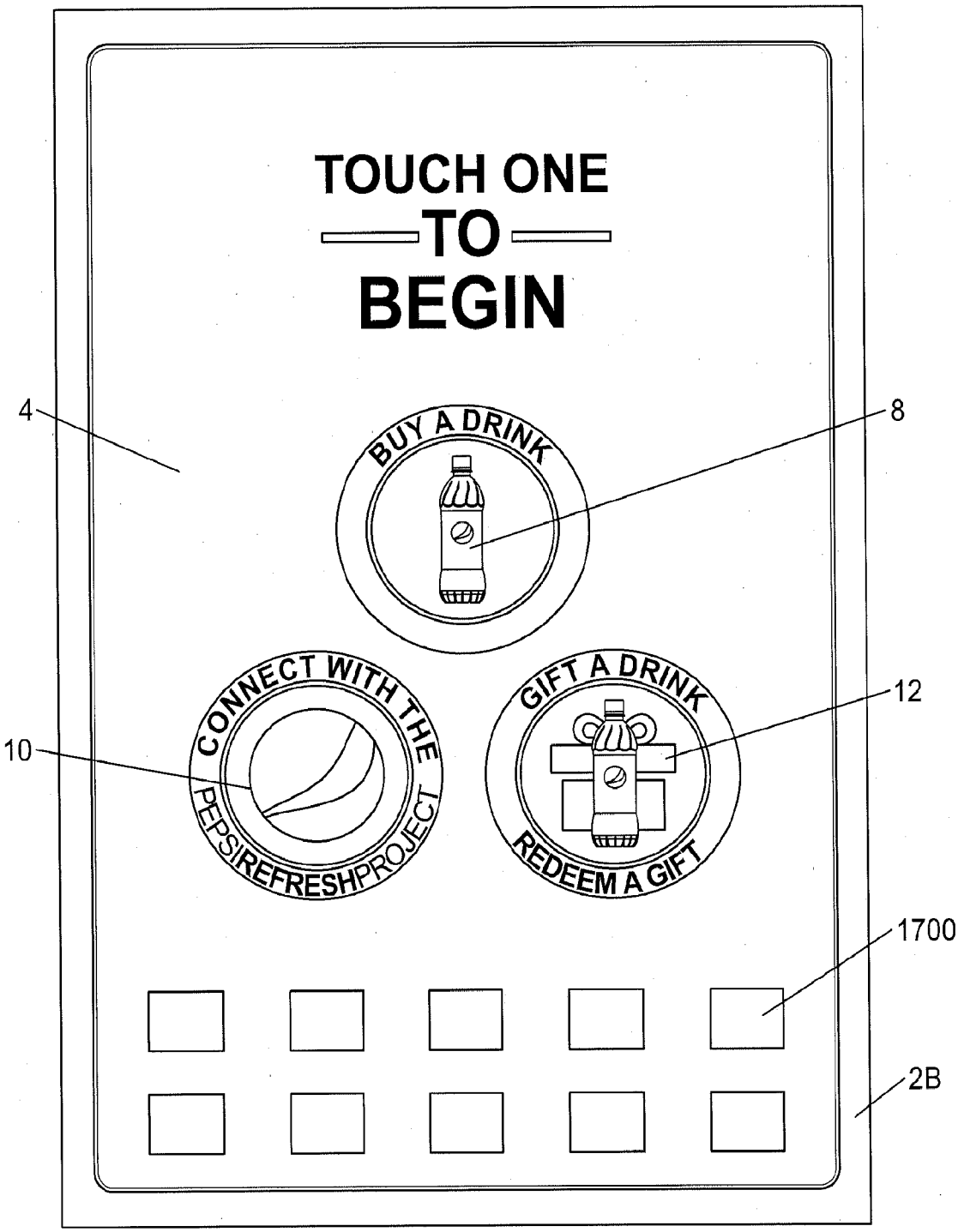
TOUCH ONE
TO
BEGIN
BUY A DRINK
CONNECT WITH THE PEPSIREFRESHPROJECT
GIFT A DRINK
REDEEM A GIFT
4
8
10
12
1700
2B

Figure 17

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2012/034486

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. G06Q20/32 G06Q30/02
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
G06Q

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
L	"STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NOTICE FROM THE EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE DATED 1 OCTOBER 2007 CONCERNING BUSINESS METHODS - EPC / ERKLAERUNG GEMAESS DER MITTEILUNG DES EUROPAEISCHEN PATENTAMTS VOM 1.OKTOBER 2007 UEBER GESCHAEFTSMETHODEN - EPU / DECLARATION CONFORMEMENT AU COMMUNIQUE DE L'OFFICE EUROP", 20071101, 1 November 2007 (2007-11-01), XP007905525, Statement in accordance with the Notice from the European Patent Office dated 1 October 2007 concerning business methods (OJ 11/2007; p592f) The claimed subject matter, with due regard to the description and drawings, relates to processes comprised in the list of subject matter and activities for which no search is required under Rule 39 PCT. The applicant is advised that in	1-32

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. [ ] See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
29 August 2012	05/09/2012

Name and mailing address of the ISA/	Authorized officer
European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Verhoef, Peter

1

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (April 2005)

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
	accordance with the established practice of the EPO, no search need be performed in respect of those aspects of the claimed invention. The only identifiable technical aspects of the claimed invention relate to the use of conventional, general-purpose data processing technology for processing data of an inherently non-technical nature. The information technology employed is considered to have been generally known as it was widely available to everyone at the date of filing/priority of the present application. The notoriety of such prior art cannot reasonably be contested. No documentary evidence is therefore considered required. -----	

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