A topping barrier and pizza box lid support device comprising an elongated flexible rectangular sheet of resilient material having a sheet length, a sheet width, a sheet thickness, a first end, a second end, a top edge, a bottom edge, a front surface and a back surface; means for releasably engaging the first end and the second end so as to form a thin-walled cylindrical barrier and support element; and wherein the cylindrical support element is configured for insertion inside a pizza box so as to completely surround the periphery of a pizza and prevent the top lid of the pizza box from coming into contact with the pizza and toppings on the pizza from being displaced from the cheese surface of the pizza to the pizza box floor.
TOPPING BARRIER AND PIZZA BOX LID SUPPORT DEVICE

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This invention relates generally to a device used to prevent toppings on a pizza from displacing and to protect a pizza pie from damage by preventing the collapse or crushing of the a traditional pizza box.

[0002] More specifically, this invention relates to a device that can be assembled from a flat, thin, flexible strip of food-grade material into a shape that is adapted to fit inside a pizza box around the periphery of the pizza pie. The device, once assembled and installed in a pizza box, provides a perpendicularly barrier and support element around the periphery of the pizza that prevents the lid of the box from collapsing and contacting the pizza and prevents toppings on the pizza from being displaced from the cheese surface of the pizza to the pizza box. The device of the present invention may contain advertisements focused on demographic groups showing a high affinity to the consumption of pizza. The device may also contain informative content that is related to the advertising material, so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed. Subsequent to its use as a pizza box lid support, the device of the present invention can be utilized as a wearable article, such as a belt or headband.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Pizza is traditionally transported in square boxes that have relatively large covers and shallow depth. As a consequence, the middle portion of the box lid has a tendency to sag inwardly. If any pressure is placed on the lid, such as by stacking other boxes on top of it, the lid can come into contact with the pizza. Obviously, after prolonged, or even very brief, contact with the sagging lid, the pizza will become disfigured and acquire an unpalatable appearance.

[0004] Another problem that has plagued the pizza delivery industry is the tendency of pizza toppings to be displaced from the surface of the pizza and into the box during transport. Displaced toppings also give pizzas an unpalatable and unappealing appearance that should be avoided.

[0005] Sogging pizza box lids and displaced toppings have long been a problem in the pizza delivery industry and new methods for preventing this problem are constantly being devised.

[0006] Previous attempts at devices to prevent the sagging of pizza box lids are described in United States Patent Application Publication No. 2006/0037885 to Hillborne. (the ’885 patent application); U.S. Pat. No. 5,694,619 to Steck, et al. (the ’619 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 5,759,119 to Ayoub et al. (the ’119 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 5,600,889 to Marotta (the ’889 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 5,542,540 to Knapp et al. (the ’540 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 5,480,031 to Mautitas et al. (the ’031 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 5,077,050 to Wall (the ’050 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 4,877,609 to Beck et al. (the ’609 patent); U.S. Pat. No. 4,700,843 to Cohen (the ’843 patent); and U.S. Pat. No. 4,498,586 to Vitrile (the ’586 patent).

[0007] The ’885 patent application describes a connectible pizza spacer wherein the secondary usefulness of a pizza spacer is increased by providing a coupling mechanism that is configured to attach the pizza spacer to other pizza spacers in order to form larger objects that have a purpose beyond that of merely functioning as a pizza spacer. For example, a pizza spacer according to some embodiments of the invention may be connected to other pizza spacers to complete a jigsaw puzzle. Other embodiments of the invention are described and claimed.

[0008] The ’619 patent describes a disposable food cutting utensil, oval or circular in construction with an integrated handle area, packaging support legs and slots, and a removable marketing element. The utensil has a tapered and sculpelled or serrated cutting edge that follows along a portion of the perimeter of the device, and allows for the inclusion of a handle area. Packaging support legs may be provided that protrude an arbitrary length from one side of the utensil, at sufficient distance from the cutting edge. Radial slots between the support legs permit the nesting of multiple utensils. The removable marketing element is held in place by thin sections of material that are sufficient to secure the element in place, but permits its removal by hand. The merchandising element is of an arbitrary shape and sufficient size as to not present a choking hazard to small children.

[0009] The ’119 patent describes a conventional golf tee comprising a circular member connected along the cylindrical region of the golf tee used to support the lid of a cardboard box such as a pizza box. The tee and circular member are inserted into a hole in the lid of a pizza box so that the point of the tee is placed downward and the lid of the box rests on the circular member. This arrangement is used in a pizza box, with the point of the tee placed in the pizza, and the circular member used to prevent the pizza box lid from sagging onto the pizza’s surface. After use as a support piece for the pizza box, the tee may be used as a normal golf tee or as a spinning toy.

[0010] The ’889 patent describes an article for supporting the lid of a cardboard box for a food item. The article, or preferably a utensil, comprises a blade having a detachable spacer releasably connected to the blade and a handle attached to the blade. The detachable spacer has a cover support and at least one vertical extending leg to contact a food article, yet at the same time, protect the food article. The handle may extend substantially parallel to, but offset from, the blade and has an top surface which may include advertising indicia thereon.

[0011] The ’540 patent describes a pizza box lid incorporating a plastic support device centrally mounted to its underside. The device has a mounting portion adhesively attached to the lid, and a post portion which is originally co-planar with the mounting portion and flat against the underside of the lid. The post portion has two panels, one of the two panels being hinged to the mounting portion and the other panel being hinged to the one panel. The entire support is formed from one homogeneous piece of material which is appropriately scored to define the hingedly connected mounting and panel portions. The post portion is folded about the hinge relative to the mounting portion and away from the lid to an erect position generally perpendicular to the lid, and then one panel is folded relative to the other panel so as to prop the panels perpendicular to the lid whereby they serve as a support post to prevent the lid from sagging when the lid is closed.

[0012] The ’031 patent describes a combined pizza box lid support and wheel-type cutter. Described is a package for
carrying and transporting a pizza product or like food article in which a combination device is used both to support a top panel of the package and prevent it from contacting the pizza product and to slice the pizza product at the place of consumption.

[0013] The '050 patent describes an article for supporting the lid of a cardboard box for a food item. The article has a container with a base, at least one sidewall extending from the base to a lid support opposite the base, and at least one compartment. There is at least one support leg extending from the container in a direction opposite the lid support. The legs have support ends opposite the container. There is sufficient distance between the base of the container and the support ends of the legs to avoid contact between the container and the food item.

[0014] The '069 patent describes a combination serving utensil and container support. This device has a server portion sized and shaped to serve a typical serving slice of pizza, and an upstanding portion which has a vertical dimension which, when the server portion is placed between the pizza and the base portion of the container, approximates the height of the pizza container. The device also includes a handle portion preferably attached to the upper end of the upstanding portion. This handle portion extends substantially parallel to but offset from the server portion and has an upper surface which may include advertising indicia thereon.

[0015] The '843 patent describes a food container fabricated from a one piece paperboard blank suitable for packaging pizza pies and the like where the container includes a tear tab which is convertible into a support for maintaining the integrity of the container.

[0016] The '586 patent describes a temperature resistant molded plastic device is described for use in boxes or packages such as pizza boxes where there is a tendency of large cover portions to sag downwardly to damage the soft pizza or other packaged products. In use, the saver is positioned near the center of the package to support the box cover for protecting the contents.

[0017] None of the devices described in the prior art describe a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid by providing a perpendicular support structure around the periphery of the pizza pie.

[0018] None of the described devices act as a barrier to prevent the displacement of pizza toppings from the cheese surface of the pizza to the pizza box during transport.

[0019] In addition, none of the devices disclosed in the prior art describe a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid without making any contact with the cheese surface of the pizza.

[0020] In addition, none of the devices disclosed in the prior art describe a device that prevents a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid while simultaneously preventing the pizza from shifting within the box.

[0021] In addition, none of the devices disclosed in the prior art describe a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid and can subsequently be utilized as a wearable article, such as a belt or headband.

[0022] Therefore, there is a need in the prior art to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid by providing a perpendicular support structure around the periphery of the pizza pie.

[0023] There is a further need in the art to provide a device that acts as a barrier to prevent the displacement of pizza toppings from the cheese surface of the pizza to the pizza box during transport.

[0024] There is a further need in the art to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid without making any contact with the cheese surface of the pizza.

[0025] There is a further need in the art to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid while simultaneously preventing the pizza from shifting within the box.

[0026] There is a further need in the art to provide a device that acts as a barrier to prevent topping displacement and protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid and can subsequently be utilized as a wearable article, such as a belt or headband, with advertising material printed on one side of the article and informative content that is related to the advertising material printed on the opposite side of the article, so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0027] The subject invention resolves the above-described needs and problems by providing a topping barrier and pizza box lid support device comprising an elongated flexible rectangular sheet of resilient material having a sheet length, a sheet width, a sheet thickness, a first end, a second end, a top edge, a bottom edge, a front surface and a back surface; means for releasably engaging the first end and the second end so as to form a thin-walled cylindrical barrier and support element; and wherein the cylindrical barrier and support element is configured for insertion inside a pizza box so as to completely surround the periphery of a pizza to prevent the top lid of the pizza box from coming into contact with the pizza and toppings on the pizza from being displaced from the cheese surface of the pizza onto the pizza box.

[0028] The disclosed device protects a pizza pie and toppings inside a pizza box without contacting the cheese surface of the pizza through a perpendicular support and barrier structure around the periphery of the pizza pie.

[0029] The device is comprised of a flexible, elongated rectangular sheet of food-grade material having a first end and a second end. The distance between said first end and said second end being slightly greater than the circumference of a pizza pie. The height of the device being no greater than the height of a pizza box and no less than the thickness of the pizza pie. Means are provided to releasably attach said first and second ends so as to give the device a cylindrical shape. In use, the device is placed inside a pizza box so as to form a perpendicular barrier and support structure around the periphery of the pizza. The device serves to prevent the pizza pie from shifting, toppings from being displaced and the box from being crushed, during transport. The device provides a medium for the placement of advertisements and
can be used as a wearable device, such as a headband or belt, after it is no longer needed as a support device.

[0030] The device may have advertising material printed on one side of the article and informative content that is related to the advertising material printed on the opposite side of the article, so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

[0031] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid by providing a perpendicular support structure around the periphery of the pizza pie.

[0032] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a device that acts as a barrier to prevent the displacement of pizza toppings from the cheese surface of the pizza to the pizza box during transport.

[0033] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid without making any contact with the cheese surface of the pizza.

[0034] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a device that protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid while simultaneously preventing the pizza from shifting within the box.

[0035] It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a device that acts as a barrier to prevent topping displacement and protects a pizza pie by preventing the sagging of a pizza box lid and can subsequently be utilized as a wearable article, such as a belt or headband, with advertising material printed on one side of the article and informative content that is related to the advertising material printed on the opposite side of the article, so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

[0036] These and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention may be more clearly understood and appreciated from a review of ensuing detailed description of the preferred and alternate embodiments and by reference to the accompanying drawings and claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0037] FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of the device of the present invention, utilizing corresponding notches as attachment means, in its pre-assembled state.

[0038] FIG. 2 shows a top view of the embodiment of the device shown in FIG. 1 after assembly.

[0039] FIG. 3 shows a detailed view of the releasably attached ends of the embodiment of the device shown in FIGS. 1 and 2.

[0040] FIG. 4 shows an embodiment of the device of the present invention, utilizing a ratcheting arrangement as attachment means, in its pre-assembled state.

[0041] FIG. 5 shows a top view of the embodiment of the device shown in FIG. 4 after assembly.

[0042] FIG. 6 shows an embodiment of the device of the present invention, utilizing a tongue and slot arrangement as attachment means, in its pre-assembled state.

[0043] FIG. 7 shows a top view of the embodiment of the device shown in FIG. 6 after assembly.

[0044] FIG. 8 shows a perspective view of the device shown in FIGS. 1 or 4 after assembly and once installed inside a pizza box.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0045] While the present invention will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which a preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown, it is to be understood at the outset of the description which follows that persons of skill in the appropriate arts may modify the invention herein described while still achieving the favorable results of this invention. Accordingly, the description which follows is to be understood as being a broad, teaching disclosure directed to persons of skill in the appropriate arts, and not as limiting upon the present invention.

[0046] Referring initially to FIG. 1, the topping barrier and pizza box lid support device (10) of the present invention is shown prior to assembly. The device comprises a flat, rectangular, flexible sheet (11) of food-grade material. Acceptable materials include, but are no limited to, paper, cardboard, laminated cardboard, polyethylene terephthalate (PET), high density polyethylene (HDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low density polyethylene (LDPE), polypropylene, polystyrene and polycarbonate. Acceptable materials are resilient, grease resistant and will remain elastic upon bending. The sheet (11) has a thickness that permits sufficient flexibility so as to allow bending of the sheet (11) with minimal effort yet provides sufficient support to prevent the device from buckling after assembly. A material thickness range of 0.1 mm to 3 mm is acceptable.

[0047] The unassembled device (10) has a first end (1) and a second end (2), a top edge (12), a bottom edge (13) and flat surfaces (7, 7') on each side. The dimensions height (H) and length (D) of the sheet (11) are determined by the size of the pizza pie to be protected and the standard height of a pizza box. The height (H) of the sheet (11) is at least as long as the thickness of a standard 9" pizza pie, including its crust, but no longer than the height of a standard pizza box. Typically the height (H) of the sheet (11) is between 0.5 and 1.5 inches. The length (D) of the sheet (11) is slightly shorter than the circumference of the pizza pie. Typically, the length (D) of the sheet (11) is between 110% and 125% of the circumference of the pizza pie.

[0048] Cut into the sheet (11) are a first end engagement notch (5) and a second end engagement notch (3). The first end engagement notch (5) is cut into either the top edge (12) or the bottom edge (13). The second end engagement notch (5) is cut into the opposite edge. The first and second end engagement notches (5, 3) are situated near their respective ends, preferably within 1-2 inches. The first and second end engagement notches (5, 3) each have a width (W) dimension which is equal to or slightly larger that the thickness of the sheet (11). The length (L, L') of the notches is preferably equal to one half of the height (H) of the sheet (11). However, it is not necessary that the length (L) of the first end engagement notch (5) be equal to the length (L') of the second end engagement notch (3). It is sufficient that the
combined length (L + L') of the notches be approximately equal to the height (H) of the sheet (11).

[0049] Optionally, additional engagement notches (4, 6) that are similarly configured to the first and second end engagement notches, may be cut into the top edge (12) and the bottom edge (13) of the sheet (11).

[0050] The topping barrier and pizza box lid support device (10) is assembled by bending the sheet into a cylindrical shape so that first end (1) and second end (2) overlap and the engagement notch (5) engages with engagement notch (3). The diameter of the cylinder formed by the device (10) may be adjusted by alternatively engaging any of the engagement notches (5, 6) on the first end (1) with any engagement notch (3, 4) on the second end (2) notch until the desired diameter is achieved.

[0051] FIG. 2 shows a top view of the assembled device (10). As is shown, the overlapping first and second ends (1, 2) are contained within the inner surface of the cylindrical shape so as to maintain a nearly smooth outer surface. The diameter (M) of the assembled device (10) can be adjusted as previously described so as to closely match the diameter of the pizza pie to be protected.

[0052] FIG. 3 illustrates a detailed front view of the engagement area of the assembled device (10). As discussed previously, first and second ends (1, 2) are contained within the inner surface of the cylindrical shape. Engaged first end and second end notches (5, 3) positively engage the first and second ends (1, 2). First and second ends (1, 2) can be disengaged by simply pulling apart the engagement notches (5, 3).

[0053] Other embodiments of the device utilize different means for releasably engaging the first and second ends (1, 2). One such embodiment utilizes a releasable ratcheting arrangement similar to that used on cable ties. Such arrangements, like, for example, the one shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,185,791 to Khokhar (incorporated herein by reference), are well known in the art. FIG. 4 shows a detailed view of such an arrangement used in conjunction with the present invention.

[0054] As shown in FIG. 4, the device in its unassembled state is identical to the device shown in FIG. 1 with the exception that instead of engagement notches it utilizes various components that comprise the ratcheting arrangement. The component includes a head (23) with a passageway (24) attached to the first end (1). Disposed on the passageway is a latch (22) which is biased in an engaged position but can be temporarily disengaged by means of an operating lever (21). Disposed on the back surface (7) of the flexible sheet (11) near the second end (2) are a set of ratcheting teeth (20) that are disposed so as to be securely engaged by the latch (22) when the second end is inserted through the passageway (24). In operation, the second end (2) can be smoothly introduced through the passageway (24) and the latch will sequentially engage the teeth (20) so as to create a secure engagement preventing the second end (2) to be removed from the passageway (24). The second end (2) can be removed by depressing operating lever (21) which in turn disengages latch (22) from the ratcheting teeth (20).

[0055] Shown in FIG. 5 is a detailed assembled top view of the engagement section of the device (10) incorporating a ratcheting arrangement. As shown, second end (2) has been introduced through passageway (24) on head (23) and teeth (20) are securely engaged by latch (22). Second end (2) can be further introduced through passageway (24) by simply pushing it through but cannot be moved in the opposite direction unless lever (21) is depressed disengaging latch (22).

[0056] Another embodiment of the device utilizes a tongue and slot arrangement for releasably engaging the first and second ends (1, 2). As shown in FIG. 6, the device in its unassembled state is identical to the device shown in FIG. 1 with the exception that instead of engagement notches it has engagement slots (31, 32) near the first end (1) and a tapered tongue (32) near the second end (2). The engaging slots (31, 32) are simply vertical cuts in the flexible sheet (11) that are dimensioned to permit the tongue (32) to be inserted therethrough.

[0057] Shown in FIG. 7 is a detailed assembled top view of the engagement section of the device (10) incorporating a tongue and slot arrangement. As shown, tongue (32) on second end (2) has been sequentially introduced through engagement slots (30) and (31) so as to releasably engage the first end (1) to the second end (2).

[0058] A further embodiment of the present invention allows the device to be used with a rectangular shaped pizza pie, commonly referred to as a “Sicilian” pizza. In such an embodiment, in addition to the previously recited elements, the sheet (11) would include folds or indentations made crosswise from the top edge (12) to the bottom edge (13) perpendicularly to both edges. The indentations or folds create pre-formed corners so that when the sheet (11) is bent to engage the first end (1) with the second end (2), a square, rather than circular, cross-sectional shape is formed.

[0059] Referring next to FIG. 8, once the device (10) has been assembled, it is installed by simply placing it inside a pizza box (60) so as to completely surround the periphery of the pizza (62). With device (10) in position, a barrier and support element is created perpendicularly to both the pizza box lid (61) and the pizza box bottom (63) which will resist any sagging of the pizza box lid (61) and thus prevent it from coming into contact with the cheese surface (64) of the pizza (62). The device, once in position, also acts (10) as a barrier that prevents toppings from being displaced from the cheese surface (64) of the pizza (62) to the pizza box bottom (63).

[0060] In addition, with device (10) in position, the contents of the pizza box are restrained from shifting during transportation.

[0061] As an additional feature of the device herein disclosed, the front surface (7) and back surface (7') of the sheet (11) can be imprinted with advertisements. The advertisements are preferably directed at demographic groups that demonstrate a high affinity for consuming pizza. Thus, tightly focused and highly relevant direct advertisement campaigns can be implemented through the use of the disclosed invention.

[0062] In addition, the front surface (7) and back surface (7') of the sheet (11) can be imprinted with graphic designs that make the assembled device resemble a wearable article of clothing such as a belt or a headband. This allows the device to be reused by consumers long after consumption of the pizza.
The device (10) can also be imprinted printed on surface (7 or 7') with informative content that is related to advertising material printed on the opposite surface (7 or 7'), so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

Accordingly, it will be understood that the preferred embodiment of the present invention has been disclosed by way of example and that other modifications and alterations may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A pizza box lid support device comprising:
   an elongated flexible rectangular sheet of resilient material having a sheet length, a sheet width, a sheet thickness, a first end, a second end, a top edge, a bottom edge, a front surface and a back surface;
   means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end so as to form a thin-walled cylindrical support element; and
   wherein said cylindrical support element is configured for insertion inside a pizza box so as to completely surround the periphery of a pizza and prevent the top lid of said pizza box from coming into contact with said pizza.

2. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said resilient material is selected from the group of materials comprised of: paper, cardboard, laminated cardboard, polyethylene terephthalate (PET), high density polyethylene (HDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low density polyethylene (LDPE), polypropylene, polystyrene and polycarbonate.

3. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said sheet length is slightly greater than the circumference of said pizza.

4. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said sheet length is between 10% and 25% greater than the circumference of said pizza.

5. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said sheet width is greater than the height of said pizza box and not less than the thickness of said pizza.

6. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said sheet width is between 0.5 inches and 1.5 inches.

7. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said sheet thickness is between 0.1 mm and 3 mm.

8. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end comprise:
   a first end engagement notch perpendicularly cut into said top edge of said sheet near said first end;
   a second end engagement notch perpendicularly cut into said bottom edge of said sheet near said second end; and
   wherein the width of said first end and second end engagement notches is not less than to said sheet thickness
   wherein the combined length of said first end engagement notch and said second end engagement notch equals said sheet height.

9. The pizza box lid support device of claim 8, wherein said means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end further comprise:
   one or more additional first end engagement notches perpendicularly cut into said top edge of said sheet near said first end;
   one or more additional second end engagement notches perpendicularly cut into said bottom edge of said sheet near said second end; and
   wherein said additional first end engagement notches are regularly spaced apart along said top edge and have length and width equal to said first end engagement notch;
   wherein said additional second end engagement notches are regularly spaced apart along said bottom edge and have length and width equal to said second end engagement notch.

10. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end consist of a ratcheting arrangement.

11. The pizza box lid support device of claim 10, wherein said ratcheting arrangement comprises:
   a series of ratcheting teeth molded into said back surface of said sheet near said second end;
   a head attached to said first end having a passageway therethrough for insertably accommodating said second end in an insertion direction;
   a latch pivotally supported at said head disposed within said passageway and engageable with said ratcheting teeth;
   said latch being biased to lockably engage said ratcheting teeth upon insertion of said second end through said passageway; and
   said latch being pivotable by means of an operating lever to disengage said ratcheting teeth and permit withdrawal of said second end from said passageway.

12. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1, wherein said means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end comprise:
   an engagement tongue near said second end having a width that is less than said sheet width;
   a plurality of engagement slots cut into said sheet near said first end; and
   wherein said engagement slots are disposed to receive said engagement tongue so as to engage said first and second ends.

13. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1 wherein advertisements are imprinted upon either or both of said front and back surfaces.

14. The pizza box lid support device of claim 13 wherein said advertisements are directed to demographic groups that demonstrate a high affinity for the consumption and purchase of pizza.

15. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1 wherein said advertisements are printed upon said front or back surfaces and informative content that is related to said advertisements is printed on the opposite surface so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

16. The pizza box lid support device of claim 1 wherein graphical designs are imprinted upon either or both of said
front and back surfaces which give the device the appearance of a wearable article of clothing.

17. A pizza box lid support device comprising:
   an elongated flexible rectangular sheet of resilient material having a sheet length, a sheet width, a sheet thickness, a first end, a second end, a top edge, a bottom edge, a front surface and a back surface;
   four spaced apart folds extending perpendicularly from said top edge to said bottom edge;
   means for releasably engaging said first end and said second end so as to form a thin-walled support element having a rectangular cross section;
   wherein said folds form the vertices of said support element; and
   wherein said support element is configured for insertion inside a pizza box so as to completely surround the periphery of a rectangular pizza and prevent the top lid of said pizza box from coming into contact with said pizza.

18. The pizza box lid support device of claim 17 wherein advertisements are imprinted upon either or both of said front and back surfaces.

19. The pizza box lid support device of claim 18 wherein said advertisements are directed at demographic groups that demonstrate a high affinity for the consumption and purchase of pizza.

20. The pizza box lid support device of claim 17 wherein advertisements are printed upon either said front or back surfaces and informative content that is related to said advertisements is printed on the opposite surface so as to induce the customer to retain the article after consumption of the pizza is completed.

21. The pizza box lid support device of claim 17 wherein graphical designs are imprinted upon either or both of said front and back surfaces which give the device the appearance of a wearable article of clothing.

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