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(54) **DISPLAY STAND AND METHOD**

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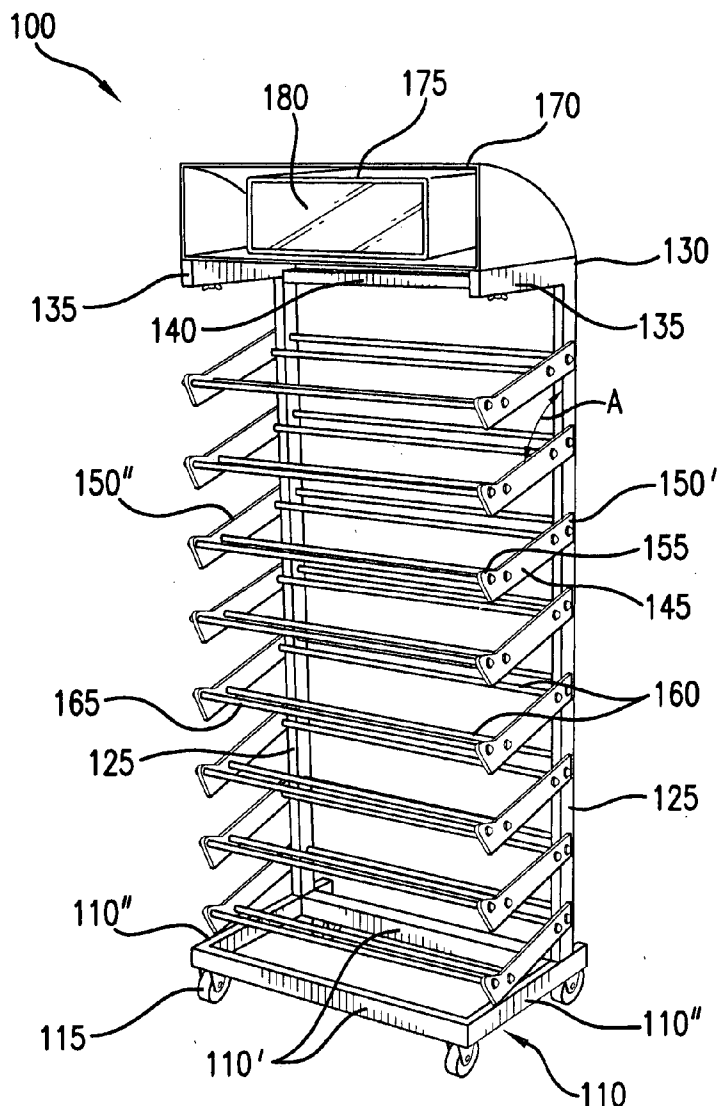
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ABSTRACT

A display stand is provided that comprises at least one video device, and which is dimensioned to hold at least one container of product such that the product is viewable by a consumer. The video device is designed to visually and aurally attract consumers to the display stand and generate interest in purchasing the displayed products.



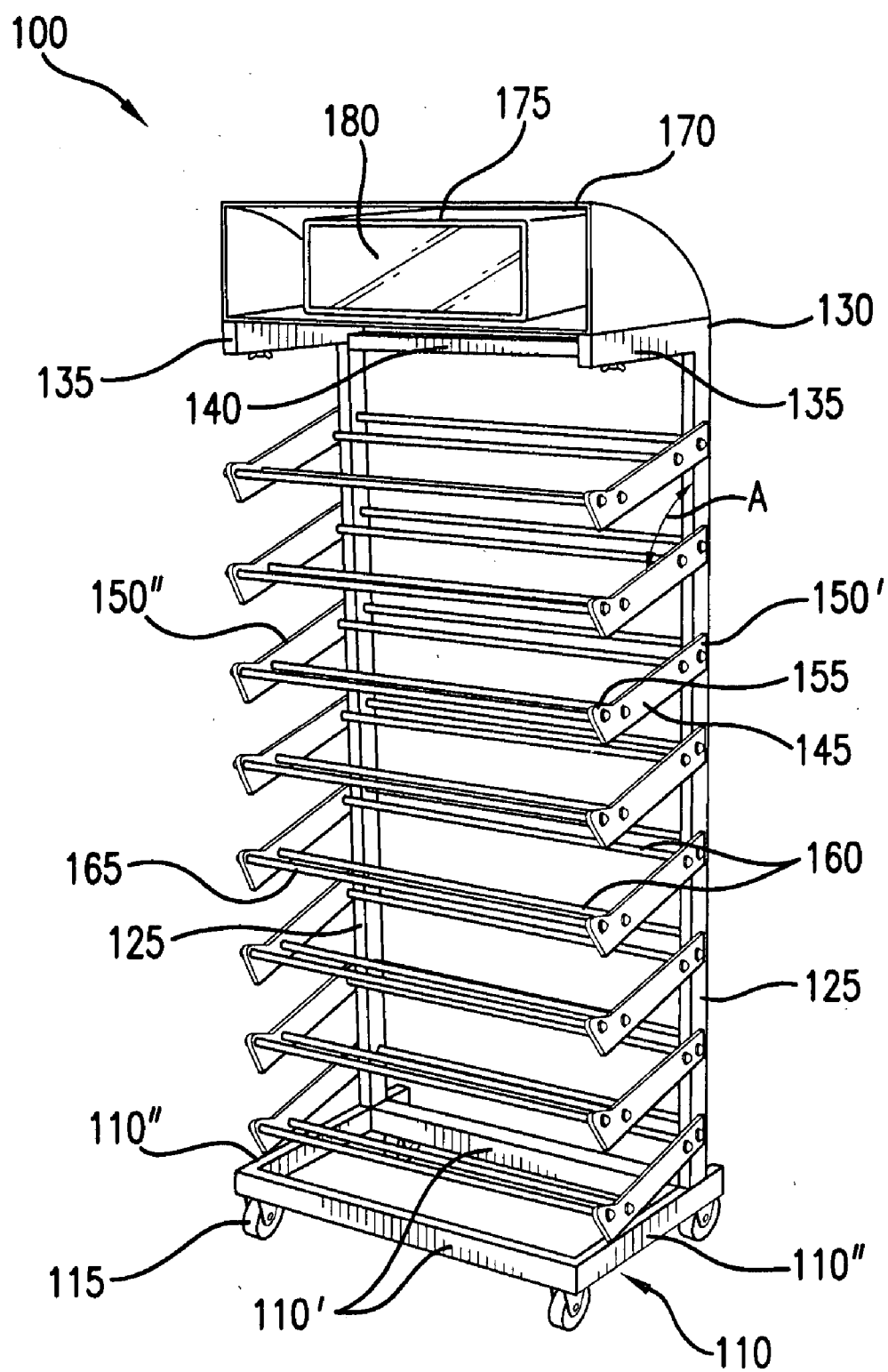


FIG. 1

DISPLAY STAND AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/809,950, filed May 31, 2006 and entitled "DISPLAY STAND AND METHOD".

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to the field of display stands for consumer products, and particularly to a display stand comprising at least one video device.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Traditionally, retail stores employ display stands to exhibit goods, so that a customer can view and purchase certain products. The presentation of the goods can have an impact on the sales volume. For example, display stands which are positioned at the ends of grocery store product aisles, or which are placed in the vicinity of check-out lanes, are more visible to a consumer and thus produce a higher sales volume. Display stands which show colorful or attractive packagings, or which have a variety of related goods, can also pique the consumers' interest and generate a higher sales volume for the displayed goods. Thus, it has long been an axiom of the retail industry that creating visibility for product, followed by creating interest for the product, is the key to successful sales.

[0004] Retailers may also place posters or other print advertising, or even video monitors, in the store window to create interest in certain products. Such window displays entice customers to enter the store, where the retailer then relies on traditional display means to induce them to purchase certain goods.

[0005] Recently, retailers are offering in-store attractions to entice customers to enter the establishment. For example, stores or restaurants can employ live performers, contain play areas for children, provide video games or arcades, or offer other amusements. Customers are drawn into the store by these amusements, and are then induced to purchase certain products. Retailers may also offer services related to the goods which are sold; for example, a pet store may offer dog grooming services. Customers will be attracted to the pet store for the grooming service, and will likely also purchase pet-related goods while in the store. However, as with the window displays discussed above, the retailer relies on traditional display means to induce customers to purchase goods once they have entered the store.

[0006] In an effort to increase the visibility of products, some retailers employ display stands with large "frontage" areas for displaying goods. Such stands are typically dimensioned to be long and shallow, so that the consumer can view most or all of the goods on a given shelf. However, the size and shape of such stands can make them difficult to use in terms of in-store placement, or in terms of efficiently replacing goods which may have been sold out.

[0007] What is needed, therefore, is a display stand which simultaneously creates visibility for a product and creates interest for the consumer in the product. Desirably, the display stand will have dimensions allow for efficient in-store placement and replacement of sold-out goods, and will

induce consumers to purchase a higher volume of displayed products than traditional stands.

SUMMARY

[0008] This invention provides a display stand comprising at least one video device, which is dimensioned to hold at least one container of product, such that the product is viewable by a consumer.

[0009] The invention further provides a method of marketing products, comprising providing a display stand of the invention and stocking the display stand with a plurality of related products, and exhibiting video content on the video device. The exhibited video content is also related to the products, and is designed to visually and aurally attract consumers to the display stand and generate interest in purchasing the displayed products.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0010] For the purpose of illustration, there are shown in the drawings forms which are exemplary; it being understood, that this invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown.

[0011] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary display stand.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] The display stand comprises at least one video device which is positioned on the stand so that it can be viewed by a consumer in proximity of the stand. The stand further comprises a frame comprising at least one support unit, such as shelving or brackets, for holding at least one container of product to be displayed. The at least one support unit is attached to portions of the display stand as is known in the art. For example, shelving or brackets can be attached to posts or panels which form the back of the display stand, and extend towards the front of the stand. In one aspect, the support units are positioned in the display stand at a slight downward angle from the back to the front of the stand, so that a product container placed on the support can be more readily viewed by a consumer.

[0013] An exemplary display stand 100 is shown in FIG. 1. The stand comprises a rectangular bottom portion 110 constructed from front and back substantially parallel elongated beams 110' connected by right and left side elongated beams 110". Beams 110" are substantially parallel to each other but substantially perpendicular to front and back beams 110', and are shorter than beams 110'. Beams 110' and 110" can be tubular, rectangular, square, L-shaped, or any suitable shape which conveys sufficient structural strength to the display stand. Bottom portion 110 may be of unitary construction, or can comprise multiple pieces. If bottom portion 110 comprises multiple pieces, then the pieces can be fastened together by any suitable means, for example by screws, bolts, rivets, clamps, friction fits, welds and the like.

[0014] Bottom portion 110 may optionally have a caster 115 fastened (either permanently or removably) to each corner or other devices by which the display stand can be readily moved. The casters or other device are positioned such that they contact the floor and support the display stand.

[0015] Right and left back posts 125 are connected to bottom portion 110 and extend upwardly and substantially

perpendicular to the bottom portion. The top of back posts **125** are connected to a top portion **130**, which comprises right and left side beams **135** and back beam **140**. Beams **135** and **140** can be tubular, rectangular, square, L-shaped, or any suitable shape which conveys sufficient structural strength to the display stand. As with the bottom portion, top portion **130** may be of unitary construction, or can comprise multiple pieces fastened together as discussed above.

[0016] A plurality of support units **145** are attached to back posts **125**. For example, the display stand can contain one, two, three, four, five, eight, ten, twenty, twenty-five or more support units. The support units comprise right portion **150'** and left side portion **150"**, which are attached by their back ends to the back posts and extend outward towards the front of the stand at a slight downward angle A. The right and left side portions **150'** and **150"** are flat and elongated, and have a slight upwardly extending flange **155** on the front end. Thin, elongated beams **160** extend between right portion **150'** and left side portion **150"** and form a bottom frame for each support unit **145**. A product container (not shown) can be set onto and held by this bottom frame and side portions **150'** and **150"**. Another thin, elongated beam **165** extends between right portion **150'** and left side portion **150"** at the level of flange **155**, and acts as a stop to keep product containers from sliding forward out of the stand. The thin, elongated beams **160** and **165** can be tubular, flat, rectangular, L-shaped, or any other suitable shape. The support units **145** can extend to the front edge of the stand (defined in FIG. 1 by front beam **110'**), can extend past the front edge of the stand, or (as illustrated in FIG. 1), can extend only part of the way to the front edge of the stand.

[0017] Top portion **130** supports casing **170**, which houses at least one video device **175** comprising screen **180**. The casing **170** also houses any electronics necessary for the operation of video device **175**, as described in more detail below. It is understood that the display stand can comprise a video device supported by the top portion without a casing. In the aspect illustrated by FIG. 1, the video device **175** is positioned above the plurality of support units **145**, and is facing forward so that a consumer can view both the video device and the containers of displayed product simultaneously. One or more access ports (not shown) may also be present in casing **170** so that the video device **175** can be reached, for example to repair the device or change the video content.

[0018] It is understood that the one or more video devices comprising the display stand can be positioned anywhere on the stand; for example above, below or in between the support units, or any combination thereof. Multiple video devices can be positioned to be viewed from virtually any angle (e.g., front, back, side or sides) as is convenient. The video device(s) can also be positionable, so that they can be moved to a suitable position and angle depending on the configuration of the display stand and the environment surrounding the stand in a given retail establishment.

[0019] The one or more video devices comprising the display stand can be any suitable video display and playback unit (including speakers or other device for producing sound) which is commercially available, such as a video monitor operably connected to a video tape machine (e.g., a video cassette recorder or video cassette player which can record and/or play video tapes such as VHS or Beta tapes),

digital video disc (DVD) player/recorder, laser disc player/recorder and the like. The video device can also comprise a broadcast, cable or satellite television signal receiver, which can receive and play suitable video signals. The video device can also comprise a computer with a central processing unit and an input/output device, which can comprise a disk drive, magnetic tape reader, or the like which can store and provide video content for viewing. For example, the input/output device can accept and read a compact flash memory card or other storage device such as a memory chip or stick (e.g., a memory stick which can be inserted into a USB port) which can store and transfer video content. It is understood that the video device can comprise one, some or all of the formats discussed above (e.g., a combination video tape and DVD machine). It is also understood that the video content exhibited by the video device can also comprise an audio component.

[0020] The video display can be any suitable size which allows for viewing of the video content, and can be, for example, about 150 mm in length and about 150 mm in width. Other sizes for the video display are contemplated.

[0021] The display stand can comprise one or more motion sensors, heat sensors, sound sensors or the like which sense the presence of a consumer in the area surrounding the display stand. For example, the video device can be triggered to play video content if a consumer walks near the display stand.

[0022] Video content which can be stored and/or broadcast by the video device include broadcast, cable or satellite TV signals, magnetic tape (e.g., video tape), digital video disks, laser disks, and computer-readable codes such as MPEG or ".wav" files, and the like, or any combination thereof. Video content can be provided to the video device by any suitable means; for example, by placing a suitable recorded or recordable medium into the device (e.g., loading a video tape or DVD), or by radio-frequency or other suitable wired or wireless transmission.

[0023] The display stand can also comprise a power supply, which can be internal (for example, a battery or battery pack), external (a plug or other power-transferring lead), or both. Internal power supplies are preferably rechargeable. External power supplies can comprise any of a plurality of plug- or lead-types designed to mate with power supply outlets in any country. The power supply is operably connected to the video device.

[0024] Reference to "fastened," "attached" or the like with respect to components of the display stand means that the components are joined together by any suitable means within the skill in the art; for example by screws, bolts, rivets, clamps, welds, friction fits and the like. In one aspect, the display stand is provided in pre-fabricated components which can be readily assembled at the point of use with minimal tools.

[0025] The components of the display stand can be fabricated from any suitable rigid material, such as metal, plastic, wood, cardboard, plasterboard, resin, or combinations thereof, such as are known in the art.

[0026] The display stand can be any convenient dimensions, and in one aspect is generally rectangular in shape, with the longer side comprising the front and back portions of the stand. Such dimensioning allows for greater viewing

and access of the displayed product by a consumer. The display stand is also, for example, of sufficient height to display a suitable number of different products (or a suitable amount of a single product). Suitable dimensions for the display stand include: a height (i.e., bottom to top and not necessarily including casters, if any) of about 1500 mm, for example 1450 mm a width of about 600 mm, for example about 580 mm; and a depth (i.e., front to back) of about 400 mm, for example about 380 mm. The height of the casing and/or video device can be, for example, about 200 mm or about 150 mm. The distance between the bottom of one support unit and the top of the one below can be any suitable distance which allows a consumer or retailer ready access to the product in the product container; for example, this distance can be about 200 mm, for example about 150 mm. Greater or lesser dimensions for all parts of the display stand are contemplated.

[0027] The display stand is used to display one or more products which are, for example, contained in a carton or other container. The support units of the display stand is preferably dimensioned to accept at least one product container, and can optionally accept multiple (e.g., two, three, four, five, six or more) containers side-by-side. The support units are also preferably dimensioned within the display stand so that displayed products can be readily reached by consumers, and the optional slight downward angle of the support units can cause the products remaining in a container to slide forward and maintain “frontage” for the product.

[0028] The display stand can comprise other electronics separate from the video device, for example, which produce sound, light or combinations of both. These additional electronics can operate independently from the video device, or can be triggered and controlled by signals from the video device. The additional electronics can be powered by the same power supply which is operably connected to the video device, or can run from one or more additional power supplies which are not necessarily connected to the video device.

[0029] In one aspect, a display stand is provided, and placed within an establishment to induce customer to purchase goods by displaying one or more related products while exhibiting video content that is also related to the product. The establishment can be any retail store, wholesale outlet, restaurant, service provider and the like. The display stand can be placed anywhere in the establishment that is convenient and where it can be viewed by consumers entering the establishment. Display of related products on the display stand, and exhibition of the video content which is related to the products, is designed to elicit interest in the products by providing visual and aural stimulation to consumers.

[0030] The one or more video devices on the display stand can be positioned such that a consumer in proximity of the display stand can readily view the video content being exhibited. The products being displayed are also readily viewed and reached by a consumer in proximity of the display stand.

[0031] Products which are “related” or which “relate” to one another are those which have a common characteristic, are contained in packaging with a common theme, or are otherwise associated or associable in the perception of a consumer.

[0032] For example, products which have a common characteristic can comprise, for example, toys, clothing, footwear, headgear, sporting goods, household goods, kitchenware (including flatware and other eating or serving utensils, and plates, bowls or other crockery), “do-it-yourself” or “DIY” materials (e.g., any materials for home improvement, such as tools and other hardware, lumber, paint and paint accessories, flooring, paneling, sheetrock, ceramic tile, and the like) or food such as meats, produce (e.g., fruits and vegetables or combinations thereof) and confections (including candy, cakes, cookies, gum and the like, or combinations thereof), or combinations thereof. Products with a common characteristic can also comprise, for example, products with similar pricing, or which have increasingly greater or lesser pricing within a certain price range. Products which are contained in packaging with a common theme comprise, for example, products which are packaged under a certain brand, trademark or trade dress. It is understood that a “brand,” “trademark” or “trade dress” can comprise a given color scheme, wording, symbols, pictures, recognizable set of characters or settings, or combinations thereof. Products can be otherwise associated or associable in the mind of a consumer if they are recognized by a consumer (or class of consumers) as being similar in size, shape or value.

[0033] Video content which is “related” or which “relate” to products in the display stand includes any content which the consumer recognizes as being associated with the products. For example, the video content can discuss the product features or characteristics, show consumers using the products or discussing the products, or compare the products to other competing products. The video content can also comprise characters or settings which also appear on the product packaging. For example, animated or live-action features (i.e., full-, medium- or short-length features) which include the relevant characters or settings can be played at various times, in order to induce consumers to come into proximity of the display stand and become interested in the displayed products. The animated or live-action features can also comprise the relevant characters discussing and/or using the displayed products. In one aspect, the video content can be changed or renewed by the retailer and/or the manufacturer of the display stand.

[0034] The video content can be exhibited in continuous loop, at set time intervals, at random time intervals, and/or when consumers come into proximity (such as walk by) the display stand. The video content can also be exhibited by action of the consumer, for example by pressing a button or speaking a command word (such as “play”). The video content is preferably designed to catch the attention of consumers and interest them in the products being displayed.

[0035] It is understood that the video content can comprise audio content. Thus, the video content can entice consumers into proximity of the display stand with both visual and aural stimuli. The video content can also hold consumers in the proximity of the stand once they have been initially attracted with both visual and aural stimuli.

[0036] The displayed products are placed on the support units of the stand, such that the products can be readily viewed by consumers in proximity of the stand. For example, the products are provided in containers, such as

cartons or boxes, which can be readily opened and placed on the support units. In one aspect, the containers are not shrink-wrapped or the like, but the products inside are individually packaged. Such containers are known in the art, and can comprise cardboard cartons with perforated portions on their top surface. The perforated portions can be “punched-out” and lifted or moved away to reveal individual product packages contained inside. Both the container and the individual product packages can be marked with the same or similar brand, trademark or trade dress to indicate that the products are related. In one aspect, the product containers provided are dimensioned to fit substantially within the dimensions of a support unit, so that the containers can be readily placed into and removed from the stand.

[0037] One or more product containers can be placed on a given support unit. For example, two, three, four, five, six or more containers can be placed side-by-side on the support units so that the products can be readily viewed by consumers in proximity of the display stand. The products can be arranged on the various support units of the display stand in any suitable order or pattern. For example, products can be arranged on the stand in descending order of prices; for example, from products costing fractions of a dollar or euro on the top support units, products costing one to two dollars or euros on the middle support units, and products costing two or more dollars or euros on the bottom shelves. Products can also be arranged in ascending order of price. Preferably, products having the same or similar price are displayed on the same support unit. Other product characteristics can be used to arrange products in the display stand, such as size, color, complexity, popularity among the consuming public, and the like.

[0038] In one aspect, a display stand can have eight support units, with products arranged by price on each support unit as in Table 1 (with support unit “one” being the one closest to the floor, and “eight” being the one closest to the top of the display stand).

TABLE 1

<u>Exemplary arrangement of products by price</u>	
Support Unit	Price (in US dollars)
One	2.00
Two	1.50
Three	1.00
Four	0.75
Five	0.50
Six	0.25
Seven	0.10
Eight	0.05

[0039] In one aspect, the display stand is provided with, or manufactured for, a given set of products and/or product containers. These products or containers can then be readily placed onto the display stand support units by the retailer in order to initially set up the display stand. Product containers can also be readily replaced once the product in a given container is sold out. As described above, the optional downward angle of the support units will cause the product to slip downward as individual packages are removed by consumers, thus continually displaying the product for viewing by the consuming public and producing the perception that the container is full until the product is sold out. In one

aspect, the display stand and product containers are dimensioned so that no other product containers fit readily with the display stand. This aspect can be used, for example, to prevent products which are not related to each other or to the video content from being displayed on the stand. In another aspect, display stands can be provided in a given or standard size, so that the retailer can readily replace a stand which occupies a given area with another stand. For example, a display stand from which all the goods have been sold can be replaced with a new stand which contains a full complement of goods. In this latter example, the display stands can be made from easily replaceable or disposable materials such as paper, cardboard or plastic, so that a “used” stand can be readily replaced with another, and the “used” stand can be discarded or recycled.

[0040] The display stand can also be provided with video content related to the products. In one aspect, the video device can only receive and play video content provided by the manufacturer of the stand. This aspect can be used, for example, to prevent the exhibition of video content which is not related to the products being displayed on the stand.

[0041] The display stand can also be decorated with signage or other indicia related to the displayed products and the video content. “Related” or “relates” with respect to signage or other indicia and displayed products or video content has the same meaning as discussed above. In one aspect, the display stand is provided with signage or other indicia related to the products to be displayed and the video content to be exhibited.

[0042] Other features can be included on the display stand or product containers to facilitate the display of the maximum number of products. For example, product ingredients or warnings related thereto can be printed or displayed directly on some portion of the display stand, so that it need not be printed on the product containers. Pricing of products can also be displayed directly on the stand, so that consumers can readily tell the price of a given product on a support unit. In one aspect, the prices of product in various currencies can be listed on different stickers or signs that are provided with the display stand or product containers, so the retailer can readily choose and display the appropriate price in the appropriate currency on the stand.

[0043] While the present invention has been described in connection with the aspects discussed above and the FIGURE, it is to be understood that other similar aspects may be used, or modifications or additions may be made to the described aspects for performing the same function of the present invention without deviating therefrom. Therefore, the present invention should not be limited to any single aspect, but rather should be construed in breadth and scope in accordance with the recitation of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A display stand for products, comprising a frame comprising at least one support unit, and at least one video device which exhibits video content, and which is positioned on the frame so that it can be viewed by a consumer in proximity of the display stand.

2. The display stand of claim 1, wherein the at least one video device is positionable independent of the display stand.

3. The display stand of claim 1, wherein the video content is related to the products being displayed.

4. The display stand of claim 1, wherein the video device is activated by the proximity of a consumer to the display stand.

5. The display stand of claim 1, wherein the support units are provided at a slight downward angle relative to the front of the display stand.

6. A method of inducing consumers to purchase products, comprising:

providing a display stand of claim 1, which has a plurality of support units;

providing a plurality of containers of product;

arranging the product containers on the plurality of support units such that a consumer can readily view the products; and

exhibiting video content,

and wherein products are related to each other, and the video content is related to the products.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the video content plays in a continuous loop.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the video content plays at selected or random time intervals.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the video content comprises characters or settings which are also displayed on the product containers.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein the product containers contain individually packaged products, and the video con-

tent comprises characters or settings which are also displayed on the individually packaged products.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein the product containers are dimensioned to fit substantially within the support units.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein at least two product containers are dimensioned to fit within one support unit.

13. The method of claim 6, wherein the products are displayed on the support units in ascending price order.

14. The method of claim 6, wherein the products are displayed on the support units in descending price order.

15. The method of claim 6, wherein the display stand further comprises signage or indicia which is related to the products to be displayed and which is related to the video content to be exhibited.

16. The method of claim 6, wherein the display stand further comprises price information displayed on the display stand.

17. The method of claim 6, wherein the display stand further comprises the ingredients of the products, or warnings regarding the products, displayed on the display stand.

18. The method of claim 6, wherein the products comprise toys, clothing, footwear, headgear, sporting goods, household goods, kitchenware, do-it-yourself materials, food or combinations thereof.

19. The method of claim 19, wherein the food is selected from the group consisting of meats, produce and confections.

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