

SUPERINTENDENCIA DE INDUSTRIA Y COMERCIO



No. 14-108658- -00009-0000

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Señor Superintendente
SUPERINTENDENCIA DE INDUSTRIA Y COMERCIO
E. S. D.

Net

Trámite : 011
Evento : 379
Actuación : 412

Referencia : Expediente No. **14.108.658**
Asunto : Solicitud de patente para: **PAQUETE PARA PRODUCTOS
ABSORBENTES DESECHABLES Y MÉTODOS
RELACIONADOS**
Solicitante : SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB
Fecha de solicitud : 20 de mayo de 2014

I. RECURSO VÍA GUBERNATIVA

Yo, Luz Clemencia DE PÁEZ, en mi condición de apoderada de la sociedad **SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB** solicitante de la patente de la referencia, por el presente escrito atentamente manifiesto a usted que debidamente notificada de la Resolución No. **39086** del 30 de julio de 2015, interpongo en su contra el recurso de **REPOSICIÓN**, para que sea revocada y en consecuencia se conceda el privilegio de patente de invención para **"PAQUETE PARA PRODUCTOS ABSORBENTES DESECHABLES Y MÉTODOS RELACIONADOS"** a favor de **SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB.**

II. OPORTUNIDAD DE LA IMPUGNACIÓN

La Resolución No. **39086** del 30 de julio de 2015, con fecha de publicación listado del 4 de agosto de 2015, fecha de vencimiento del 4 de septiembre de 2015, y fecha del término legal 18 de septiembre de 2015.

III. LA DECISIÓN RECURRIDA

"EXCELENCIA LEGAL EN UN MUNDO SIN FRONTERAS"

- 3.1 Mediante la Resolución objeto de la presente impugnación, el Superintendente de Industria y Comercio decidió:
- 3.1.1 Denegar la patente de invención a la creación titulada: **“PAQUETE PARA PRODUCTOS ABSORBENTES DESECHABLES Y MÉTODOS RELACIONADOS”**
- 3.2 En la parte motiva de la providencia, se mencionaron los siguientes fundamentos:
- 3.2.1 El capítulo reivindicatorio no cumple con lo estipulado en el artículo 30 de la decisión 486, ya que presenta efectos técnicos al mencionar: “...ejerciendo una fuerza de expansión contra dichas paredes externas [sic] desde dicho interior...” lo cual no es permitido. Las reivindicaciones deben caracterizar un producto por la forma o constitución del mismo y las partes que lo componen. No se aceptan reivindicaciones que caractericen resultados, usos, ventajas o efectos.
- 3.2.2 Las reivindicaciones 1 a 3 presentan características funcionales del paquete como lo son: “...ninguna parte de dicha primera muestra gráfica es visible a través de dicha primera parte...”, se le recuerda a la solicitante que si bien pueden ir dentro de las reivindicaciones, su función es dar claridad a las mismas, por lo que no le pueden dar novedad o nivel inventivo ya que no se consideran características técnicas esenciales.
- 3.2.3 El agente sustentante reclamado en la solicitud no tiene nivel inventivo en vista de los documentos D1: WO 2009/040767 y D2: US 2004/0238393.
- 3.2.4 La persona del oficio normalmente versada en la materia aplicando técnicas propias de su quehacer y con la información contenida en el documento D2, estaría motivada a ubicar las gráficas del primer artículo absorbente conocido en D1 de manera tal que sea totalmente invisible a través de la ventana transparente para así llegar al objeto de la reivindicación 1 de la solicitud. Por lo cual se considera obvia.
- 3.2.5 Al no las relaciones funcionales, características técnicas esenciales estructurales del paquete, no le brindan altura inventiva a la invención, es por tanto, que tal y como fue definida la invención en la materia reivindicada, la combinación de las

anterioridades D1 y D2 permiten llegar de manera obvia al objeto de la invención.

- 3.2.6 No se evidencia un efecto técnico inesperado respecto a que la gráfica del primer artículo absorbente no sea visible al cliente, ya que la estructura del paquete el cual incluye una ventana traslucida, sugiriendo que es posible la visualización o no de elementos impresos en los artículos absorbentes, ya era conocida en el estado de la técnica en el documento D2.

IV. OBJETO DEL RECURSO

De acuerdo con los argumentos que expongo a continuación, solicito atentamente a su Despacho lo siguiente:

1. Revocar la Resolución No. **39086** del 30 de julio de 2015.
2. Conceder el privilegio de patente de invención para **“PAQUETE PARA PRODUCTOS ABSORBENTES DESECHABLES Y MÉTODOS RELACIONADOS”** a favor de **SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB**.

V. MODIFICACIÓN DE UNA SOLICITUD EN TRÁMITE

De acuerdo con el artículo 34 de la Decisión 486 de la Comisión de la Comunidad Andina, donde se establece que la modificación de una solicitud es posible en cualquier momento del trámite mientras no implique una ampliación de la solicitud inicial, me permito presentar un nuevo pliego reivindicatorio conformado por 14 reivindicaciones.

Por lo tanto, los argumentos esgrimidos a continuación con respecto a la patentabilidad de la invención, en los términos del capítulo reivindicatorio modificado, resultan plenamente predicables del capítulo reivindicatorio sobre el cual la patente fue negada. En efecto, la no ampliación de la materia en el nuevo pliego es evidencia suficiente de que el presente recurso controvierte el análisis de patentabilidad efectuado por su Despacho, de tal manera que el presente recurso cumple con los requisitos de ley para su aceptación y trámite.

VI. FUNDAMENTOS DEL RECURSO

Respetuosamente me permito disentir de lo expuesto por ese Despacho en la Resolución objeto del presente recurso, toda vez que la presente solicitud sí cumple con los requerimientos de novedad y nivel inventivo exigidos en la Decisión 486, como se demostrará a continuación:

Fundamentos de la petición principal

6.1 La presente solicitud sí es clara

En primer lugar, se desea aclarar que en el nuevo pliego reivindicatorio se ha eliminado la expresión “ejerciendo una fuerza de expansión contra dichas paredes extremas desde dicho interior”, por lo que la objeción hacia la misma debe verse superada.

En cuanto a la expresión “de modo que ninguna parte de dicha primera muestra gráfica sea visible a través de dicha primera parte...” se debe tener en cuenta que la misma enseña a la persona versada en la materia un requerimiento de posición de la muestra gráfica en el producto absorbente con respecto a la porción transparente del paquete. No es posible definir únicamente características estructurales todas las disposiciones en las que la muestra gráfica no es visible a través de la porción transparente. Por lo anterior, esta característica funcional es indispensable para entender la invención y aclara la disposición de los elementos en la invención, por lo que debe ser tomada en cuenta para el análisis de patentabilidad. Dicha disposición de elementos debe otorgarle tanto novedad como nivel inventivo a la presente solicitud.

Para una mayor claridad que ha modificado la expresión “la pila (...) y el material de polímero flexible están colocados” para ahora recitar: “dicha primera muestra gráfica (50, 50e; 70a, 70b; 144) y dicha primera parte transparente (29; 57; 97; 97a; 140) están colocadas...”

Así pues se debe reconocer que el nuevo capítulo reivindicatorio cumple a cabalidad con el requisito de claridad.

6.2 La presente solicitud sí tiene nivel inventivo

A pesar de lo anterior y con el fin de demostrar que la presente solicitud cumple no sólo con el requerimiento de novedad sino también con el requerimiento de nivel inventivo, se pone de presente lo siguiente:

El artículo 18 de la Decisión 486 señala lo siguiente:

“Artículo 18.- Se considerará que una invención tiene nivel inventivo, si para una persona del oficio normalmente versada en la materia técnica correspondiente, esa invención no hubiese resultado obvia ni se hubiese derivado de manera evidente del estado de la técnica.”

Consecuentemente, una invención se considerará inventiva si la misma no hubiese resultado obvia a partir del arte previo, para una persona del oficio normalmente versada en la materia. Esto a su vez implica que el Examinador a cargo de esta evaluación debe colocarse en el momento exacto en el que el inventor buscaba resolver el problema técnico contemplado en la solicitud y para el cual poseía la literatura y el conocimiento disponibles en dicho momento.

Siguiendo entonces los lineamientos de la Jurisprudencia aplicable al análisis del nivel inventivo de una solicitud de patente, se considera que una anterioridad o una combinación de dos anterioridades puede afectar dicho requerimiento de patentabilidad, si una persona medianamente versada en la materia encuentra enseñanzas o sugerencias claras que, a partir de un conocimiento medio en dicho campo, le permitan llegar de manera obvia a la invención reivindicada. Adicionalmente se considera que una mejora sustancial, un efecto inesperado o una ventaja con respecto al arte previo es un indicio de nivel inventivo, por cuanto aporta un salto tecnológico en la regla técnica.

Respecto a lo anterior, el Tribunal de Justicia de la Comunidad Andina ha expuesto en la Interpretación Prejudicial del proceso 13-IP-2010:

“En este orden de ideas, se puede concluir que una invención goza de nivel inventivo cuando a los ojos de un experto medio en el asunto de que se trate, se necesita algo más que la simple aplicación de los conocimientos técnicos en la

materia para llegar a ella, es decir, que de conformidad con el estado de la técnica el invento no es consecuencia clara y directa de dicho estado”.

[señalado fuera del texto]

Por lo anterior, se entiende que para que una persona medianamente versada en la materia pudiera derivar de manera obvia una invención, requeriría simplemente aplicar sus conocimientos técnicos. En contraste, todo aquello que va más allá de la simple aplicación de los conocimientos técnicos y que no ha sido revelado en el estado de la técnica, debe ser considerado inventivo.

A este respecto, respetuosamente manifestamos nuestro desacuerdo con el análisis llevado a cabo por el Examinador y con las conclusiones del mismo y solicitamos atentamente la reconsideración de las razones por las cuales se decidió negar la patente, con base en la siguiente información:

En cuanto al documento D1, vale la pena resaltar que el mismo no divulga disponer una pila de productos/muestra gráfica y el recinto/porción transparente, uno con respecto al otro, de manera que ninguna parte de la muestra gráfica sea visible a través de la porción transparente. El efecto técnico es proteger la muestra gráfica de ser vista y por consiguiente de contribuir con el diseño del empaque.

El documento D2 divulga que la porción transparente puede ser ubicada de manera arbitraria (párrafo 0067) y que puede tener cualquier forma y tamaño (párrafo 0070). Por consiguiente no se puede garantizar la invisibilidad de un gráfico. De hecho, si la persona versada en la materia fuera a combinar los documentos D1 y D2, obtendría la enseñanza de ubicar una pila de productos del documento 1 – con gráficas pero sin fuerza de expansión y que por consiguiente se puede mover – en un recinto con una ubicación arbitraria y porciones transparentes. Lo anterior es contrario a la actual reivindicación 1, la cual lleva a cabo la ubicación relativa específica de la pila y del recinto para prevenir hacer que el gráfico contribuya al diseño del paquete.

En cuanto al argumento del Examinador de acuerdo con el cual el documento D2 enseña localizar la ventana de manera que proteja las porciones adhesivas 41-43 de los rayos UV (párrafo 0069, D2), respetuosamente se aclara que esto se logra, en primer lugar, mediante el doblaje apropiado de la toalla sanitaria 20 y luego asegurando que la línea de doblaje F1 (primer borde 71) se posicione hacia la ventana 16. Sin embargo, haciendo un análisis más cercano a la toalla 20, como en las figuras 3 a 5, se puede ver

que ninguno de los bordes 71-74 cuenta con una porción adhesiva, al contrario, las porciones adhesivas se proporcionan en la cara de hoja de la toalla 20 la cual no está expuesta, y por consiguiente no es para nada visible a través de la ventana 16. Esto es sólo lógico ya que no es deseado y es contraproducente ubicar las porciones adhesivas cerca a los bordes, en donde el doblaje se estresa y entra en contacto con las paredes del recinto, lo que debilitaría o impediría su acción. Consecuentemente, la persona versada en la materia no recibiría enseñanza alguna del documento D2 para disponer la ventana con respecto al adhesivo.

También cabe la pena resaltar que los bordes de la toalla 20 no son adecuados para aplicar indicios o gráficos (contrario a las caras frontales), por lo que el documento D2 no podría proporcionar una enseñanza como la de la reivindicación 1 de la presente solicitud. En el documento D2 no hay enseñanza alguna que indique posicionar la ventana en una pared frontal con respecto a la muestra gráfica en una superficie que mira dicha pared frontal, como sí lo indica la presente reivindicación 1.

En consecuencia de lo anterior, la invención de la presente solicitud de patente tiene nivel inventivo en vista de los documentos D1 y D2 del estado de la técnica citados por el Examinador.

Conclusión

El documento D1, el documento D2, o su combinación no resulta anterioridad válida capaz de afectar el nivel inventivo de la invención de la presente solicitud.

En consecuencia, el mérito investigativo de la presente invención ha sido reconocido por otras oficinas de patentes del mundo, las cuales han otorgado patentes para invenciones equivalentes. Tal es el caso de las Oficinas de Estados Unidos de América, Australia, Rusia, México y Europa. Se debe resaltar que las reivindicaciones de la solicitud Europea son iguales a las de la presente solicitud.

A este respecto, deseamos poner de presente que si bien cada país es autónomo de conceder o negar una solicitud luego de la realización del estudio de fondo, es claro que el hecho de que la novedad y el nivel inventivo de una invención hayan sido reconocidos por varias oficinas a nivel mundial, es un indicio de la patentabilidad de la misma toda vez que (i) el estudio de novedad y nivel inventivo en todas las Oficinas de Patentes del mundo es realizado por personas con conocimientos técnicos en el área de

interés que son consideradas personas idóneas para emitir conceptos sobre la patentabilidad de una invención y que (ii) los resultados de los exámenes de novedad o de patentabilidad efectuados respecto a solicitudes extranjeras pueden ser reconocidos como suficientes para acreditar el cumplimiento de las condiciones de patentabilidad de la invención, tal como se señala en el artículo 46 de la Decisión 486:

“Artículo 46.- La oficina nacional competente podrá requerir el informe de expertos o de organismos científicos o tecnológicos que se consideren idóneos, para que emitan opinión sobre la patentabilidad de la invención. Asimismo, cuando lo estime conveniente, podrá requerir informes de otras oficinas de propiedad industrial.

De ser necesario, a efectos del examen de patentabilidad y a requerimiento de la oficina nacional competente, el solicitante proporcionará, en un plazo que no excederá de 3 meses, uno o más de los siguientes documentos relativos a una o más de las solicitudes extranjeras referidas total o parcialmente a la misma invención que se examina:

a) copia de la solicitud extranjera;

b) copia de los resultados de exámenes de novedad o de patentabilidad efectuados respecto a esa solicitud extranjera;

(...)

*La oficina nacional competente podrá **reconocer los resultados de los exámenes referidos en el literal b) como suficientes para acreditar el cumplimiento de las condiciones de patentabilidad de la invención**” (Negrilla fuera del texto).*

Por todo lo anterior, consideramos que la presente solicitud cumple a cabalidad con los requerimientos de patentabilidad exigidos por la legislación actual, por lo que atentamente solicitamos en consideración lo siguiente:

VII. PETICIÓN

Por todo lo anterior, solicito a ese Despacho lo siguiente:

Petición principal:

7.1 Que al considerar las razones precedentes se revoque la decisión contenida en la Resolución No. **39086** del 30 de julio de 2015, en cuanto resuelve negar el privilegio de patente de invención.

7.2. Que se acepte el nuevo pliego reivindicatorio presentado con este escrito, conformado por 14 reivindicaciones.

7.3. Que se otorgue el privilegio de patente de invención para **“PAQUETE PARA PRODUCTOS ABSORBENTES DESECHABLES Y MÉTODOS RELACIONADOS”** a favor de **SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB**.

VIII. NOMBRE Y DIRECCIÓN

El nombre y la dirección del solicitante recurrente son los siguientes:

S-405 03 , Göteborg
Suecia

IX. ANEXOS

- Formulario de modificaciones en solicitud pendiente
- Recibo por concepto de presentación de modificaciones a las reivindicaciones por valor de \$ 132.000
- Nuevo pliego reivindicatorio conformado por 14 reivindicaciones
- Patente concedida por la Oficina de Patentes de los Estados Unidos de América
- Patente concedida por la Oficina de Patentes de Australia
- Notificación de concesión de la solicitud equivalente - Oficina de Patentes de Rusia
- Notificación de concesión de la solicitud equivalente - Oficina de Patentes de México
- Notificación de concesión de la solicitud equivalente - Oficina de Patentes Europea

X. NOTIFICACIONES

Atentamente manifiesto a usted que recibiré notificaciones en la Secretaria de su Despacho o en mi oficina de abogada situada en la Carrera 4ª. No. 72-35, piso 4º, de esta ciudad de Bogotá, D.C.

Señor Superintendente,


LUZ CLEMENCIA DE PÁEZ

C.C. 35.456.344 de Usaquén

T.P.A. No. 23.555

 Industria y Comercio SUPERINTENDENCIA	Espacio reservado para el adhesivo de radicación
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DIRECCIÓN DE NUEVAS CREACIONES
MODIFICACIONES Y/O CORRECCIONES

1. Identificación del Trámite

☐ Error material ☒ Modificación a una Solicitud en trámite

☒ Patente de Invención

☐ Patente de Modelo de Utilidad

☐ Registro de Diseño Industrial

☐ Esquema de Trazado de Circuitos Integrados

2. Datos del solicitante

Persona Natural ☐ Persona Jurídica ☒

SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB

Nombre o denominación / Nombre o razón social completa

Nombre representante legal

Tipo de empresa Micro ☐ Pequeña ☐ Mediana ☐ Otra ☐

Documento de identificación: ☐ C.C. ☐ C.E. ☐ NIT ☐ Otro Número _____

Nacionalidad/País de constitución	Dirección y domicilio del titular	Ciudad
Suecia	405 03 Göteborg, Suecia	Göteborg
Dirección electrónica	No. Fax	Número telefónico
clientes@cavelier.com	2 11 86 50	3 47 36 11

☐ Autorizo expresamente a la Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio para que todas las comunicaciones sean enviadas a través de la dirección de correo electrónico

3. Datos del apoderado:

Apellidos y Nombre De Páez Luz Clemencia	Documento de identificación C.C. 35.456.344	Tarjeta profesional T.P.A. 23.555
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Dirección y domicilio	Ciudad	
Carrera 4ª No. 72 –35	Bogotá	
Dirección electrónica	No. Fax	Número telefónico
cavelier@cavelier.com	2 11 86 50	3 47 36 11

En caso de haber presentado poder general para asuntos que se adelanten ante la Delegatura de Propiedad Industrial, sírvase indicar el número de su radicación o protocolo de poder general

4. Datos del trámite

Corrección:

Expediente No 14.108.658

Aparece

Debe ser

Modificación:



Modificación al capítulo reivindicatorio.

Presento nuevo capítulo reivindicatorio compuesto por 14 reivindicaciones y pido respetuosamente que el examen de patentabilidad sea realizado sobre estas nuevas reivindicaciones presentadas. Respetuosamente manifiesto que a pesar de eliminar materia del pliego reivindicatorio originalmente presentado, mi representada no renuncia a la protección que pueda obtener sobre dicha materia y además se reserva el derecho de presentar una solicitud divisional que la contenga durante el trámite de la presente solicitud, beneficiándose de la fecha de prioridad inicialmente reivindicada.

5. Anexos



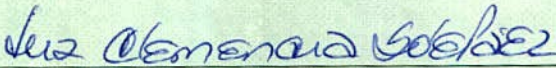
Comprobante de pago de la tasa para la presentación de la corrección y/o modificación por \$132.000.



Documento que contiene las modificaciones o correcciones.



Comprobante de pago por reivindicaciones adicionales después de la décima reivindicación por.

6. Firma	
Nombre y apellidos	Firma
LUZ CLEMENCIA DE PAEZ	
C.C. 35.456.344 DE Usaquén	Tarjeta Profesional 23.555

REIVINDICACIONES MODIFICADAS

1. Un paquete (10; 90; 136) de productos absorbentes desechables (12; 72; 83; 122), que comprende:
 - un recinto (11; 130) definido mediante un material de polímero flexible, que tiene un interior (26), e incluyendo una pared superior (18), una pared inferior (20) dispuesta de manera opuesta a dicha pared superior, una primera y una segunda pared lateral (24) dispuestas de manera opuesta una a la otra y extendiéndose entre dichas paredes superior e inferior, y una primera y una segunda pared extrema (15, 16; 95; 96) dispuestas de manera opuesta una a la otra; y
 - una pila comprimida de productos absorbentes desechables (12; 72; 83; 122) en dicho interior, dicha pila comprimida incluyendo un primer producto absorbente desechable (12f) que contacta dicha primera pared extrema desde dicho interior,
 - en donde:
 - dicha primera pared extrema (15; 95; 96) tiene una primera parte transparente (29; 57; 97; 97a; 140),
 - dicho primer producto absorbente desechable (12f; 72; 83; 122) incluye una primera muestra gráfica (50, 50e; 70a, 70b; 144) en una superficie exterior del mismo que mira hacia dicha primera pared extrema, y
 - dicha primera muestra gráfica (50, 50e; 70a, 70b; 144) y dicha primera parte transparente (29; 57; 97; 97a; 140) están colocadas una con respecto a la otra de modo que ninguna parte de dicha primera muestra gráfica sea visible a través de dicha primera parte transparente de dicha primera pared extrema.
2. El paquete (10) de la reivindicación 1, en donde dicha muestra gráfica comprende una pluralidad de figuras individuales (50c, 50e) espaciadas entre sí, ninguna de las cuales es visible a través de la parte transparente (29) de dicha primera pared extrema.
3. El paquete (10) de la reivindicación 1 o 2, en donde:
 - dicha pila comprimida tiene un segundo producto absorbente desechable (12p) que contacta dicha segunda pared extrema (16) de dicho interior, dicho segundo producto absorbente desechable tiene una segunda muestra gráfica (55) en una superficie exterior del mismo y que mira hacia dicha segunda pared extrema,
 - dicha segunda pared extrema tiene una parte (57) que es transparente, y
 - dicha parte transparente de dicha segunda pared extrema está diseñada de modo que ninguna porción de dicha segunda muestra gráfica es visible a través de la misma.
4. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de la reivindicación 3, en donde dicha primera y segunda muestra gráfica son similares.
5. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 4, en donde cada uno de dichos productos absorbentes desechables en dicha pila comprimida incluye una muestra gráfica en una respectiva superficie exterior del mismo similar a dicha primera muestra gráfica.
6. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 5, en donde dicha parte transparente es una tira alargada (29; 97; 140) que tiene una anchura no mayor a alrededor de 25mm.
7. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 6, que comprende además signos de identificación (35) en dicha parte transparente.
8. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 7, en donde dicha parte transparente incluye un sello (33; 103; 134) de dicha envoltura.
9. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 8, en donde al menos una de dicha primera o segunda pared lateral (24) o dicha pared superior o inferior incluye una segunda parte transparente (37).
10. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1, 2 o 4 a 9, en donde dicha segunda pared extrema es opaca.

11. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 10, en donde cada uno de dichos productos absorbentes desechables se selecciona del grupo que consiste de protectores para la incontinencia, protectores femeninos, pañales de entrenamiento, pañales para bebé y pañales para adultos.

12. El paquete (10) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 11, en donde dicho primer producto absorbente desechable (12a) incluye un panel frontal (44), un panel posterior (46), y un panel de la entrepierna (48) entre dichos paneles frontal y posterior, dicha primera muestra gráfica (70a; 70b) estando ubicada en al menos uno de dichos paneles frontal o posterior.

13. El paquete (90; 136) de cualquiera de las reivindicaciones 1 a 11, en donde dicho primer producto absorbente desechable (72; 83; 122) incluye un panel frontal (82), un panel posterior (84), un panel de la entrepierna (86) entre dichos paneles frontal y posterior, y un elemento de envoltura exterior (81; 81') que envuelve dichos paneles frontal, posterior y de la entrepierna, dicha primera muestra gráfica (70a; 70b) estando ubicada en dicho elemento de envoltura exterior.

14. El paquete (10; 90; 136) de la reivindicación 1, en donde: la primera parte transparente es una porción de tira alargada, y cada uno de los productos absorbentes desechables incluye una muestra gráfica en una respectiva superficie exterior del mismo.



US008479920B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Biber

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(54) **PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE
ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED
METHODS**

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Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority, or the
Declaration (PCT/ISA/220), PCT International Search Report (PCT/
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USPC **206/459.5**; 206/494

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 206/438, 440, 494, 812, 459.5, 775,
206/776, 777, 778
See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A package has a stack of disposable absorbent products in an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material. The enclosure has top and bottom walls, sidewalls extending between the top and bottom walls, and end walls disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products is located in the interior of the enclosure and exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting one of the end walls, which has a portion that is substantially transparent. The first disposable absorbent product includes a graphic display on an outer surface thereof that faces that end wall. No portion of the graphic display is visible through the substantially transparent portion of that end wall.

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20 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

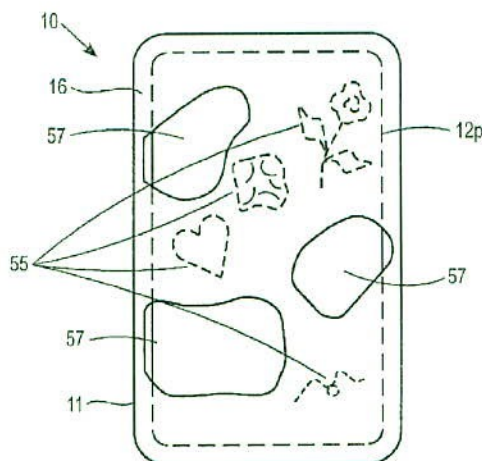


FIG. 1

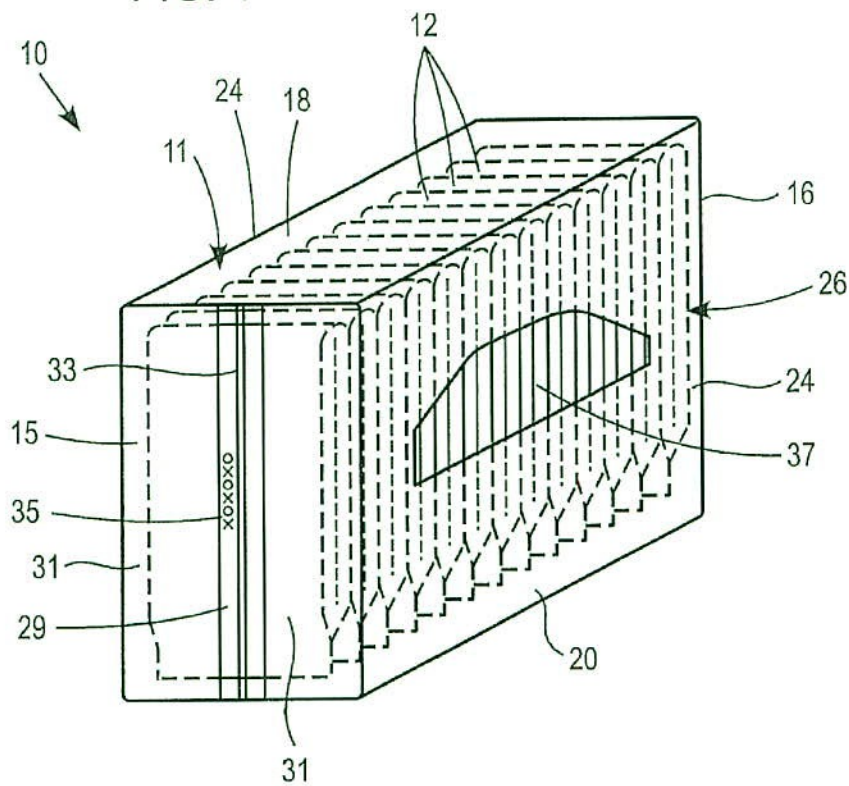


FIG. 1A

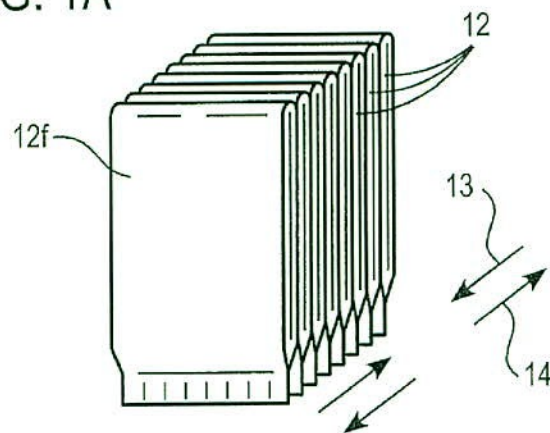


FIG. 2

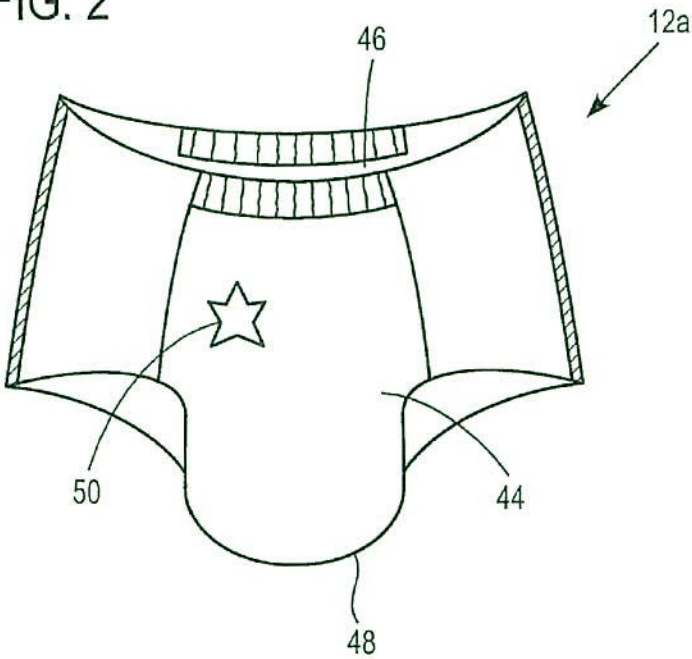


FIG. 3

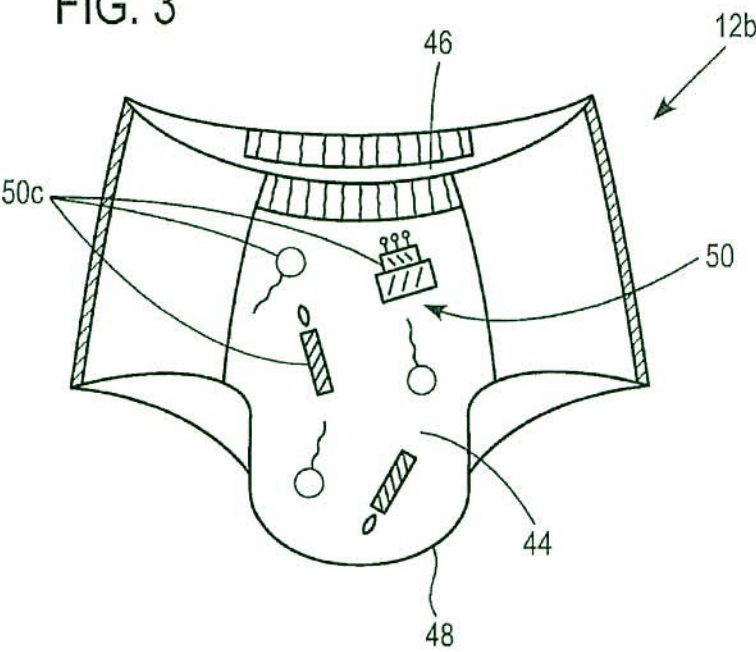


FIG. 4

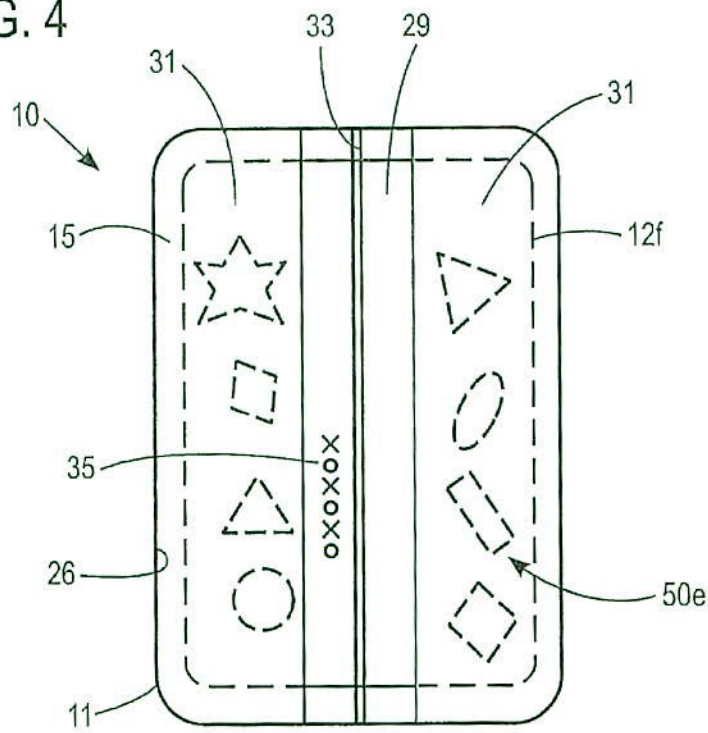


FIG. 5

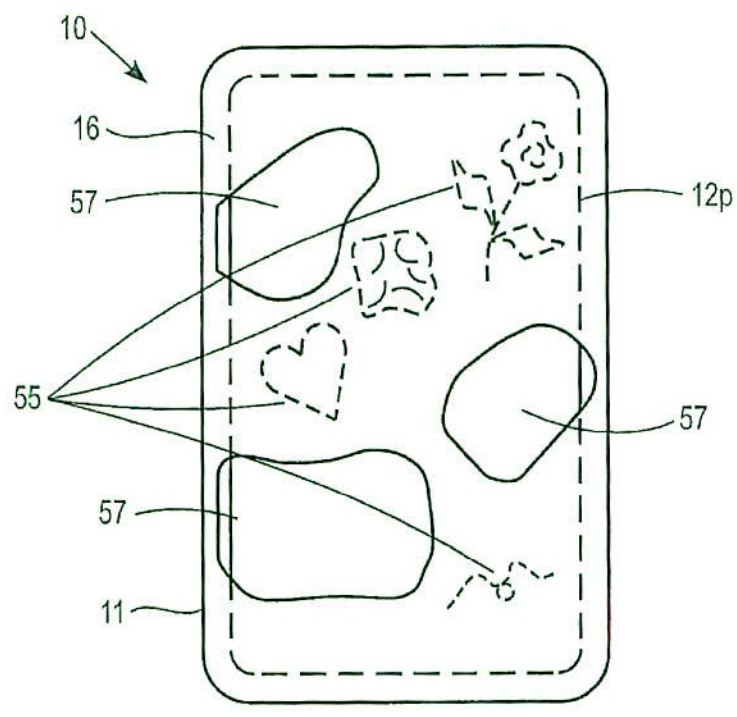


FIG. 6

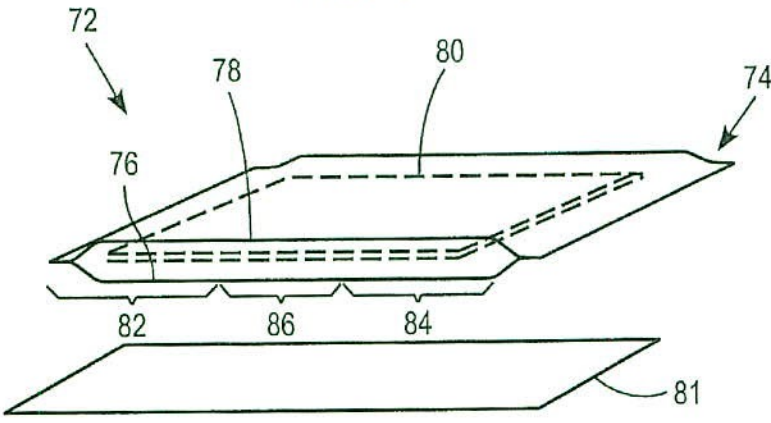


FIG. 6A

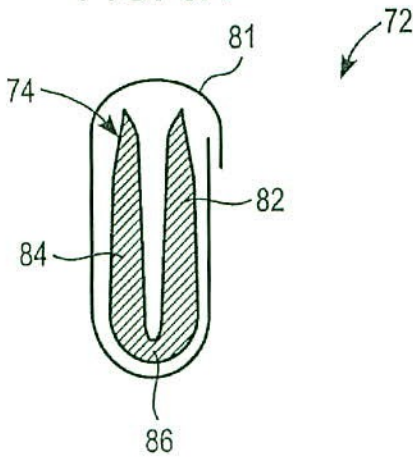


FIG. 6B

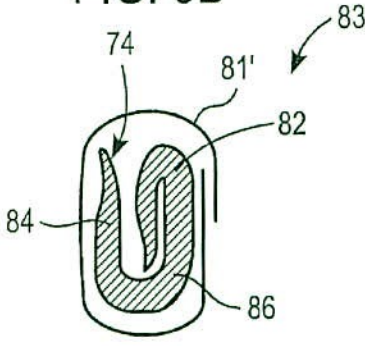


FIG. 9

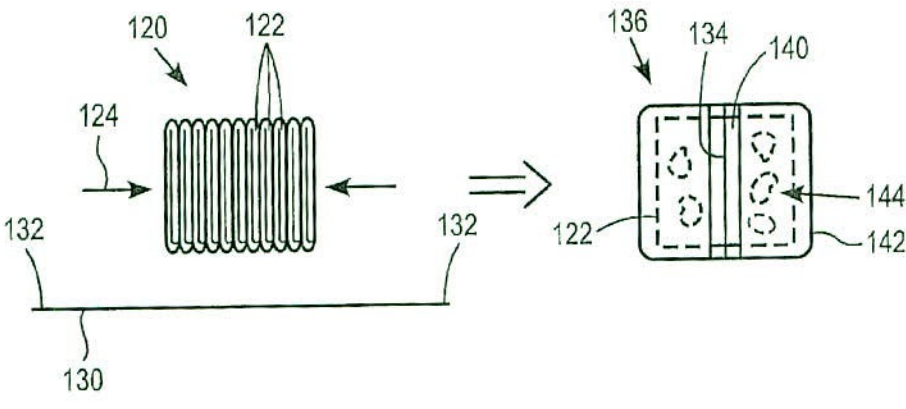
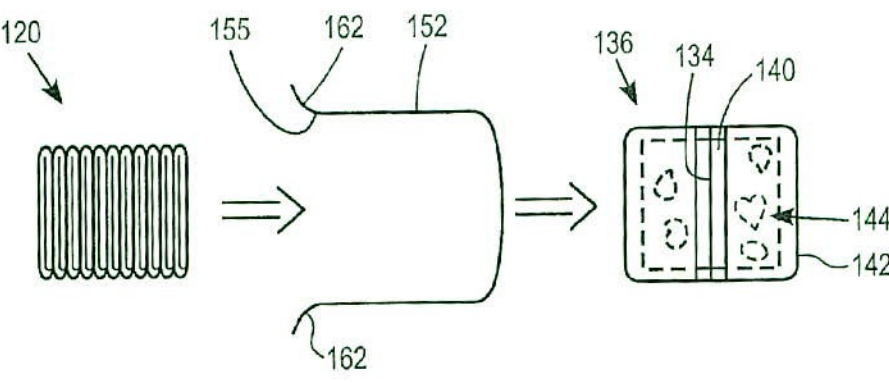


FIG. 10



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PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED METHODS

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention is generally related to absorbent products and, more particularly, to packaging for disposable absorbent products that are worn by humans for the containment and absorption of fluid bodily secretions.

BACKGROUND

Disposable absorbent products for absorption of bodily fluids are available in different types, designs, and dimensions. For example, training pants, baby diapers, adult diapers, and incontinence guards are products designed for the containment of urine and excrement. There are other types of disposable absorbent articles, such as feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners) that are designed to contain and absorb urine and/or menses secreted by female wearers. Known products of this type typically include a topsheet facing the body of the wearer, a backsheet facing the garment worn by the wearer, and an absorbent core sandwiched between the topsheet and backsheet.

Products of the type described above are known to be packaged in flexible, polymeric films that completely envelop a stack of the products. These products may be compressed prior to being packaged, and introduced into an open bag formed from the flexible film or otherwise enclosed by the flexible film. The bag or, generally, the film is then typically sealed and the resulting package of disposable absorbent products moved to another stage of the manufacturing process, or to a staging area for further disposition. Often it is desirable to print, on the outer surface of the package, identifying information associated, for example, with a production date, time, and/or other production details of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package. To that end, known processes are known that print identifying information on a transparent portion of one of the walls of the package, for example. In processes of that type for packaging disposable absorbent products that have graphic displays on their outer surfaces, these displays may interfere with the ability of a user or even of manufacturing personnel to read the identifying information. This, in turn, may cause unnecessary delays in the disposition of finished packages or in the overall ability of a user to obtain information associated with the manufacturing of the products contained in the bag.

In addition to the above, packages of disposable products are known that have selected portions that are transparent and other portions that are opaque. Further, transparent portions are known to provide certain advantages, such as allowing the buyer to see a general shape, feature, or predominant color of the product contained in a package resting on a store shelf, or permitting the user to see the number of products left in a package. But transparent portions may offer certain disadvantages. For example, in the case of products made for children, the transparent portions may eliminate the element of surprise that children are known to appreciate, by easily disclosing the graphic displays that are present on the product.

Accordingly, it is desirable to provide a package of disposable absorbent products, and related methods, that address these and other drawbacks of conventional packages.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objectives and features of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a stack of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package of FIG. 1.

FIG. 2 is an elevation view of an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2, showing an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is an elevation view of the package of FIG. 1, showing a first end wall thereof.

FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4, showing an exemplary second end wall thereof disposed opposite the first end wall of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a schematic, disassembled view of a disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6A is a cross-sectional view of the exemplary disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6, in a folded condition, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6B is a view similar to FIG. 6A, showing the disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6 in a folded condition, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 8 is an elevation view showing an end wall of a package similar to that of FIG. 7, in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 9 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 10 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

SUMMARY

In one embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided that includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material. The enclosure has an interior, and includes a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls that are disposed opposite one another. The package also includes a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior of the enclosure and which exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior.

The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior, and a second disposable absorbent product contacting the second end wall from the interior. The first end wall in this embodiment has a portion that is substantially transparent. In addition, the first disposable absorbent product includes a graphic display on an outer surface thereof that is in contact with the first end wall. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display is visible through the substantially transparent portion of the first end wall.

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In another embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided. The package includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, and which has an interior. The enclosure also has a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior. The first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent, and each of the disposable products includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof, with the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product facing the first end wall from the interior. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product is visible through the elongated strip portion of the first end wall.

In yet another embodiment, a method is provided for packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, with at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products being located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof. The method includes enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls. The compressed stack exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The method also includes positioning the stack and the flexible material relative to one another such that the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure such that the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and such that no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference to the figures, and more particularly to FIGS. 1 and 1A, an exemplary package 10 of disposable absorbent products 12 is illustrated. The package 10 is a generally polyhedral structure (hexahedral in the shown embodiment) that includes an outer, flexible polymeric outer enclosure defining a bag 11 that envelops a stack of the products 12 that are packaged under pressure. For example, and without limitation, the flexible polymeric material defining the bag 11 may be a polyethylene film or film laminate having a thickness of about 2.5 mils (about 0.0635 millimeters). Other non-limiting examples include a LDPE (low density polyethylene) film, a LDPE/LLDPE (linear low density polyethylene) film laminate, a LDPE/MDPE (medium density polyethylene) film laminate, and a LDPE/HDPE (high density polyethylene) film laminate.

The stack of products 12 is packaged under pressure (i.e., they are compression-packed) with a force applied in the general direction of arrows 13. Once the stack of products 12 is in the bag 11, the products 12 exert an outward force (i.e., an expansion force, arrows 14) against a pair of end walls 15, 16 of the package 10. The bag 11 also defines top and bottom walls 18, 20, and a pair of sidewalls 24 extending between the top and bottom walls 18, 20. Package 10 may also include a line of weakness or some other frangible element (not shown) that permits the user to easily tear the bag 11 in specific

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locations so to gain access to the interior 26 of the bag 11, where the products 12 are located. In specific embodiments, the frangible element is an open-ended arcuate line or a closed geometric shape (e.g., an oval or circle having a perforated perimeter) located entirely within a single one of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24, or extending between at least two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24.

Package 10 includes, at one or both of the end walls 15, 16, one or more substantially transparent portions and one or more substantially opaque portions. In the illustrated embodiment, the end wall 15 that is shown in the figure has a centrally located, elongated portion 29 that is substantially transparent, and a pair of side portions 31 that are substantially opaque. In addition, package 10 includes a seal 33 extending within the elongated portion 29, and which is formed, in this exemplary embodiment, when sealing a pair of substantially transparent edges of the bag 11. Notably, the package 10 in the shown embodiment also includes indicia 35, such as letters, numbers, symbols, or combinations thereof, printed at the seal 33 or areas adjacent thereto, and which display codified information associated with the products 12 contained in the package 10. For example, and without limitation, the indicia 35 may be a combination of letters and numbers that provide the user or manufacturing personnel with information on the manufacturing facility, manufacturing line, and/or manufacturing date for the products 12. Indicia 35 may also provide information on the available shelf life for the products 12. It is contemplated that indicia 35 may be printed or alternatively embossed, crimped, or through some other method be made to display information associated with the products 12 or some other type of information, all of which is considered to fall within the scope of the present disclosure.

As used herein, the term "transparent" and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to transmit light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may be seen through that material as clearly as if the material were not present. In that regard, a substantially transparent material is a clear film material capable of transmitting light in the range of between about 0% Haze and about 25% Haze, as measured by the ASTM D1003-11 Standard Test Method for Haze and Luminous Transmittance of Transparent Plastics (using either Procedure A—Hazemeter; Procedure B—Spectrophotometer; or the Alternative Haze [Shortcut] Procedure). Moreover, as used herein, the term "opaque" and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to block light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may not be seen through that material. In that regard, a substantially opaque material is capable of substantially blocking light and has opacity in the range from about 55% to about 100%, as measured by the TAPPI T425 Standard Test Method for the Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing) or the ASTM D589-97 Standard Test Method for Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing). Moreover, a substantially opaque material may be formed from an originally clear film that has ink of a predetermined color (e.g., white) printed thereon or otherwise integrated therewith, or it may instead be originally formed as a colored film.

In another aspect of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, one of the sidewalls 24 has a substantially transparent portion 37 that permits the user, for example, to assess the number of products 12 that remain in the package 10, or to appreciate other aspects (e.g., shapes, colors) of the products 12 that are not clearly visible through the one or more substantially transparent portions 29 located at one or both of the end walls

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15, 16. While not shown, it is contemplated that other substantially transparent portions may be present in package 10, located for example at the top wall 18, bottom wall 20 and/or the other of the sidewalls 24, and which may be present in any number and have any shapes and/or dimensions. For example, it is contemplated that an exemplary substantially transparent portion may extend across two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, or 24 or even extend across more than two of the walls.

With reference to FIG. 2, an exemplary product 12a is illustrated. Product 12a is in the form of a training pant, although this is merely exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting. Product 12a has a front panel 44, a back panel 46, and a crotch panel 48 located between the front and back panels 44, 46. In use, the front panel 44 of product 12a is typically worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a child), the back panel 46 is typically worn on the rear side of the wearer, and the crotch panel 48 is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. The exemplary product 12a shown in FIG. 2 has a graphic display 50 that is, in the illustrated embodiment, in the form of a single star. It is contemplated, however, that the graphic display 50 may be made up of a single object or shape or a plurality of objects or shapes, such as geometric shapes, representations of an animal or plant or parts thereof, representations of a fictitious or reality-based character, lines, dots, letters, numbers, symbols, or any other regular or irregular objects or shapes or combinations thereof. In that regard, therefore, and as used herein, the term "graphic display" and derivatives thereof refer to a single object or shape, or a plurality of objects or shapes that are similar to or different from one another.

In specific embodiments, the graphic display may for example be a series of objects that are linked by a common theme. For example, and without limitation, FIG. 3, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features in the preceding figures, illustrates a graphic display 50 that is made up of a plurality of figures (e.g., objects or shapes) 50e that are associated with a child's birthday party, such as one or more balloons, one or more birthday candles, and one or more birthday cakes, with each of those figures being either grouped together following a predetermined pattern, or randomly located on the outer surface of the product 12b shown in that figure. It is also understood that the graphic display may be either entirely or partially located on any or all of the panels 44, 46, 48.

FIG. 4 illustrates an exemplary end wall 15 of the package 10 (FIG. 1). The package 10 shown in FIG. 4 contains, in its interior 26, a stack of products of the general type described above. The package 10 of the illustrated embodiment, and particularly the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4, are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 50e that is on the outer surface of the first one of the products 12 is visible to the exterior through the substantially transparent portion 29. As that figure shows, the first product 12f in the stack, which is in contact with the end wall 15 from the interior 26, has a graphic display 50e on the surface that faces and contacts the interior surface of the end wall 15. Notably, however, all portions of the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f are hidden from view, by virtue of being in contact with the substantially opaque portions 31, rather than with the substantially transparent portion 29 of the illustrated embodiment.

The substantially transparent portion 29 contains indicia 35 that are easily discernible. More specifically, reading or otherwise obtaining information from the indicia 35 is undisturbed by any of the graphic display 50e that forms part of the first product 12f. In addition to the above, hiding of all portions of the graphic display 50e of first product 12f provides

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an opportunity to the manufacturer and/or marketer of the products 12 (FIGS. 1, 1A) to pleasantly surprise the user of those products. In the case of children, for example, it may be desirable to hide the graphic display 50e, such that a child wearing the products 12 looks forward, with anticipation, to retrieving additional products 12 from the package 10, so as to be surprised by the graphic display 50e thereon that becomes apparent only upon removal of the product 12 from the bag 11. In that regard, embodiments are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure, in which each of the products 12 in a package 10 has identical or at least substantially similar graphic displays 50e, or in which the graphic displays 50e vary between products in the stack within a single package 10.

With continued reference to FIG. 4, and further referring now to FIG. 5, the end wall 16 opposite from the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4 may have a configuration that is similar to or different from that of the end wall 15. More specifically, the entirety of the end wall 16 may be defined by portions of the bag 11 that are substantially opaque, or may have portions that are substantially transparent and having shapes and/or dimensions that are similar to or different from those of substantially transparent portion 29 of end wall 15. Similarly, the stack of products 12 (FIGS. 1 and 1A) in package 10 has a product 12p at the end of the stack that is in contact, from the interior of the package 10, with the interior surface of end wall 16. The product 12p may have a graphic display that is identical or at least substantially similar to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f. Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 5, the product 12p may have a graphic display 55 that is different from the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f. The end wall 16 in the illustrated embodiment has a plurality of spaced, substantially transparent portions 57 that have a configuration that is different from that of substantially transparent portion 29 at end wall 15 (FIG. 4). Notably, the substantially transparent portions 57 are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 55 is visible therethrough, which also provides the benefits described above with respect to the location of the substantially transparent portion 29 relative to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f.

While FIGS. 1-5 refer to products 12 that may be in the form of baby diapers or training pants, these are shown and described as such only in exemplary rather than limiting fashion. It is understood, therefore, that the products 12 may instead be in the form of other types of disposable absorbent products such as, and without limitation, adult diapers, incontinence guards, or feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners).

Referring now to FIGS. 6 and 6A, another exemplary product 72 is illustrated, in the form of a catamenial or feminine hygiene product. Product 72 is made up of a body portion 74 comprising a backsheet 76, a topsheet 78, and an absorbent structure or core 80 disposed between the backsheet and topsheet 76, 78, as well as an outer wrapping element 81 that encloses the body portion 74 when folded (FIGS. 6A and 6B). The body portion 74 of product 72 has, in use, a front panel 82 that is predominantly worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a woman), a back panel 84 that is predominantly worn on the rear side of the wearer, and a crotch panel 86 that is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 6, 6A, and 6B refer to similar features. FIG. 6A illustrates an exemplary folding of the product 72 in which the resulting product is a bifolded structure, enveloped by the outer wrapping element 81. FIG. 6B shows a variation of this embodiment in which a product 83, similar in most respects to product 72, is a tri-folded structure enveloped by an outer wrapping element 81'.

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In the embodiments illustrated at FIGS. 6A and 6B, each of the exemplary outer wrapping elements 81, 81' has a graphic display 70a, 70b (FIGS. 7 and 8) on its outer surface that includes a plurality of squiggly lines and irregular spots, although these are exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting.

With reference to FIGS. 7 and 8, an exemplary package 90 is illustrated containing, in its interior, a stack of compressed products 72 (FIGS. 6 and 6A). Those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that, while package 90 contains products of the type associated with FIG. 6A, it may alternatively contain products similar to the products 83 associated with FIG. 6B, or variations thereof. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 7 and 8 refer to similar features in any of the preceding figures, the description of which may be referred to for an understanding of the features of the embodiment shown in FIGS. 7 and 8 as well. Package 90 includes an end wall 95 having a substantially transparent portion 97 surrounded by a pair of larger substantially opaque portions 99. In the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the substantially transparent portion 97 is in the form of an elongated strip and includes a seal 103, similar to the seal 33 of FIGS. 1 and 4.

The elongated strip-shaped substantially transparent portion 97 in the embodiment of FIG. 7 (or for the substantially transparent portion 29 of FIGS. 1 and 4) may have a width "w," that is no greater than about 25 mm or even no greater than about 7 mm, for example. A variation of this embodiment is contemplated that includes no seal 103 at all, or which instead has a seal or similar structure that is located elsewhere in the package 90. It is also contemplated that the shape and location of the substantially transparent portion 97 on the end wall 95 may be different from that shown in FIG. 7. Yet in another variation, shown in FIG. 8, an end wall 96 may have a plurality of substantially transparent portions 97a that are spaced from one another. In that embodiment, the graphic display 70b of at least the first one of the products in the stack is arranged so as not to be visible through the substantially transparent portions 97a.

In the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 8, no portion of the graphic display 70a, 70b on the outer wrapping element 81 of the first one of the products 72 (i.e., the product closest to and in direct contact with the interior surface of end wall 95, 96) is visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a. The graphic display 70a, 70b is instead in contact with the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96. This facilitates reading or otherwise obtaining information from any indicia 35 that may be present at the seal 103 or in any other portion of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, as discussed above with respect to the embodiment of FIG. 4. In addition, hiding of the graphic display 70a, 70b behind the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96 may be desirable in situations in which a marketer or manufacturer of the products 72 wants the potential buyer to see only specific parts or characteristics of the products but not others. For example, a marketer may want the potential buyer to know that the outer wrapping element 81 has a predetermined color e.g., pink, by making that color visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, while hiding a graphic display 70a, 70b that is present on the surface of the outer wrapping element 81. This may be desirable as a way to pleasantly surprise the user of the product 72 with an unexpected ornamental feature (i.e., the graphic display 70a, 70b) of the products 72. Yet additionally, a marketer may desire to prevent the graphic display 70a, 70b from being visible through one or both of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a so as to make the package of products 72

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discrete, rather than flashy, while making each of the products 72 ornamentally appealing once they are removed from the package.

With respect to FIG. 9, an exemplary process for packaging a stack of disposable absorbent products is schematically illustrated. The process includes obtaining a stack 120 of disposable absorbent products 122, compressing the stack (arrows 124), and enclosing the compressed stack with a sheet 130 of flexible polymeric material. The sheet 130 is then sealed along a pair of confronting substantially transparent edge portions 132, thereby forming a seal 134 on the finished package 136 of the products 122. The edge portions 132 define an exemplary substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at an end wall 142 of the package 136. Notably, this exemplary method includes placing the edge portions 132 relative to the stack 120 such that no portion of a graphic display 144, on at least the first one of the products of the stack 120, is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

A variation of the above-discussed process is schematically illustrated in FIG. 10, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features of the embodiment of FIG. 9. In the process illustrated in FIG. 10, the compressed stack 120 is inserted into a preformed open bag 152 made of a flexible polymeric material. The exemplary preformed bag 152 has an opening 155 that includes substantially transparent edge portions 162. Once the stack 120 is inserted into the open bag 152, same is closed and sealed along the substantially transparent edge portions 162, thereby resulting in the formation of the substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at the end wall 142 of the package 136, which may or may not have a seal 134. In this exemplary process, the insertion of the stack 120 into the open bag 152 is such that no portion of the graphic display 144 is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

A contemplated variation of the processes described in association with FIGS. 9 and 10 is such that the seal 134 may be located in a different wall, other than one of the end walls of the formed package 136. To that end, the orientation of the stack 120 relative to the sheet 130 (FIG. 9) or open preformed bag 152 (FIG. 10) would be different from that shown in the figures but still fall within the scope of the present disclosure, so long as any transparent portions at one or both of the end walls of the package 136 does not permit the graphic display 144 of an immediately adjacent product 122 to be visible therethrough.

While the above-discussed processes refer to a package 136 in which the resulting transparent portion 140 is in the form of an elongated strip, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 of package 136 may have other shapes or dimensions and be present in any number other than one. Similarly, the processes described with respect to FIGS. 9 and 10 are intended to be exemplary rather than limiting, and the products described with respect to FIGS. 1-8 may be packaged by any other suitably chosen methods, so long as they result in packages having the features described in the present disclosure.

Exemplary embodiments of the invention are described as follows, in non-limiting fashion:

- 1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second side-walls disposed opposite one another and extending

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- between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
 a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,
 wherein:
 said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,
 said first disposable absorbent product includes a first graphic display on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall, and
 no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.
2. The package of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.
 3. The package of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
 said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product contacting said second end wall from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall,
 said second end wall has a portion that is substantially transparent, and
 no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.
 4. The package of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.
 5. The package of any of claims 1 to 4, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.
 6. The package of any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip having a width no greater than about 25 mm.
 7. The package of any of claims 1 to 6, further comprising identifying indicia on said substantially transparent portion.
 8. The package of any of claims 1 to 7, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal of said enclosure.
 9. The package of any of claims 1 to 8, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion.
 10. The package of any of claims 1, 2 or 4 to 9, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.
 11. The package of any of claims 1 to 10, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.
 12. The package of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, and a crotch panel between said front and back panels, said first graphic display being located on at least one of said front or back panels.
 13. The package of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, a crotch panel between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display being located on said outer wrapping element.
 14. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, at least a first one of the disposable

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- absorbent products located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof, the method comprising:
 enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls, the compressed stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and
 positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that:
 (a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure,
 (b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and
 (c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.
15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:
 defining a seal of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent portion.
 16. The method of either of claim 14 or 15, further comprising:
 displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.
 17. The method of any of claims 14 to 16, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising:
 positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.
- Other embodiments are also contemplated for uses and methods for making a package of disposable absorbent products according to any of claims 1 to 13, as described above.
- From the above disclosure of the general principles of the present invention and the preceding detailed description of exemplary embodiments, those skilled in the art will readily comprehend the various modifications to which this invention is susceptible. Accordingly, this invention is intended to be limited only by the scope of the following claims and equivalents thereof.
- What is claimed is:
1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
 an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
 a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,
 wherein:
 said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,
 said first disposable absorbent product includes a first graphic display on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall, and

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no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

2. The package of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

3. The package of claim 1, wherein:

said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product contacting said second end wall from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall.

said second end wall has a portion that is substantially transparent, and

no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.

4. The package of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.

5. The package of claim 1, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.

6. The package of claim 1, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip having a width no greater than about 25 mm.

7. The package of claim 6, further comprising identifying indicia on said substantially transparent portion.

8. The package of claim 1, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal of said enclosure.

9. The package of claim 1, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion.

10. The package of claim 1, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.

11. The package of claim 1, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.

12. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, and a crotch panel between said front and back panels, said first graphic display being located on at least one of said front or back panels.

13. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, a crotch panel between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display being located on said outer wrapping element.

14. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:

an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and

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a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,

wherein:

said first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent,

each of said disposable absorbent products includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof, said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product facing said first end wall from said interior, and no portion of said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product is visible through said elongated strip portion of said first end wall.

15. The package of claim 14, further comprising indicia on said elongated strip displaying information associated with the disposable absorbent products contained in said package.

16. The package of claim 14, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second portion that is substantially transparent.

17. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof, the method comprising:

enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls, the compressed stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that:

(a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure,

(b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and

(c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising: defining a seal of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent portion.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising:

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

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DATED : July 9, 2013
INVENTOR(S) : Mariela Biber

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the Specification:

In column 7, line 25, change "or for the substantially" to --or the substantially--;

In column 8, lines 38 and 39, change "in association with" to --in connection with--;

Delete the disclosure beginning at column 8, line 61 and ending at column 10, line 40.

In the Claims:

Column 11, lines 6-7, in claim 2, change "the substantially transparent portion" to --said first substantially transparent portion--.

Signed and Sealed this
Twentieth Day of August, 2013



Teresa Stanek Rea
Acting Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office



Australian Government
IP Australia

CERTIFICATE OF GRANT STANDARD PATENT

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I, Fatima Beattie, the Commissioner of Patents, certify that the following are the particulars of this patent appearing in the Register of Patents:

Name and Address of Patentee(s):

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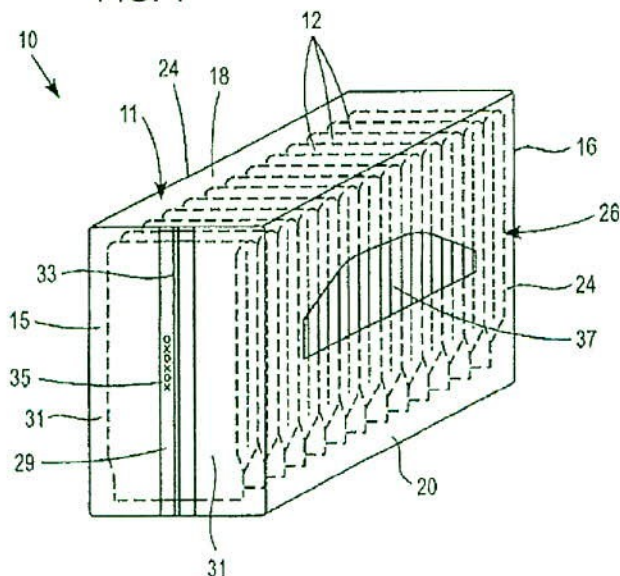
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(54) Title: PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED METHODS

FIG. 1



(57) Abstract: Package (10) having a stack of disposable absorbent products (12) in an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material (11). The enclosure has top and bottom walls (18, 20), sidewalls (24), and end walls (15, 16) disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products (12) is located in the interior (26) of the enclosure and exerts an expansion force against the end walls (15, 16) from the interior (26). The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product (12f) contacting one of the end walls (15, 16), which has a portion (29) that is substantially transparent. The first disposable absorbent product (12f) includes a graphic display (50c) on an outer surface thereof that faces that end wall (15, 16). No portion of the graphic display (50c) is visible through the substantially transparent portion (29) of that end wall (15, 16).

PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS
AND RELATED METHODS

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention is generally related to absorbent products and, more particularly, to packaging for disposable absorbent products that are worn by humans for the containment and absorption of fluid bodily secretions.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Disposable absorbent products for absorption of bodily fluids are available in different types, designs, and dimensions. For example, training pants, baby diapers, adult diapers, and incontinence guards are products designed for the containment of urine and excrement. There are other types of disposable absorbent articles, such as feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners) that are designed to contain and absorb urine and/or menses secreted by female wearers. Known products of this type typically include a topsheet facing the body of the wearer, a backsheet facing the garment worn by the wearer, and an absorbent core sandwiched between the topsheet and backsheet.

[0003] Products of the type described above are known to be packaged in flexible, polymeric films that completely envelop a stack of the products. These products may be compressed prior to being packaged, and introduced into an open bag formed from the flexible film or otherwise enclosed by the flexible film. The bag or, generally, the film is then typically sealed and the resulting package of disposable absorbent products moved to another stage of the manufacturing process, or to a staging area for further disposition. Often it is desirable to print, on the outer surface of the package, identifying information

associated, for example, with a production date, time, and/or other production details of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package. To that end, known processes are known that print identifying information on a transparent portion of one of the walls of the package, for example. In processes of that type for packaging disposable absorbent products that have graphic displays on their outer surfaces, these displays may interfere with the ability of a user or even of manufacturing personnel to read the identifying information. This, in turn, may cause unnecessary delays in the disposition of finished packages or in the overall ability of a user to obtain information associated with the manufacturing of the products contained in the bag.

[0004] In addition to the above, packages of disposable products are known that have selected portions that are transparent and other portions that are opaque. Further, transparent portions are known to provide certain advantages, such as allowing the buyer to see a general shape, feature, or predominant color of the product contained in a package resting on a store shelf, or permitting the user to see the number of products left in a package. But transparent portions may offer certain disadvantages. For example, in the case of products made for children, the transparent portions may eliminate the element of surprise that children are known to appreciate, by easily disclosing the graphic displays that are present on the product.

[0005] Accordingly, it is desirable to provide a package of disposable absorbent products, and related methods, that address these and other drawbacks of conventional packages. US 2009/088715A1 discloses a package according to the preamble of claim 1.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The objectives and features of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0007] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a stack of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package of FIG. 1

[0009] FIG. 2 is an elevation view of an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00010] FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2, showing an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00011] FIG. 4 is an elevation view of the package of FIG. 1, showing a first end wall thereof.

[00012] FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4, showing an exemplary second end wall thereof disposed opposite the first end wall of FIG. 4.

[00013] FIG. 6 is a schematic, disassembled view of a disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00014] FIG. 6A is a cross-sectional view of the exemplary disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6, in a folded condition, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00015] FIG. 6B is a view similar to FIG. 6A, showing the disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6 in a folded condition, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00016] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00017] FIG. 8 is an elevation view showing an end wall of a package similar to that of FIG. 7, in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention.

[00018] FIG. 9 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00019] FIG. 10 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

SUMMARY

[00020] In one embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided that includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material. The enclosure has an interior, and includes a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls that are disposed opposite one another. The package also includes a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior of the enclosure and which exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior.

[00021] The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior, and a second disposable absorbent product contacting the second end wall from the interior. The first end wall in this embodiment has a portion that is substantially transparent. In addition, the first disposable absorbent product includes a graphic display on an outer surface thereof that is in contact with the first end wall. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display is visible through the substantially transparent portion of the first end wall.

[00022] In another embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided. The package includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, and which has an interior. The enclosure also has a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior. The first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent, and each of the disposable products includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof, with the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product facing the first end wall from the interior. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product is visible through the elongated strip portion of the first end wall.

[00023] In yet another embodiment, a method is provided for packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, with at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products being located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof. The method includes enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls. The compressed stack exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The method also includes positioning the stack and the flexible material relative to one another such that the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure

such that the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and such that no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[00024] With reference to the figures, and more particularly to FIGS. 1 and 1A, an exemplary package 10 of disposable absorbent products 12 is illustrated. The package 10 is a generally polyhedral structure (hexahedral in the shown embodiment) that includes an outer, flexible polymeric outer enclosure defining a bag 11 that envelops a stack of the products 12 that are packaged under pressure. For example, and without limitation, the flexible polymeric material defining the bag 11 may be a polyethylene film or film laminate having a thickness of about 2.5 mils (about 0.0635 millimeters). Other non-limiting examples include a LDPE (low density polyethylene) film, a LDPE/LLDPE (linear low density polyethylene) film laminate, a LDPE/MDPE (medium density polyethylene) film laminate, and a LDPE/HDPE (high density polyethylene) film laminate.

[00025] The stack of products 12 is packaged under pressure (i.e., they are compression-packed) with a force applied in the general direction of arrows 13. Once the stack of products 12 is in the bag 11, the products 12 exert an outward force (i.e., an expansion force, arrows 14) against a pair of end walls 15, 16 of the package 10. The bag 11 also defines top and bottom walls 18, 20, and a pair of sidewalls 24 extending between the top and bottom walls 18, 20. Package 10 may also include a line of weakness or some other frangible element (not shown) that permits the user to easily tear the bag 11 in specific locations so to gain access to the interior 26 of the bag 11, where the products 12 are located. In specific embodiments, the frangible element is an open-ended arcuate line or a closed geometric shape (e.g., an oval or circle having a perforated perimeter) located

entirely within a single one of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24, or extending between at least two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24.

[00026] Package 10 includes, at one or both of the end walls 15, 16, one or more substantially transparent portions and one or more substantially opaque portions. In the illustrated embodiment, the end wall 15 that is shown in the figure has a centrally located, elongated portion 29 that is substantially transparent, and a pair of side portions 31 that are substantially opaque. In addition, package 10 includes a seal 33 extending within the elongated portion 29, and which is formed, in this exemplary embodiment, when sealing a pair of substantially transparent edges of the bag 11. Notably, the package 10 in the shown embodiment also includes indicia 35, such as letters, numbers, symbols, or combinations thereof, printed at the seal 33 or areas adjacent thereto, and which display codified information associated with the products 12 contained in the package 10. For example, and without limitation, the indicia 35 may be a combination of letters and numbers that provide the user or manufacturing personnel with information on the manufacturing facility, manufacturing line, and/or manufacturing date for the products 12. Indicia 35 may also provide information on the available shelf life for the products 12. It is contemplated that indicia 35 may be printed or alternatively embossed, crimped, or through some other method be made to display information associated with the products 12 or some other type of information, all of which is considered to fall within the scope of the present disclosure.

[00027] As used herein, the term "transparent" and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to transmit light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may be seen through that material as clearly as if the material were not present. In that regard, a substantially transparent

material is a clear film material capable of transmitting light in the range of between about 0% Haze and about 25% Haze, as measured by the ASTM D1003-11 Standard Test Method for Haze and Luminous Transmittance of Transparent Plastics (using either Procedure A – Hazemeter; Procedure B – Spectrophotometer; or the Alternative Haze [Shortcut] Procedure). Moreover, as used herein, the term “opaque” and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to block light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may not be seen through that material. In that regard, a substantially opaque material is capable of substantially blocking light and has opacity in the range from about 55% to about 100%, as measured by the TAPPI T425 Standard Test Method for the Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing) or the ASTM D589-97 Standard Test Method for Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing). Moreover, a substantially opaque material may be formed from an originally clear film that has ink of a predetermined color (e.g., white) printed thereon or otherwise integrated therewith, or it may instead be originally formed as a colored film.

[00028] In another aspect of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, one of the sidewalls 24 has a substantially transparent portion 37 that permits the user, for example, to assess the number of products 12 that remain in the package 10, or to appreciate other aspects (e.g., shapes, colors) of the products 12 that are not clearly visible through the one or more substantially transparent portions 29 located at one or both of the end walls 15, 16. While not shown, it is contemplated that other substantially transparent portions may be present in package 10, located for example at the top wall 18, bottom wall 20 and/or the other of the sidewalls 24, and which may be present in any number and have any shapes and/or

dimensions. For example, it is contemplated that an exemplary substantially transparent portion may extend across two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, or 24 or even extend across more than two of the walls.

[00029] With reference to FIG. 2, an exemplary product 12a is illustrated. Product 12a is in the form of a training pant, although this is merely exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting. Product 12a has a front panel 44, a back panel 46, and a crotch panel 48 located between the front and back panels 44, 46. In use, the front panel 44 of product 12a is typically worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a child), the back panel 46 is typically worn on the rear side of the wearer, and the crotch panel 48 is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. The exemplary product 12a shown in FIG. 2 has a graphic display 50 that is, in the illustrated embodiment, in the form of a single star. It is contemplated, however, that the graphic display 50 may be made up of a single object or shape or a plurality of objects or shapes, such as geometric shapes, representations of an animal or plant or parts thereof, representations of a fictitious or reality-based character, lines, dots, letters, numbers, symbols, or any other regular or irregular objects or shapes or combinations thereof. In that regard, therefore, and as used herein, the term “graphic display” and derivatives thereof refer to a single object or shape, or a plurality of objects or shapes that are similar to or different from one another.

[00030] In specific embodiments, the graphic display may for example be a series of objects that are linked by a common theme. For example, and without limitation, FIG. 3, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features in the preceding figures, illustrates a graphic display 50 that is made up of a plurality of figures (e.g., objects or shapes) 50c that are associated with a child's birthday party, such as one or more balloons, one or more birthday candles, and one or more birthday cakes, with each of those figures

being either grouped together following a predetermined pattern, or randomly located on the outer surface of the product 12b shown in that figure. It is also understood that the graphic display may be either entirely or partially located on any or all of the panels 44, 46, 48.

[00031] FIG. 4 illustrates an exemplary end wall 15 of the package 10 (FIG. 1). The package 10 shown in FIG. 4 contains, in its interior 26, a stack of products of the general type described above. The package 10 of the illustrated embodiment, and particularly the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4, are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 50e that is on the outer surface of the first one of the products 12 is visible to the exterior through the substantially transparent portion 29. As that figure shows, the first product 12f in the stack, which is in contact with the end wall 15 from the interior 26, has a graphic display 50e on the surface that faces and contacts the interior surface of the end wall 15. Notably, however, all portions of the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f are hidden from view, by virtue of being in contact with the substantially opaque portions 31, rather than with the substantially transparent portion 29 of the illustrated embodiment.

[00032] The substantially transparent portion 29 contains indicia 35 that are easily discernible. More specifically, reading or otherwise obtaining information from the indicia 35 is undisturbed by any of the graphic display 50e that forms part of the first product 12f. In addition to the above, hiding of all portions of the graphic display 50e of first product 12f provides an opportunity to the manufacturer and/or marketer of the products 12 (FIGS. 1, 1A) to pleasantly surprise the user of those products. In the case of children, for example, it may be desirable to hide the graphic display 50e, such that a child wearing the products 12 looks forward, with anticipation, to retrieving additional products 12 from the package 10, so as to be surprised by the graphic display 50e thereon that becomes apparent

only upon removal of the product 12 from the bag 11. In that regard, embodiments are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure, in which each of the products 12 in a package 10 has identical or at least substantially similar graphic displays 50e, or in which the graphic displays 50e vary between products in the stack within a single package 10.

[00033] With continued reference to FIG. 4, and further referring now to FIG. 5, the end wall 16 opposite from the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4 may have a configuration that is similar to or different from that of the end wall 15. More specifically, the entirety of the end wall 16 may be defined by portions of the bag 11 that are substantially opaque, or may have portions that are substantially transparent and having shapes and/or dimensions that are similar to or different from those of substantially transparent portion 29 of end wall 15. Similarly, the stack of products 12 (FIGS. 1 and 1A) in package 10 has a product 12p at the end of the stack that is in contact, from the interior of the package 10, with the interior surface of end wall 16. The product 12p may have a graphic display that is identical or at least substantially similar to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f. Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 5, the product 12p may have a graphic display 55 that is different from the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f. The end wall 16 in the illustrated embodiment has a plurality of spaced, substantially transparent portions 57 that have a configuration that is different from that of substantially transparent portion 29 at end wall 15 (FIG. 4). Notably, the substantially transparent portions 57 are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 55 is visible therethrough, which also provides the benefits described above with respect to the location of the substantially transparent portion 29 relative to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f.

[00034] While FIGS. 1-5 refer to products 12 that may be in the form of baby diapers or training pants, these are shown and described as such only in exemplary rather than limiting fashion. It is understood, therefore, that the products 12 may instead be in the form of other types of disposable absorbent products such as, and without limitation, adult diapers, incontinence guards, or feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners).

[00035] Referring now to FIGS. 6 and 6A, another exemplary product 72 is illustrated, in the form of a catamenial or feminine hygiene product. Product 72 is made up of a body portion 74 comprising a backsheet 76, a topsheet 78, and an absorbent structure or core 80 disposed between the backsheet and topsheet 76, 78, as well as an outer wrapping element 81 that encloses the body portion 74 when folded (FIGS. 6A and 6B). The body portion 74 of product 72 has, in use, a front panel 82 that is predominantly worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a woman), a back panel 84 that is predominantly worn on the rear side of the wearer, and a crotch panel 86 that is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 6, 6A, and 6B refer to similar features. FIG. 6A illustrates an exemplary folding of the product 72 in which the resulting product is a bifolded structure, enveloped by the outer wrapping element 81. FIG. 6B shows a variation of this embodiment in which a product 83, similar in most respects to product 72, is a trifolded structure enveloped by an outer wrapping element 81'. In the embodiments illustrated at FIGS. 6A and 6B, each of the exemplary outer wrapping elements 81, 81' has a graphic display 70a, 70b (FIGS. 7 and 8) on its outer surface that includes a plurality of squiggly lines and irregular spots, although these are exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting.

[00036] With reference to FIGS. 7 and 8, an exemplary package 90 is illustrated containing, in its interior, a stack of compressed products 72 (FIGS. 6 and 6A). Those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that, while package 90 contains products of the type associated with FIG. 6A, it may alternatively contain products similar to the products 83 associated with FIG. 6B, or variations thereof. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 7 and 8 refer to similar features in any of the preceding figures, the description of which may be referred to for an understanding of the features of the embodiment shown in FIGS. 7 and 8 as well. Package 90 includes an end wall 95 having a substantially transparent portion 97 surrounded by a pair of larger substantially opaque portions 99. In the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the substantially transparent portion 97 is in the form of an elongated strip and includes a seal 103, similar to the seal 33 of FIGS. 1 and 4.

[00037] The elongated strip-shaped substantially transparent portion 97 in the embodiment of FIG. 7 (or for the substantially transparent portion 29 of FIGS. 1 and 4) may have a width "w," that is no greater than about 25mm or even no greater than about 7mm, for example. A variation of this embodiment is contemplated that includes no seal 103 at all, or which instead has a seal or similar structure that is located elsewhere in the package 90. It is also contemplated that the shape and location of the substantially transparent portion 97 on the end wall 95 may be different from that shown in FIG. 7. Yet in another variation, shown in FIG. 8, an end wall 96 may have a plurality of substantially transparent portions 97a that are spaced from one another. In that embodiment, the graphic display 70b of at least the first one of the products in the stack is arranged so as not to be visible through the substantially transparent portions 97a.

[00038] In the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 8, no portion of the graphic display 70a, 70b on the outer wrapping element 81 of the first one of the products 72 (i.e., the product closest to and in direct contact with the interior surface of end wall 95, 96) is visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a. The graphic display 70a, 70b is instead in contact with the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96. This facilitates reading or otherwise obtaining information from any indicia 35 that may be present at the seal 103 or in any other portion of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, as discussed above with respect to the embodiment of FIG. 4. In addition, hiding of the graphic display 70a, 70b behind the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96 may be desirable in situations in which a marketer or manufacturer of the products 72 wants the potential buyer to see only specific parts or characteristics of the products but not others. For example, a marketer may want the potential buyer to know that the outer wrapping element 81 has a predetermined color e.g., pink, by making that color visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, while hiding a graphic display 70a, 70b that is present on the surface of the outer wrapping element 81. This may be desirable as a way to pleasantly surprise the user of the product 72 with an unexpected ornamental feature (i.e., the graphic display 70a, 70b) of the products 72. Yet additionally, a marketer may desire to prevent the graphic display 70a, 70b from being visible through one or both of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a so as to make the package of products 72 discrete, rather than flashy, while making each of the products 72 ornamentally appealing once they are removed from the package.

[00039] With respect to FIG. 9, an exemplary process for packaging a stack of disposable absorbent products is schematically illustrated. The process includes obtaining a stack 120 of disposable absorbent products 122, compressing the stack (arrows 124), and

enclosing the compressed stack with a sheet 130 of flexible polymeric material. The sheet 130 is then sealed along a pair of confronting substantially transparent edge portions 132, thereby forming a seal 134 on the finished package 136 of the products 122. The edge portions 132 define an exemplary substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at an end wall 142 of the package 136. Notably, this exemplary method includes placing the edge portions 132 relative to the stack 120 such that no portion of a graphic display 144, on at least the first one of the products of the stack 120, is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

[00040] A variation of the above-discussed process is schematically illustrated in FIG. 10, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features of the embodiment of FIG. 9. In the process illustrated in FIG. 10, the compressed stack 120 is inserted into a preformed open bag 152 made of a flexible polymeric material. The exemplary preformed bag 152 has an opening 155 that includes substantially transparent edge portions 162. Once the stack 120 is inserted into the open bag 152, same is closed and sealed along the substantially transparent edge portions 162, thereby resulting in the formation of the substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at the end wall 142 of the package 136, which may or may not have a seal 134. In this exemplary process, the insertion of the stack 120 into the open bag 152 is such that no portion of the graphic display 144 is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

[00041] A contemplated variation of the processes described in association with FIGS. 9 and 10 is such that the seal 134 may be located in a different wall, other than one of the end walls of the formed package 136. To that end, the orientation of the stack 120 relative to the sheet 130 (FIG. 9) or open preformed bag 152 (FIG. 10) would be different

from that shown in the figures but still fall within the scope of the present disclosure, so long as any transparent portions at one or both of the end walls of the package 136 does not permit the graphic display 144 of an immediately adjacent product 122 to be visible therethrough.

[00042] While the above-discussed processes refer to a package 136 in which the resulting transparent portion 140 is in the form of an elongated strip, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 of package 136 may have other shapes or dimensions and be present in any number other than one. Similarly, the processes described with respect to FIGS. 9 and 10 are intended to be exemplary rather than limiting, and the products described with respect to FIGS. 1-8 may be packaged by any other suitably chosen methods, so long as they result in packages having the features described in the present disclosure.

[00043] Exemplary embodiments of the invention are described as follows, in non-limiting fashion:

1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,
wherein:
said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,

said first disposable absorbent product includes a first graphic display on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall, and
no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

2. The package of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

3. The package of claims 1 or 2, wherein:
said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product contacting said second end wall from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall,
said second end wall has a portion that is substantially transparent, and
no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.

4. The package of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.

5. The package of any of claims 1 to 4, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.

6. The package of any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip having a width no greater than about 25mm.
7. The package of any of claims 1 to 6, further comprising identifying indicia on said substantially transparent portion.
8. The package of any of claims 1 to 7, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal of said enclosure.
9. The package of any of claims 1 to 8, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion.
10. The package of any of claims 1, 2 or 4 to 9, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.
11. The package of any of claims 1 to 10, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.
12. The package of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, and a crotch panel between said front and back panels, said first graphic display being located on at least one of said front or back panels.

13. The package of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, a crotch panel between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display being located on said outer wrapping element.

14. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof, the method comprising:

enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls, the compressed stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that:

(a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure,

(b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and

(c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:

defining a seal of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent portion.

16. The method of either of claim 14 or 15, further comprising:
displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being associated
with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.

17. The method of any of claims 14 to 16, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least
a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising: positioning the
compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second
substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the
sidewalls of the enclosure.

Other embodiments are also contemplated for uses and methods for making a package of
disposable absorbent products according to any of claims 1 to 13, as described above.

[0044] From the above disclosure of the general principles of the present invention and
the preceding detailed description of exemplary embodiments, those skilled in the art will readily
comprehend the various modifications to which this invention is susceptible. Accordingly, this
invention is intended to be limited only by the scope of the following claims and equivalents
thereof.

[0045] Comprises/comprising and grammatical variations thereof when used in this
specification are to be taken to specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps or
components or groups thereof, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other
features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,
wherein:
said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,
said first disposable absorbent product includes a first graphic display on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall, and
no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.
2. The package of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.
3. The package of claim 1-2 wherein:
said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product contacting said second end wall from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall,
said second end wall has a portion that is substantially transparent, and
no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.
4. The package of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.
5. The package of claim 1, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.

6. The package of any one of claims 1-5, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip having a width no greater than about 25 mm.
7. The package of any one of claims 1-6, further comprising identifying indicia on said substantially transparent portion.
8. The package of any one of claims 1-7, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal of said enclosure.
9. The package of any one of claims 1-8, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion.
10. The package of claim 1, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.
11. The package of any one of claims 1-10, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.
12. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, and a crotch panel between said front and back panels, said first graphic display being located on at least one of said front or back panels.
13. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, a crotch panel between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display being located on said outer wrapping element.
14. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
 - an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
 - a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,
 wherein:

said first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent,
each of said disposable absorbent products includes a graphic display on a respective
outer surface thereof, said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product facing said
first end wall from said interior, and

no portion of said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product is visible
through said elongated strip portion of said first end wall.

15. The package of claim 14, further comprising indicia on said elongated strip displaying
information associated with the disposable absorbent products contained in said package.

16. The package of claim 14 or 15, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or
said top or bottom walls includes a second portion that is substantially transparent.

17. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, at least a
first one of the disposable absorbent products located at an end of the stack having a graphic
display on an outer surface thereof, the method comprising:

enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one
substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having
a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one
another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls, the compressed
stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another
such that:

(a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end
walls of the enclosure,

(b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and

(c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially
transparent portion.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

defining a seal of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent portion.

19. The method of claim 17 or 18, further comprising:

displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being
associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.

20. The method of any one of claims 17-19, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising:
- positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.

SCA HYGIENE PRODUCTS AB

WATERMARK PATENT & TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS

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FIG. 1

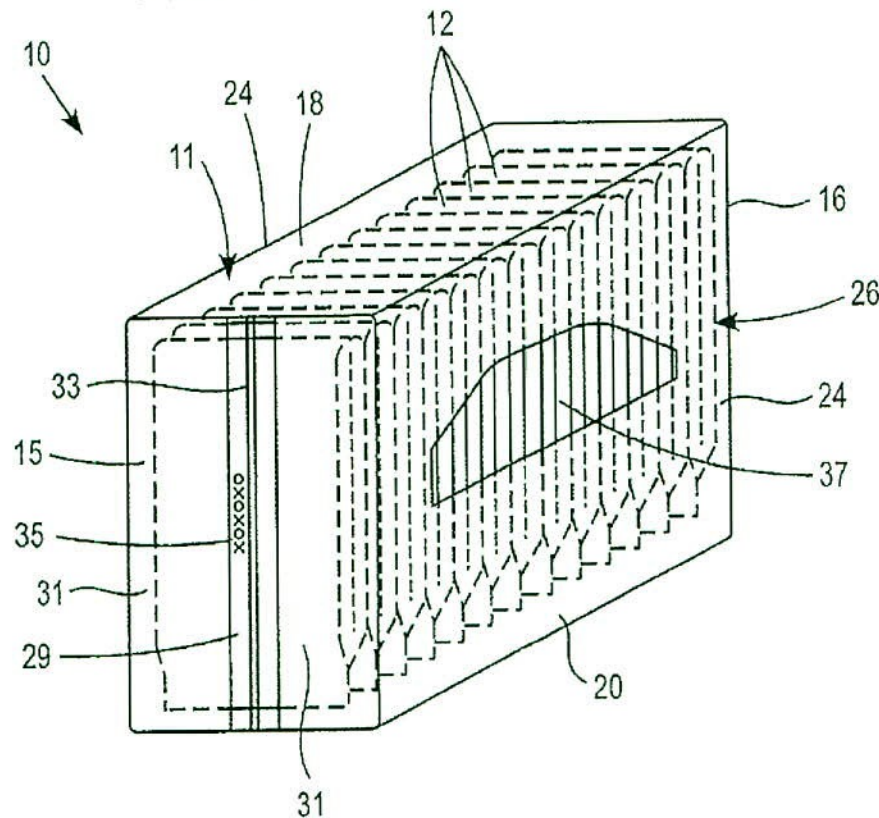
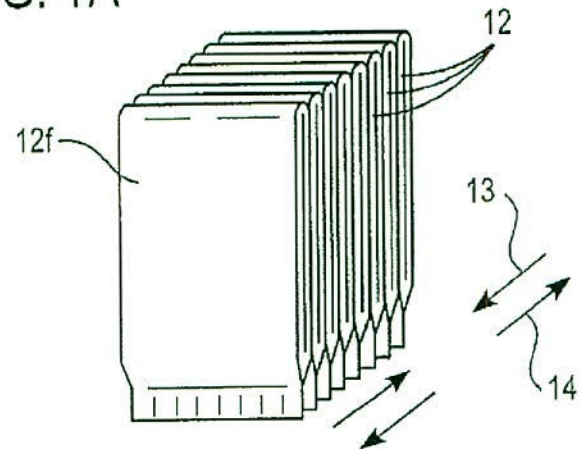


FIG. 1A



57

FIG. 2

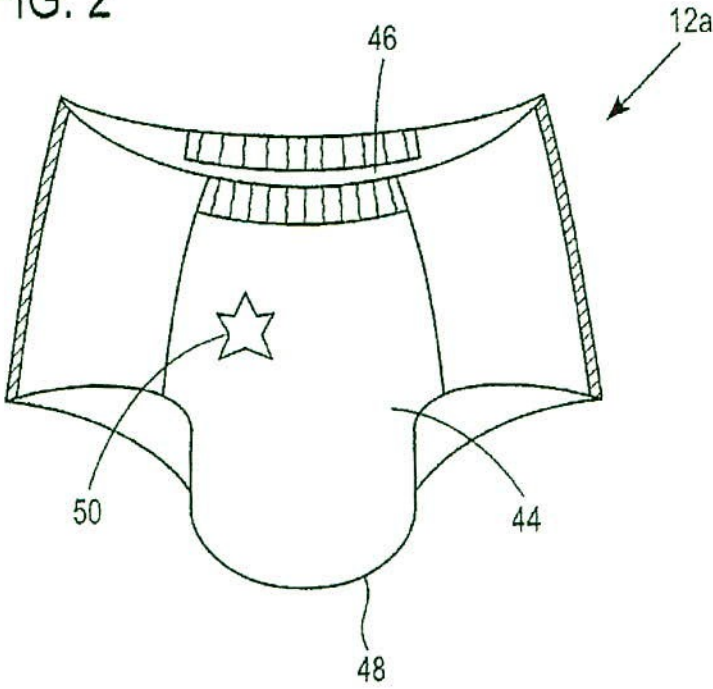


FIG. 3

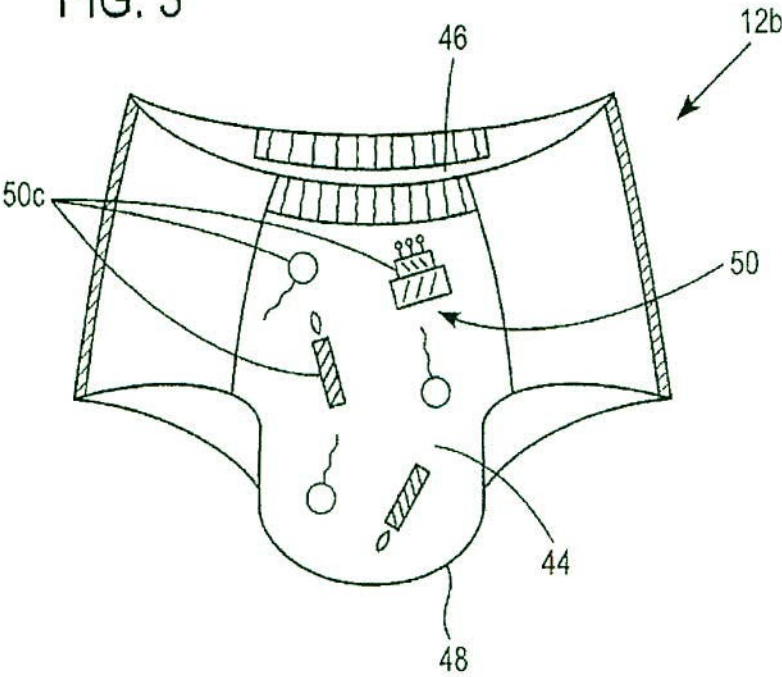


FIG. 4

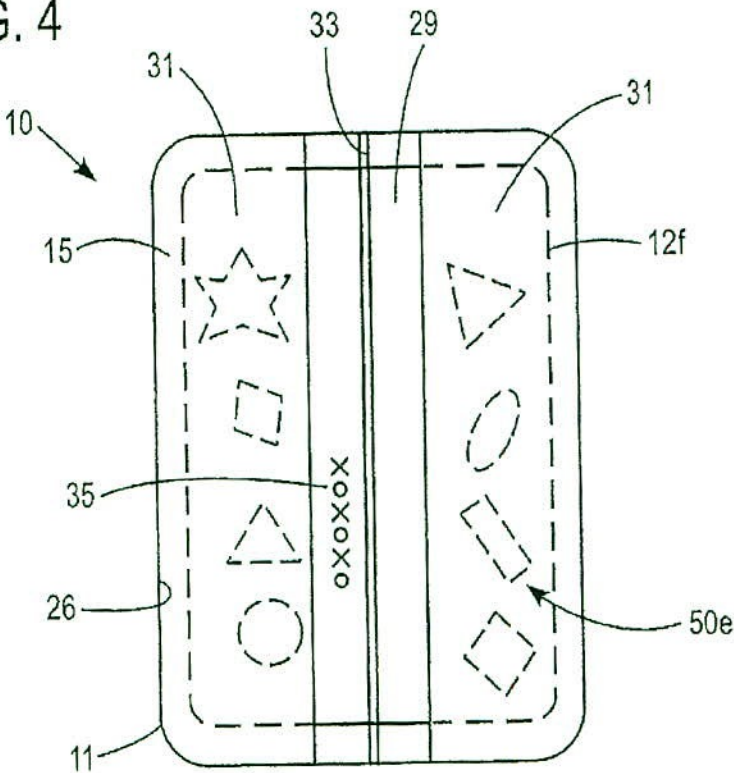


FIG. 5

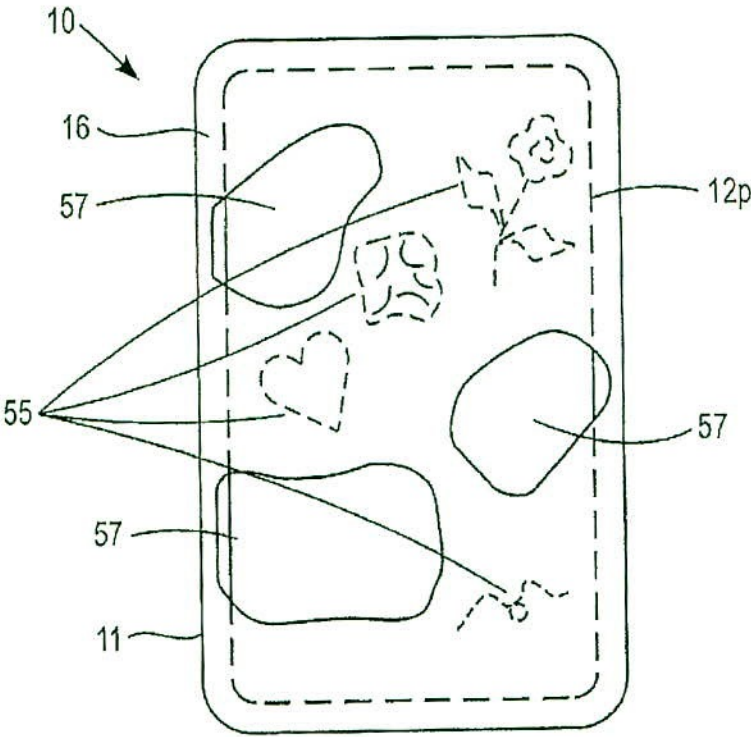


FIG. 6

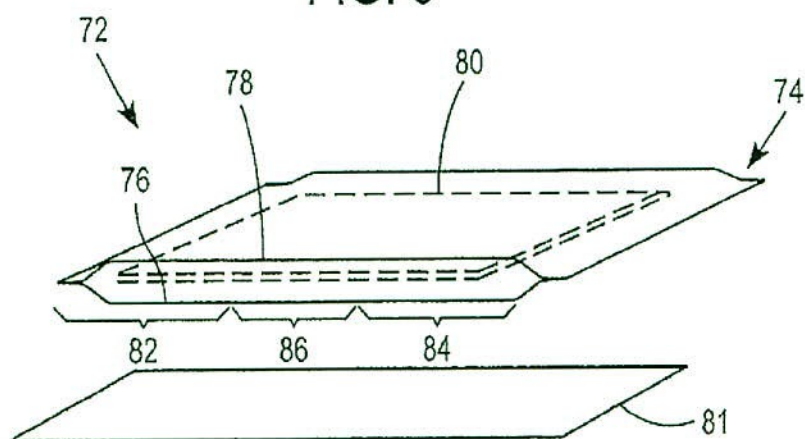


FIG. 6A

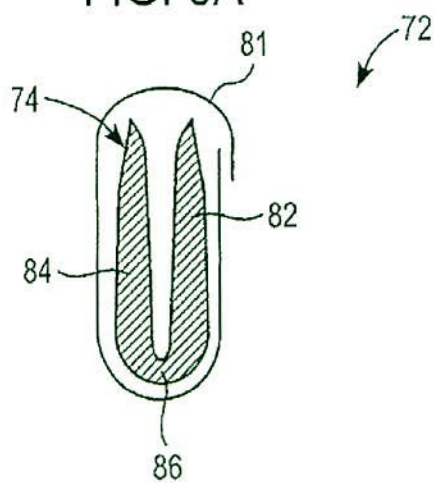


FIG. 6B

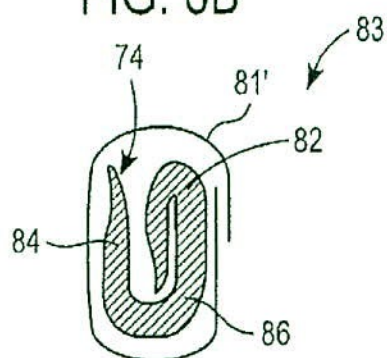


FIG. 7

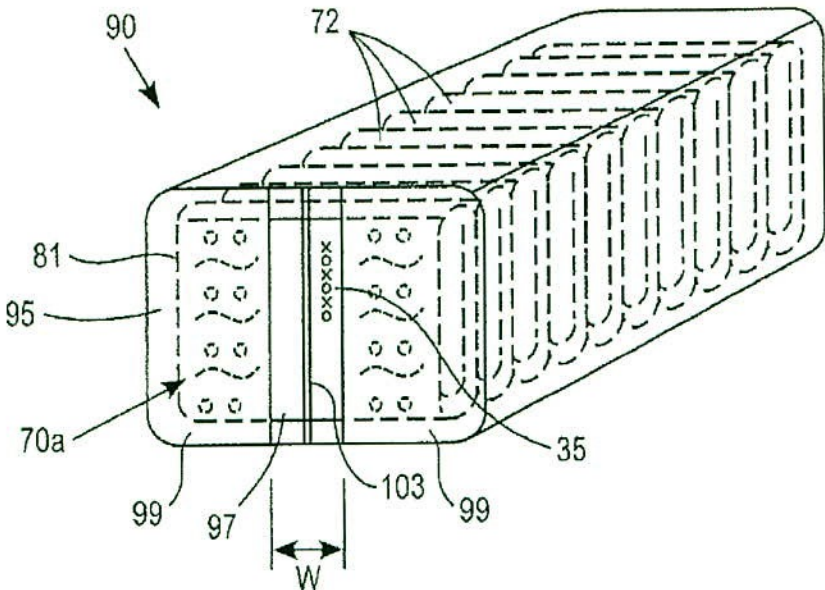


FIG. 8

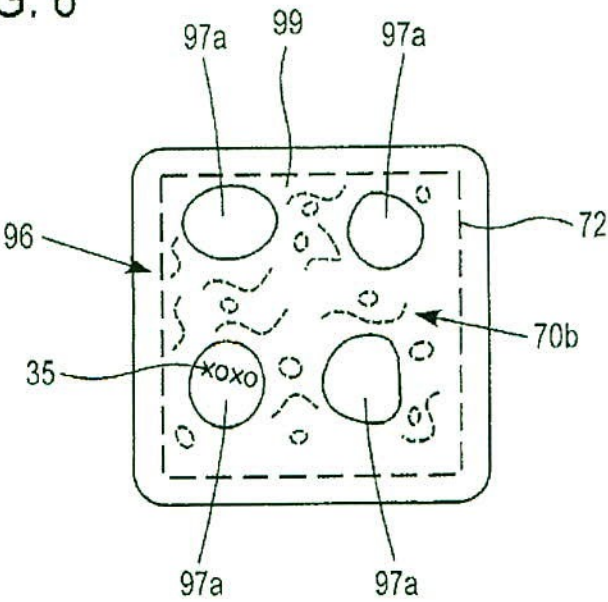


FIG. 9

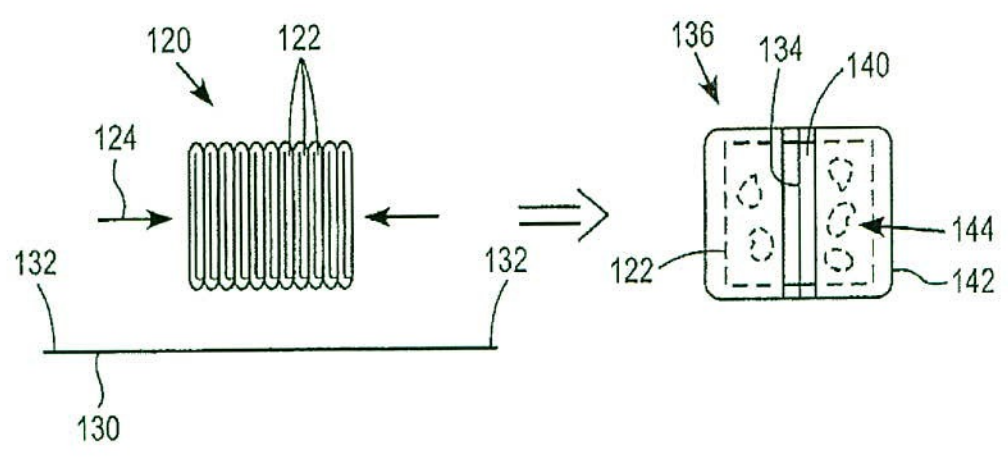
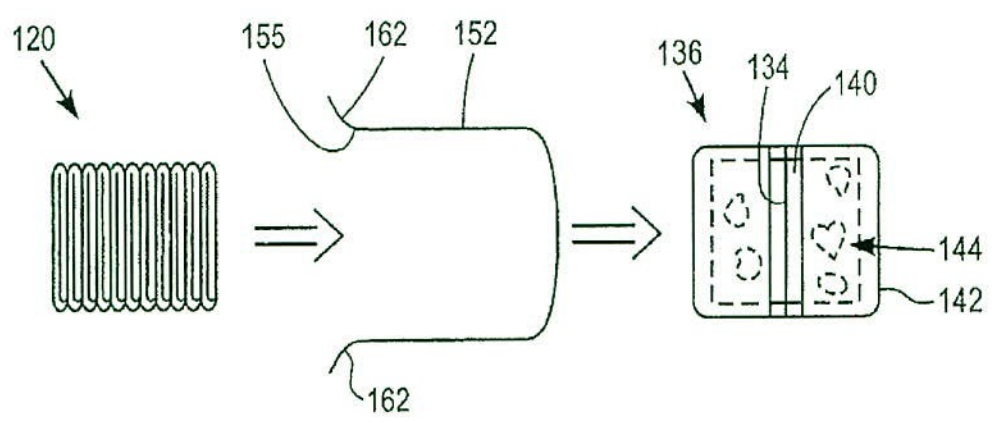


FIG. 10



**ФЕДЕРАЛЬНАЯ СЛУЖБА ПО ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНОЙ СОБСТВЕННОСТИ
(РОСПАТЕНТ)**

Бережковская наб., 30, корп. 1, Москва, Г-59, ГСП-3, 125993. Телефон (8-499) 240- 60- 15. Факс (8-495) 531- 63- 18

На № 2420-514853RU/032 от -
Наш № 2014120476/12(032704)

*При переписке просим ссылаться на номер заявки и
сообщить дату получения настоящей корреспонденции
от 16.06.2015*

ООО "Юридическая фирма Городисский и
Партнеры"
ул. Б. Спасская, 25, строение 3
Москва
129090

Г&П 18-06-2015



**РЕШЕНИЕ
о выдаче патента на изобретение**

(21) Заявка № 2014120476/12(032704)

(22) Дата подачи заявки 18.10.2012

В результате экспертизы заявки на изобретение по существу установлено, что заявленная группа изобретений относится к объектам патентных прав, соответствует условиям патентоспособности, сущность заявленного изобретения (изобретений) в документах заявки раскрыта с полнотой, достаточной для осуществления изобретения (изобретений)*, в связи с чем принято решение о выдаче патента на изобретение.

Заключение по результатам экспертизы прилагается.

Приложение: на 8 л. в 1 экз.

Врио руководителя

Л.Л. Кирий



**Проверка достаточности раскрытия сущности заявленного изобретения проводится по заявкам на изобретения, поданным после 01.10.2014.*

ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЕ ПО РЕЗУЛЬТАТАМ ЭКСПЕРТИЗЫ

(21) Заявка № 2014120476/12(032704) (22) Дата подачи заявки 18.10.2012
(24) Дата начала отсчета срока действия патента 18.10.2012
(85) Дата начала рассмотрения международной заявки на национальной фазе 21.05.2014

ПРИОРИТЕТ УСТАНОВЛЕН ПО ДАТЕ

(30) подачи первой(ых) заявки(ок) в государстве-участнике Парижской конвенции
(31) Номер первой(ых) заявки(ок) (32) Дата подачи первой(ых) заявки(ок) (33) Код страны
1. 13/278,892 21.10.2011 US
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(87) Номер публикации и дата публикации заявки РСТ WO2013/057184 от 25.04.2013

(72) Автор(ы) БАЙБЕР Мариэла, US

(73) Патентообладатель(и) СКА ХАЙДЖИН ПРОДАКТС АБ, SE

(54) Название изобретения УПАКОВКА ДЛЯ ВПИТЫВАЮЩИХ ИЗДЕЛИЙ ОДНОРАЗОВОГО ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ И СООТВЕТСТВУЮЩИЕ СПОСОБЫ

(см. на обороте)		
03	1	121318

ВНИМАНИЕ! С целью исключения ошибок просьба проверить сведения, приведенные в заключении, т.к. они без изменения будут внесены в Государственный реестр изобретений Российской Федерации, и незамедлительно сообщить об обнаруженных ошибках.

Адрес для переписки с патентообладателем или его представителем, который будет опубликован в официальном бюллетене
указан на лицевой стороне бланка решения

Адрес для направления патента
указан на лицевой стороне бланка решения

В результате экспертизы заявки по существу, проведенной в соответствии со статьей 1386 и пунктом 1 статьи 1387 Гражданского кодекса Российской Федерации, введенного в действие Федеральным законом от 18 декабря 2006 г. № 230-ФЗ (далее – Кодекс), в отношении первоначальной формулы изобретения установлено соответствие заявленной группы изобретений требованиям статьи 1349 Кодекса, условиям патентоспособности, установленным статьей 1350 Кодекса.

Формула изобретения приведена на странице(ах) 3-8.

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(21) 2014120476/12

(51) МПК
B65D 75/52 (2006.01)

(57)

1. Упаковка впитывающих изделий одноразового использования, содержащая:

оболочку, образованную гибким полимерным материалом, имеющую внутреннюю часть и включающую в себя верхнюю стенку, нижнюю стенку, расположенную напротив указанной верхней стенки, первую и вторую боковые стенки, расположенные напротив друг друга и продолжающиеся между указанными верхней и нижней стенками, и первую и вторую торцевые стенки, расположенные напротив друг друга; и сжатую стопу впитывающих изделий одноразового использования, расположенную в указанной внутренней части и создающую силу расширения, действующую на указанные торцевые стенки со стороны указанной внутренней части, при этом указанная сжатая стопа включает в себя первое впитывающее изделие одноразового использования, контактирующее с указанной первой торцевой стенкой со стороны указанной внутренней части, при этом:

указанная первая торцевая стенка имеет первую по существу прозрачную часть;

указанное первое впитывающее изделие одноразового использования включает первое графическое изображение на своей наружной поверхности, обращенной к указанной первой торцевой стенке, и

часть указанного первого графического изображения не видна сквозь указанную первую, по существу прозрачную часть указанной первой торцевой стенки.

2. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой указанное графическое изображение содержит множество отдельных фигур, расположенных на расстоянии друг от друга, при этом ни одна из указанных фигур не видна сквозь по существу прозрачную часть указанной первой торцевой стенки.

3. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой:

указанная сжатая стопа имеет второе впитывающее изделие одноразового использования, контактирующее с указанное второй торцевой стенкой со стороны указанной внутренней части, при этом указанное второе впитывающее изделие одноразового использования имеет второе графическое изображение на своей наружной поверхности, обращенное к указанной второй торцевой стенке,

указанная вторая торцевая стенка имеет часть, которая является по существу прозрачной, и

никакая часть указанного второго графического изображения не видна сквозь указанную, по существу прозрачную часть указанной второй торцевой стенки.

4. Упаковка по п. 3, в которой указанные первое и второе графические изображения являются по меньшей мере в основном аналогичными.

5. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой каждое из указанных впитывающих изделий одноразового использования в указанной стопе имеет графическое изображение на своей соответствующей наружной поверхности, по меньшей мере в основном аналогичное указанному первому графическому изображению.

6. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой указанная, по существу прозрачная часть представляет собой удлиненную полосу, имеющую ширину, не превышающую приблизительно 25 мм.

7. Упаковка по п. 6, дополнительно содержащая идентификационные знаки на указанной, по существу прозрачной части.
8. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой указанная, по существу прозрачная часть включает в себя герметичный шов (seal) указанной оболочки.
9. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой, по меньшей мере, одна из указанных первой и второй боковых стенок или указанных верхней и нижней стенок включает в себя вторую по существу прозрачную часть.
10. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой указанная вторая торцевая стенка является по существу непрозрачной.
11. Упаковка по п. 1, в которой каждое из указанных впитывающих изделий одноразового использования выбрано из группы, состоящей из прокладок, используемых при недержании, прокладок для женщин, тренировочных трусов, подгузников для детей и подгузников для взрослых.
12. Упаковка по п. 11, в которой указанное первое впитывающее изделие одноразового использования включает в себя переднюю панель, заднюю панель и промежуточную панель между указанными передней и задней панелями, при этом указанное первое графическое изображение находится на, по меньшей мере, одной из указанных передней и задней панелей.
13. Упаковка по п. 11, в которой указанное первое впитывающее изделие одноразового использования включает в себя переднюю панель, заднюю панель, промежуточную панель между указанными передней и задней панелями и наружный обертывающий элемент, охватывающий указанные переднюю, заднюю и промежуточную панели, при этом указанное первое графическое изображение находится на указанном наружном обертывающем элементе.
14. Упаковка впитывающих изделий одноразового использования, содержащая:
оболочку, образованную гибким полимерным материалом, имеющую внутреннюю часть и включающую в себя верхнюю стенку, нижнюю

стенку, расположенную напротив указанной верхней стенки, первую и вторую боковые стенки, расположенные напротив друг друга и продолжающиеся между указанными верхней и нижней стенками, и первую и вторую торцевые стенки, расположенные напротив друг друга; и сжатую стопу впитывающих изделий одноразового использования в указанной внутренней части и создающую силу расширения, действующую на указанные торцевые стенки со стороны указанной внутренней части, при этом указанная сжатая стопа включает в себя первое впитывающее изделие одноразового использования, контактирующее с указанной первой торцевой стенкой со стороны указанной внутренней части, при этом:

указанная первая торцевая стенка имеет часть удлиненной полосы, которая является по существу прозрачной,

каждое из указанных впитывающих изделий одноразового использования имеет графическое изображение на своей соответствующей наружной поверхности, при этом указанное графическое изображение на указанном первом впитывающем изделии одноразового использования обращено к указанной первой торцевой стенке со стороны указанной внутренней части, и

часть указанного графического изображения на указанном первом впитывающем изделии одноразового использования не видна сквозь указанную часть удлиненной полосы указанной первой торцевой стенки.

15. Упаковка по п. 14, дополнительно содержащая знаки на указанной удлиненной полоске, отображающие информацию, связанную с впитывающими изделиями одноразового использования, содержащимися в указанной упаковке.

16. Упаковка по п. 14, в которой, по меньшей мере, одна из указанных первой и второй боковых стенок или указанных верхней и нижней стенок включает в себя вторую часть, которая является по существу прозрачной.

17. Способ упаковывания стопы сжатых впитывающих изделий одноразового использования, при этом, по меньшей мере, первое из впитывающих изделий одноразового использования, расположенное в конце стопы, имеет графическое изображение на своей наружной поверхности, при этом способ предусматривает:

охватывание сжатой стопы гибким полимерным материалом, имеющим, по меньшей мере, одну по существу прозрачную часть, для образования оболочки, имеющей внутреннюю часть и, дополнительно, имеющей верхнюю стенку, нижнюю стенку, расположенную напротив верхней стенки, две боковые стенки, расположенные напротив друг друга и продолжающиеся между верхней и нижней стенками, и две торцевые стенки, при этом сжатая стопа создает силу расширения, действующую на торцевые стенки со стороны внутренней части; и

размещение сжатой стопы и гибкого полимерного материала друг относительно друга так, что:

- (а) данная, по меньшей мере, одна по существу прозрачная часть находится на первой из торцевых стенок оболочки,
- (b) графическое изображение обращено к первой из торцевых стенок, и
- (с) никакая часть графического изображения не видна сквозь данную, по меньшей мере, одну по существу прозрачную часть.

18. Способ по п. 17, дополнительно включающий:

образование герметичного шва оболочки на данной, по меньшей мере, одной по существу прозрачной части.

19. Способ по п. 17, дополнительно включающий:

отображение информации на по существу прозрачной части, при этом данная информация связана с впитывающими изделиями одноразового использования, содержащимися внутри оболочки.

20. Способ по п. 17, в котором гибкий полимерный материал имеет, по меньшей мере, вторую по существу прозрачную часть, при этом способ дополнительно включает:

размещение сжатой стопы и гибкого полимерного материала друг относительно друга таким образом, чтобы вторая по существу прозрачная часть образовывала часть, по меньшей мере, одной из верхней стенки, нижней стенки или боковых стенок оболочки.

(56) US 2009088715 A, 02.04.2009;

WO 9749618 A1, 31.12.1997;

US 2006131200 A1, 22.06.2006.

При публикации сведений о выдаче патента будет использовано описание в первоначальной редакции заявителя.

При публикации сведений о выдаче патента будут использованы первоначальные чертежи.

Приложение: Реферат, скорректированный экспертизой, на 1 л. в 1 экз.

Заместитель заведующего отделом текстильной и лёгкой промышленности ФИПС



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Публиковать с фиг. № -

Приложение № 1

К заявке № 2014120476/12

**(54) УПАКОВКА ДЛЯ ВПИТЫВАЮЩИХ ИЗДЕЛИЙ ОДНОРАЗОВОГО
ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ И СООТВЕТСТВУЮЩИЕ СПОСОБЫ**

Реферат

(57) Раскрыта упаковка (10), имеющая стопу впитывающих изделий (12) одноразового использования в оболочке, образованной гибким полимерным материалом (11). Оболочка имеет верхнюю и нижнюю стенки (18, 20), боковые стенки (24) и торцевые стенки (15, 16), расположенные напротив друг друга. Сжатая стопа впитывающих изделий (12) одноразового использования расположена во внутренней части (26) оболочки и создает силу расширения, действующую на торцевые стенки (15, 16) со стороны внутренней части (26). Сжатая стопа включает в себя первое впитывающее изделие (12f) одноразового использования, контактирующее с одной из торцевых стенок (15, 16), которая имеет часть (29), которая является по существу прозрачной. Первое впитывающее изделие (12f) одноразового использования имеет первое графическое изображение (50с) на своей наружной поверхности, которая обращена к данной торцевой стенке (15, 16). Никакая часть графического изображения (50с) не видна сквозь по существу прозрачную часть (29) данной торцевой стенки (15, 16). (Фиг. 1)

Референт Селиванов В.А.

Your reference: 171 775 aa/sis
Our reference: 2413-514853RU/732
Application No.: 2014120476
Attorney Name: Sergey A. Dorofeev

GORODISSKY

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TRANSLATION

FEDERAL SERVICE FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS (ROSPATENT)

DECISION ON GRANT
PATENT FOR INVENTION

(21) Application № 2014120476/12(032704)

(22) Date of filing the application 18 October 2012

Basing on the results of substantive examination of the patent application conducted in respect to

☐ claimed invention

☒ claimed group of inventions

It is established that it relates to the objects of patent rights and complies with the patentability conditions stipulated by the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, and the essence of the claimed invention is disclosed in the application materials sufficiently for implementing the invention, in view of this, a decision to grant a patent for the invention has been taken.

The Conclusion on the results of the examination is enclosed.

Enclosure: 6 sheets in one copy

Director General

(signature)

Kirij L.L.



Your reference: 171 775 aa/sis
Our reference: 2413-514853RU/732
Application No.: 2014120476
Attorney Name: Sergey A. Dorofeev

Decision on Grant

THE CONCLUSION ON THE RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION

(21) Application № 2014120476/12(032704).		(22) Date of filing the application 18 October 2012	
(24) Date from which industrial property rights may have effect 18 October 2012			
(85) Date of commencement of the national phase 21 May 2014			
PRIORITY IS FIXED ON DATE			
☒ (30) Data relating to priority under the Paris Convention			
(31) Number assigned to priority application	(32) Date of filing priority application	(33) Country code	Claim
13/278,892	21 October 2011	US	
(86) PCT Application number and date EP2012/070646 of 18 October 2012.			
(87) PCT Publication number and date WO2013/057184 of 25 April 2013.			
(72) Inventor(s) BIBER, Mariela, US			
(73) Assignee(s) SCA Hygiene Products AB SE-405 03 Goteborg, Sweden, SE			
(54) Title PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED METHODS			

The Examination department basing on the results of substantive examination of the patent application conducted in respect to

☒ originally filed claims ☐ claims amended by the applicant

has revealed their concordance to the requirements of patentability set forth by the Articles 1349 and 1350 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation and decided to grant the Patent of the Russian Federation for the following claims:

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Our reference: 2413-514853RU/732
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Attorney Name: Sergey A. Dorofeev

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(21) 2014120476/12

(51) IPC

B65D 75/52 (2006.01)

(57)

1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:

an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and

a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,

wherein:

said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,

said first disposable absorbent product includes a first graphic display on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall, and

no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

2. The package of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

3. The package of claim 1, wherein:

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Application No.: **2014120476**
Attorney Name: **Sergey A. Dorofeev**

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said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product contacting said second end wall from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall,

said second end wall has a portion that is substantially transparent, and

no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.

4. The package of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.

5. The package of claim 1, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.

6. The package of claim 1, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip having a width no greater than about 25mm.

7. The package of claim 6, further comprising identifying indicia on said substantially transparent portion.

8. The package of claim 1, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal of said enclosure.

9. The package of claim 1, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion.

10. The package of claim 1, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.

11. The package of claim 1, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.

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Attorney Name: **Sergey A. Dorofeev**

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12. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, and a crotch panel between said front and back panels, said first graphic display being located on at least one of said front or back panels.

13. The package of claim 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product includes a front panel, a back panel, a crotch panel between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display being located on said outer wrapping element.

14. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:

an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and

a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior,

wherein:

said first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent,

each of said disposable absorbent products includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof, said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product facing said first end wall from said interior, and

no portion of said graphic display of said first disposable absorbent product is visible through said elongated strip portion of said first end wall.

15. The package of claim 14, further comprising indicia on said elongated strip displaying information associated with the disposable absorbent products contained in said package.

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Attorney Name: Sergey A. Dorofeev

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16. The package of claim 14, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls or said top or bottom walls includes a second portion that is substantially transparent.

17. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof, the method comprising:

enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls, the compressed stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that:

(a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure,

(b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and

(c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

defining a seal of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent portion.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising:

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positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.

(56) US 2009088715 A, 02.04.2009;
WO 9749618 A1, 31.12.1997;
US 2006131200 A1, 22.06.2006.

Patent publication will be published using the specification in the original wording provided by the Applicant and the abstract amended by the Examiner.

Enclosure: The Abstract amended by the Examiner, 1 sheet in one copy

Deputy Chief of
Textile and Light Industry Department

A.S. Kondratiev

Your reference: 171 775 aa/sis
Our reference: 2413-514853RU/732
Application No.: 2014120476
Attorney Name: Sergey A. Dorofeev

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Publish with Fig.No

Enclosure №1

To application № 2014120476/12

(54) PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED METHODS

Abstract (57) Package (10) having a stack of disposable absorbent products (12) in an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material (11). The enclosure has top and bottom walls (18, 20), sidewalls (24), and end walls (15, 16) disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products (12) is located in the interior (26) of the enclosure and exerts an expansion force against the end walls (15, 16) from the interior (26). The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product (12f) contacting one of the end walls (15, 16), which has a portion (29) that is substantially transparent. The first disposable absorbent product (12f) includes a graphic display (50c) on an outer surface thereof that faces that end wall (15, 16). No portion of the graphic display (50c) is visible through the substantially transparent portion (29) of that end wall (15, 16). (Fig.1) Amended by Selivanov
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"2015, Año del Generalísimo José María Morelos y Pavón"

Certificado de acuse de
recibo registro(s):
MX/E/2014/081984

DIRECCIÓN DIVISIONAL DE PATENTES
SUBDIRECCION DIVISIONAL DE EXAMEN DE FONDO DE PATENTES AREAS
BIOTECNOLOGICA, FARMACEUTICA Y QUIMICA
COORDINACION DEPARTAMENTAL DE EXAMEN DE FONDO AREA QUIMICA
Expediente MX/a/2014/004571 de Patente PCT. ✓

Asunto: Procede el otorgamiento de la Patente solicitada al amparo del Art. 12º transitorio de la LFPPI.

México, D.F., a 29 de enero de 2015

Nora Silvia CARMONA ROJAS
Apoderado de
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No. de Folio: **7588**

RECIBI ORIGINAL

Nombre:

Fecha:

Firma:

09 FEB 2015

4-8

REF: Su solicitud No. MX/a/2014/004571 de Patente PCT presentada el 18 de Octubre de 2012 ✓

En relación con la solicitud arriba indicada, comunico a usted que una vez satisfecho lo dispuesto en los arts. 38, 50 y 52 de la Ley de la Propiedad Industrial (LPI), se ha efectuado el examen de fondo previsto por el artículo 53 de la citada Ley y se cumplen los requisitos establecidos por los artículos 16 y demás relativos de dicha Ley y su Reglamento, por lo que es procedente el otorgamiento de la Patente respectiva. En consecuencia, de acuerdo con el artículo 57 de la LPI, se le requiere para que efectúe el pago por la expedición del título y las anualidades correspondientes a este año calendario y las de los cuatro siguientes, efectuándose por quinquenios y por año calendario completo, pudiendo pagar dos o más quinquenios en forma anticipada, de conformidad con el tercero y cuarto párrafos del artículo segundo de las Disposiciones Generales de la tarifa vigente y exhiba el comprobante de pago correspondiente a fin de expedirle el Título de Patente.

Asimismo, deberá entregar tres copias en papel couché de la figura no. 1 con medidas 7.0 x 11 cm., en caso de un solo dibujo ó de 11.0 x 14.0 cm., para dos o más dibujos, para efectos de publicación a que se refieren los Artículos 57 y 60 de la LPI, 46 de su Reglamento y 10 del Acuerdo que establece las reglas para la presentación de solicitudes ante el Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial.

Para cumplir con lo anterior se le concede un plazo de dos meses contados a partir del día siguiente a la fecha en que se le notifique el presente oficio, mismo que podrá extenderse por un plazo adicional de dos meses que señala el artículo 58 de la LPI sin que medie escrito de por medio y comprobando el pago del artículo 31 de la tarifa vigente, apercibido que de no hacerlo dentro del plazo inicial o en el adicional antes precisados, se considerará abandonada su solicitud de patente y perdida la fecha de presentación de acuerdo con lo dispuesto en los preceptos legales invocados.

El suscrito firma el presente oficio con fundamento en los artículos 6º fracciones III y XI y 7º bis 2 de la Ley de la Propiedad Industrial (Diario Oficial de la Federación (D.O.F.) 27/06/1991, reformada el 02/08/1994, 25/10/1996, 26/12/1997, 17/05/1999, 26/01/2004, 16/06/2005, 25/01/2006, 06/05/2009, 06/01/2010, 18/06/2010, 28/06/2010, 27/01/2012 y 09/04/2012); artículos 1º, 3º fracción V inciso a) sub inciso ii) primer guión, 4º y 12º fracciones I, II, III, IV y VI del Reglamento del Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial (D.O.F. 14/12/1999, reformado el 01/07/2002, 15/07/2004, 28/07/2004 y 7/09/2007); artículos 1º, 3º, 5º fracción V inciso a) sub inciso ii) primer guión, 16 fracciones I, II, III, IV y VI y 30 del Estatuto Orgánico del Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial (D.O.F. 27/12/1999, reformado el 10/10/2002, 29/07/2004, 04/08/2004 y 13/09/2007); 1º, 3º y 5º inciso c), d), e) e i) y penúltimo párrafo del Acuerdo que delega facultades en los Directores Generales Adjuntos, Coordinador, Directores Divisionales, Titulares de las Oficinas Regionales, Subdirectores Divisionales, Coordinadores Departamentales y otros subalternos del Instituto Mexicano de la Propiedad Industrial. (D.O.F. 15/12/1999, reformado el 04/02/2000, 29/07/2004, 04/08/2004 y 13/09/2007).

ATENTAMENTE
COORDINADOR DEPARTAMENTAL DE
EXAMEN DE FONDO ÁREA QUÍMICA


JOEL ESAÚ ANDRADE MENESES

AMWDDP.6.2015.1



MX/2015/7588

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Application No. 12 772 974.7 - 1708	Ref. 171 770 aasis	Date 03.08.2015
Applicant Sca Hygiene Products AB		

Communication under Rule 71(3) EPC

1. Intention to grant

You are informed that the examining division intends to grant a European patent on the basis of the above application, with the text and drawings and the related bibliographic data as indicated below.

A copy of the relevant documents is enclosed.

- 1.1 In the text for the Contracting States:
AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT
RO RS SE SI SK SM TR

Description, Pages

1, 3-11, 14-16, 20	as published		
2, 12, 13	received on	25-04-2013 with letter of	25-04-2013

Claims, Numbers

1-18	received on	30-04-2014 with letter of	30-04-2014
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Drawings, Sheets

1/6-6/6	as published
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With the following amendments to the above-mentioned documents proposed by the division

Description, Pages	16, 20 (a)
	Delete Previous: 17-19 (a)

Comments

(a) Article 84 EPC ; Examination Guidelines Part F - Chapter IV-4.10 - 4.4 : "spirit" of the invention

1.2 Bibliographic data

The title of the invention in the three official languages of the European Patent Office, the international patent classification, the designated contracting states, the registered name(s) of the applicant(s) and the other bibliographic data are shown on **EPO Form 2056** (enclosed).

2. Invitation

You are invited, **within a non-extendable period of four months** of notification of this communication,

2.1 to EITHER approve the text communicated above and verify the bibliographic data (Rule 71(5) EPC)

(1) by filing a translation of the claim(s) in the other two official languages of the EPO

	Fee code	EUR
(2a) by paying the fee for grant including the fee for publication: minus any amount already paid (Rule 71a(5) EPC):	007	915.00 0.00
	Total amount:	915.00
(3) by paying additional claims fees under Rule 71(4) EPC; number of claims fees payable: 0 minus any amount already paid (Rule 71a(5) EPC):	016	0.00 0.00
	Total amount:	0.00

Important: If the translations of the claims and fees have already been filed and paid respectively in reply to a previous communication under Rule 71(3) EPC, e.g. in the case of resumption of examination after approval (see Guidelines C-V, 6), **agreement as to the text to be granted** (Rule 71a(1) EPC) must be expressed within the same time limit (e.g. by approving the text and verifying the bibliographic data, by confirming that grant proceedings can go ahead with the documents on file and/or by stating which translations of the claims already on file are to be used).

Note 1: See "Important notes concerning fee payments" below.
 Note 2: Any overpaid "minus" amounts will be refunded when the decision to grant (EPO Form 2006A) has been issued.

2.2 OR, in the case of disapproval, to request reasoned amendments or corrections to the text communicated above or keep to the latest text submitted by you (Rule 71(6) EPC).

In this case the translations of the claims and fee payments mentioned under point 2.1 above are NOT due.

The terms "amendment(s)" and "correction(s)" refer only to amendments or corrections of the application documents and not of other documents (e.g. bibliographic data, the designation of the inventor, etc.).

If filing amendments, you must identify them and indicate the basis for them in the application as filed. Failure to meet either requirement may lead to a communication from the examining division requesting that you correct this deficiency (Rule 137(4) EPC).

2.3 Bibliographic data

Where you request a change or correction of bibliographic data in response to the Rule 71(3) communication, this will **not** cause the sending of a further communication under Rule 71(3) EPC. You will still have to pay the fees and file translations in reply to the Rule 71(3) communication in the case of 2.1 above, unless you also file a reasoned request for amendments or corrections in response to the Rule 71(3) communication (see case 2.2 above).

3. Loss of rights

If neither of the two possible actions above (see points 2.1 or 2.2) is performed in due time, the European patent application will be deemed to be withdrawn (Rule 71(7) EPC).

4. Further procedure

4.1 In the case of point 2.1 above

- 4.1.1 The decision to grant the European patent will be issued, and the **mention of the grant** of the patent will be published in the European Patent Bulletin, if the requirements concerning the translation of the claims and the payment of all fees are fulfilled and there is agreement as to the text to be granted (Rule 71a(1) EPC).

Note on payment of the renewal fee:

If a renewal fee becomes due before the next possible date for publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, publication will be effected only after the renewal fee and any additional fee have been paid (Rule 71a(4) EPC).

Under Article 86(2) EPC, the obligation to pay renewal fees to the European Patent Office terminates with the payment of the renewal fee due in respect of the year in which the mention of the grant of the European patent is published.

Note on payment of the designation fee(s):

If the designation fee(s) become(s) due after the communication under Rule 71(3) EPC, the mention of the grant of the European patent will not be published until these fees have been paid (Rule 71a(3) EPC).

- 4.1.2 After publication, the **European patent specification** can be downloaded free of charge from the EPO publication server <https://data.epo.org/publication-server> or ordered from the Vienna sub-office upon payment of a fee (OJ EPO 2005, 126).

4.1.3 Filing of translations in the contracting states

As regards translation requirements prescribed by the contracting states under Article 65(1) EPC, please consult the website of the European Patent Office

www.epo.org → Law & practice → Legal texts, National law relating to the EPC

www.epo.org → Law & practice → All Legal texts → London Agreement

In the case of a valid extension or validation

As regards translation requirements prescribed by the extension or validation states, please consult the website of the European Patent Office

www.epo.org → Law & practice → Legal texts, National law relating to the EPC

Failure to supply a prescribed translation in a contracting state, or in an extension or validation state may result in the patent being deemed to be void *ab initio* in the state concerned (Art. 65(3) EPC).

4.2 In the case of 2.2 above

If the present communication under Rule 71(3) EPC is based on an auxiliary request and, within the time limit, you maintain the main request or a higher ranking request which is not allowable, the application will be refused (Art. 97(2) EPC).

If the examining division gives its consent to the requested amendments or corrections, it will issue a new communication under Rule 71(3) EPC; otherwise, it shall resume the examination proceedings (Rule 71(6) EPC).

5. Filing of a divisional application

Any divisional application relating to this European patent application must be filed directly with the European Patent Office in Munich, The Hague or Berlin and will be in the language of the proceedings for the present application, or if the latter was not in an official language of the EPO, the divisional application may be filed in the language of the present application as filed (see Article 76(1) and Rule 36(2) EPC). Any such divisional application must be filed while the present application is still pending (Rule 36(1) EPC; Guidelines A-IV, 1.1.1).

6. Important notes concerning fee payments

6.1 For all payments, please refer to the relevant **fee code(s)**.

6.2 Automatic debiting procedure

The fee for grant, including the fee for publication, and any additional claims fees due under Rule 71(4) EPC will be debited automatically on the date of filing of the translations of the claims, or on the last day of the period of this communication. However, if the designation fee(s) become(s) due as set out in Rule 71a(3) EPC and/or a renewal fee becomes due as set out in Rule 71a(4) EPC, these should be paid separately by another permitted way of payment in order not to delay the publication of the mention of the grant. The same applies in these circumstances to the payment of extension and validation fees. For further details see the Arrangements for the automatic debiting procedure (AAD) and accompanying information from the EPO concerning the automatic debiting procedure (Annexes A.1 and A.2 to the Arrangements for deposit accounts (ADA) in Supplementary publication - OJ EPO 3/2015).

Note: If a waiver is expressed in response to a Rule 71(3) communication (see OJ EPO 2015, A52), the fee for grant, including the fee for publication/printing, and any additional claims fees will not be debited automatically. These fees must be paid separately by another means of payment allowed under the Rules relating to Fees.

6.3 Important information relating to fee amounts

Following any amendment to the Rules relating to Fees, the amount(s) mentioned in this communication may be different from the amount(s) **actually due on the date of payment**. The latest version of the Schedule of fees and expenses, published as a Supplement to the Official Journal of the EPO, is also available on the EPO website (www.epo.org) and can be found under www.epo.org/schedule-of-fees, which allows the viewing, downloading and searching for individual fee amounts, both current and previous.

Please note that procedural fees are usually adjusted every two years, on even years, with effect from 1 April.

Date 03.08.2015

Sheet 5

Application No.: 12 772 974.7

Examining Division:

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2nd Examiner:	Sundqvist, Stefan
1st Examiner:	Duc, Emmanuel



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Enclosures: Text intended for grant (28 pages)

EPO Form 2056



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Fax: +49 89 2399 4465

Annex to EPO Form 2004, Communication pursuant to Rule 71(3) EPC

Bibliographical data of European patent application No. 12 772 974.7

For the intended grant of the European patent, the bibliographical data are set out below, for information:

Title of invention:

- VERPACKUNG FÜR SAUGFÄHIGE EINWEGARTIKEL UND ZUGEHÖRIGE VERFAHREN
- PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS AND RELATED METHODS
- EMBALLAGE POUR PRODUITS ABSORBANTS JETABLES ET PROCÉDÉS CONNEXES

Classification: INV. B65D75/52 A61F13/514 A61F13/551

Date of filing: 18.10.2012

Priority claimed: US /21.10.2011 /USA201113278892

Contracting States*
for which fees have been paid:

AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR

Extension States*
for which fees have been paid:

Validation States*
for which fees have been paid:

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2929 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104
US

*) If the time limit for the payment of designation fees according to Rule 39(1) EPC has not yet expired and the applicant has not withdrawn any designation, **all Contracting States/Extension States/Validation States** are currently still deemed to be designated. See also Rule 71a(3) EPC and, if applicable, the above Note to users of the automatic debiting procedure.

**) If two or more applicants have designated different Contracting States, this is indicated here.

~~Druckexemplar~~
~~PACKAGING FOR DISPOSABLE ABSORBENT PRODUCTS~~
~~AND RELATED METHODS~~

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention is generally related to absorbent products and, more particularly, to packaging for disposable absorbent products that are worn by humans for the containment and absorption of fluid bodily secretions.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Disposable absorbent products for absorption of bodily fluids are available in different types, designs, and dimensions. For example, training pants, baby diapers, adult diapers, and incontinence guards are products designed for the containment of urine and excrement. There are other types of disposable absorbent articles, such as feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners) that are designed to contain and absorb urine and/or menses secreted by female wearers. Known products of this type typically include a topsheet facing the body of the wearer, a backsheet facing the garment worn by the wearer, and an absorbent core sandwiched between the topsheet and backsheet.

[0003] Products of the type described above are known to be packaged in flexible, polymeric films that completely envelop a stack of the products. These products may be compressed prior to being packaged, and introduced into an open bag formed from the flexible film or otherwise enclosed by the flexible film. The bag or, generally, the film is then typically sealed and the resulting package of disposable absorbent products moved to another stage of the manufacturing process, or to a staging area for further disposition. Often it is desirable to print, on the outer surface of the package, identifying information

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associated, for example, with a production date, time, and/or other production details of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package. To that end, known processes are known that print identifying information on a transparent portion of one of the walls of the package, for example. In processes of that type for packaging disposable absorbent products that have graphic displays on their outer surfaces, these displays may interfere with the ability of a user or even of manufacturing personnel to read the identifying information. This, in turn, may cause unnecessary delays in the disposition of finished packages or in the overall ability of a user to obtain information associated with the manufacturing of the products contained in the bag.

[0004] In addition to the above, packages of disposable products are known that have selected portions that are transparent and other portions that are opaque. Further, transparent portions are known to provide certain advantages, such as allowing the buyer to see a general shape, feature, or predominant color of the product contained in a package resting on a store shelf, or permitting the user to see the number of products left in a package. But transparent portions may offer certain disadvantages. For example, in the case of products made for children, the transparent portions may eliminate the element of surprise that children are known to appreciate, by easily disclosing the graphic displays that are present on the product.

[0005] Accordingly, it is desirable to provide a package of disposable absorbent products, and related methods, that address these and other drawbacks of conventional packages. US 2009/088715A1 discloses a package according to the preamble of claim 1.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The objectives and features of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0007] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 1A is a perspective view of a stack of the disposable absorbent products contained in the package of FIG. 1

[0009] FIG. 2 is an elevation view of an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00010] FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2, showing an exemplary disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00011] FIG. 4 is an elevation view of the package of FIG. 1, showing a first end wall thereof.

[00012] FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4, showing an exemplary second end wall thereof disposed opposite the first end wall of FIG. 4.

[00013] FIG. 6 is a schematic, disassembled view of a disposable absorbent product in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00014] FIG. 6A is a cross-sectional view of the exemplary disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6, in a folded condition, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00015] FIG. 6B is a view similar to FIG. 6A, showing the disposable absorbent product of FIG. 6 in a folded condition, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00016] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a package of disposable absorbent products in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

[00017] FIG. 8 is an elevation view showing an end wall of a package similar to that of FIG. 7, in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention.

[00018] FIG. 9 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[00019] FIG. 10 is a schematic representation of an exemplary process for packaging disposable absorbent products, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

SUMMARY

[00020] In one embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided that includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material. The enclosure has an interior, and includes a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls that are disposed opposite one another. The package also includes a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior of the enclosure and which exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior.

[00021] The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior, and a second disposable absorbent product contacting the second end wall from the interior. The first end wall in this embodiment has a portion that is substantially transparent. In addition, the first disposable absorbent product includes a graphic display on an outer surface thereof that is in contact with the first end wall. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display is visible through the substantially transparent portion of the first end wall.

[00022] In another embodiment, a package of disposable absorbent products is provided. The package includes an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, and which has an interior. The enclosure also has a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another. A compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in the interior exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The compressed stack includes a first disposable absorbent product contacting the first end wall from the interior. The first end wall has an elongated strip portion that is substantially transparent, and each of the disposable products includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof, with the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product facing the first end wall from the interior. In this embodiment, no portion of the graphic display of the first disposable absorbent product is visible through the elongated strip portion of the first end wall.

[00023] In yet another embodiment, a method is provided for packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products, with at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products being located at an end of the stack having a graphic display on an outer surface thereof. The method includes enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least one substantially transparent portion, so as to define an enclosure having an interior and further having a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls. The compressed stack exerts an expansion force against the end walls from the interior. The method also includes positioning the stack and the flexible material relative to one another such that the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls of the enclosure

such that the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and such that no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially transparent portion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[00024] With reference to the figures, and more particularly to FIGS. 1 and 1A, an exemplary package 10 of disposable absorbent products 12 is illustrated. The package 10 is a generally polyhedral structure (hexahedral in the shown embodiment) that includes an outer, flexible polymeric outer enclosure defining a bag 11 that envelops a stack of the products 12 that are packaged under pressure. For example, and without limitation, the flexible polymeric material defining the bag 11 may be a polyethylene film or film laminate having a thickness of about 2.5 mils (about 0.0635 millimeters). Other non-limiting examples include a LDPE (low density polyethylene) film, a LDPE/LLDPE (linear low density polyethylene) film laminate, a LDPE/MDPE (medium density polyethylene) film laminate, and a LDPE/HDPE (high density polyethylene) film laminate.

[00025] The stack of products 12 is packaged under pressure (i.e., they are compression-packed) with a force applied in the general direction of arrows 13. Once the stack of products 12 is in the bag 11, the products 12 exert an outward force (i.e., an expansion force, arrows 14) against a pair of end walls 15, 16 of the package 10. The bag 11 also defines top and bottom walls 18, 20, and a pair of sidewalls 24 extending between the top and bottom walls 18, 20. Package 10 may also include a line of weakness or some other frangible element (not shown) that permits the user to easily tear the bag 11 in specific locations so to gain access to the interior 26 of the bag 11, where the products 12 are located. In specific embodiments, the frangible element is an open-ended arcuate line or a closed geometric shape (e.g., an oval or circle having a perforated perimeter) located

entirely within a single one of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24, or extending between at least two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, 24.

[00026] Package 10 includes, at one or both of the end walls 15, 16, one or more substantially transparent portions and one or more substantially opaque portions. In the illustrated embodiment, the end wall 15 that is shown in the figure has a centrally located, elongated portion 29 that is substantially transparent, and a pair of side portions 31 that are substantially opaque. In addition, package 10 includes a seal 33 extending within the elongated portion 29, and which is formed, in this exemplary embodiment, when sealing a pair of substantially transparent edges of the bag 11. Notably, the package 10 in the shown embodiment also includes indicia 35, such as letters, numbers, symbols, or combinations thereof, printed at the seal 33 or areas adjacent thereto, and which display codified information associated with the products 12 contained in the package 10. For example, and without limitation, the indicia 35 may be a combination of letters and numbers that provide the user or manufacturing personnel with information on the manufacturing facility, manufacturing line, and/or manufacturing date for the products 12. Indicia 35 may also provide information on the available shelf life for the products 12. It is contemplated that indicia 35 may be printed or alternatively embossed, crimped, or through some other method be made to display information associated with the products 12 or some other type of information, all of which is considered to fall within the scope of the present disclosure.

[00027] As used herein, the term "transparent" and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to transmit light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may be seen through that material as clearly as if the material were not present. In that regard, a substantially transparent

material is a clear film material capable of transmitting light in the range of between about 0% Haze and about 25% Haze, as measured by the ASTM D1003-11 Standard Test Method for Haze and Luminous Transmittance of Transparent Plastics (using either Procedure A – Hazemeter; Procedure B – Spectrophotometer; or the Alternative Haze [Shortcut] Procedure). Moreover, as used herein, the term “opaque” and derivatives thereof refer to the ability of the material to block light from the interior of a package to the exterior thereof, so that the products contained in that package may not be seen through that material. In that regard, a substantially opaque material is capable of substantially blocking light and has opacity in the range from about 55% to about 100%, as measured by the TAPPI T425 Standard Test Method for the Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing) or the ASTM D589-97 Standard Test Method for Opacity of Paper (average value of 5 specimens when using the 89% reflectance backing or paper backing). Moreover, a substantially opaque material may be formed from an originally clear film that has ink of a predetermined color (e.g., white) printed thereon or otherwise integrated therewith, or it may instead be originally formed as a colored film.

[00028] In another aspect of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, one of the sidewalls 24 has a substantially transparent portion 37 that permits the user, for example, to assess the number of products 12 that remain in the package 10, or to appreciate other aspects (e.g., shapes, colors) of the products 12 that are not clearly visible through the one or more substantially transparent portions 29 located at one or both of the end walls 15, 16. While not shown, it is contemplated that other substantially transparent portions may be present in package 10, located for example at the top wall 18, bottom wall 20 and/or the other of the sidewalls 24, and which may be present in any number and have any shapes and/or

dimensions. For example, it is contemplated that an exemplary substantially transparent portion may extend across two adjacent ones of the walls 15, 16, 18, 20, or 24 or even extend across more than two of the walls.

[00029] With reference to FIG. 2, an exemplary product 12a is illustrated. Product 12a is in the form of a training pant, although this is merely exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting. Product 12a has a front panel 44, a back panel 46, and a crotch panel 48 located between the front and back panels 44, 46. In use, the front panel 44 of product 12a is typically worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a child), the back panel 46 is typically worn on the rear side of the wearer, and the crotch panel 48 is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. The exemplary product 12a shown in FIG. 2 has a graphic display 50 that is, in the illustrated embodiment, in the form of a single star. It is contemplated, however, that the graphic display 50 may be made up of a single object or shape or a plurality of objects or shapes, such as geometric shapes, representations of an animal or plant or parts thereof, representations of a fictitious or reality-based character, lines, dots, letters, numbers, symbols, or any other regular or irregular objects or shapes or combinations thereof. In that regard, therefore, and as used herein, the term “graphic display” and derivatives thereof refer to a single object or shape, or a plurality of objects or shapes that are similar to or different from one another.

[00030] In specific embodiments, the graphic display may for example be a series of objects that are linked by a common theme. For example, and without limitation, FIG. 3, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features in the preceding figures, illustrates a graphic display 50 that is made up of a plurality of figures (e.g., objects or shapes) 50c that are associated with a child’s birthday party, such as one or more balloons, one or more birthday candles, and one or more birthday cakes, with each of those figures

being either grouped together following a predetermined pattern, or randomly located on the outer surface of the product 12b shown in that figure. It is also understood that the graphic display may be either entirely or partially located on any or all of the panels 44, 46, 48.

[00031] FIG. 4 illustrates an exemplary end wall 15 of the package 10 (FIG. 1). The package 10 shown in FIG. 4 contains, in its interior 26, a stack of products of the general type described above. The package 10 of the illustrated embodiment, and particularly the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4, are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 50e that is on the outer surface of the first one of the products 12 is visible to the exterior through the substantially transparent portion 29. As that figure shows, the first product 12f in the stack, which is in contact with the end wall 15 from the interior 26, has a graphic display 50e on the surface that faces and contacts the interior surface of the end wall 15. Notably, however, all portions of the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f are hidden from view, by virtue of being in contact with the substantially opaque portions 31, rather than with the substantially transparent portion 29 of the illustrated embodiment.

[00032] The substantially transparent portion 29 contains indicia 35 that are easily discernible. More specifically, reading or otherwise obtaining information from the indicia 35 is undisturbed by any of the graphic display 50e that forms part of the first product 12f. In addition to the above, hiding of all portions of the graphic display 50e of first product 12f provides an opportunity to the manufacturer and/or marketer of the products 12 (FIGS. 1, 1A) to pleasantly surprise the user of those products. In the case of children, for example, it may be desirable to hide the graphic display 50e, such that a child wearing the products 12 looks forward, with anticipation, to retrieving additional products 12 from the package 10, so as to be surprised by the graphic display 50e thereon that becomes apparent

only upon removal of the product 12 from the bag 11. In that regard, embodiments are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure, in which each of the products 12 in a package 10 has identical or at least substantially similar graphic displays 50e, or in which the graphic displays 50e vary between products in the stack within a single package 10.

[00033] With continued reference to FIG. 4, and further referring now to FIG. 5, the end wall 16 opposite from the end wall 15 shown in FIG. 4 may have a configuration that is similar to or different from that of the end wall 15. More specifically, the entirety of the end wall 16 may be defined by portions of the bag 11 that are substantially opaque, or may have portions that are substantially transparent and having shapes and/or dimensions that are similar to or different from those of substantially transparent portion 29 of end wall 15. Similarly, the stack of products 12 (FIGS. 1 and 1A) in package 10 has a product 12p at the end of the stack that is in contact, from the interior of the package 10, with the interior surface of end wall 16. The product 12p may have a graphic display that is identical or at least substantially similar to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f. Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 5, the product 12p may have a graphic display 55 that is different from the graphic display 50e on the first product 12f. The end wall 16 in the illustrated embodiment has a plurality of spaced, substantially transparent portions 57 that have a configuration that is different from that of substantially transparent portion 29 at end wall 15 (FIG. 4). Notably, the substantially transparent portions 57 are designed such that no portion of the graphic display 55 is visible therethrough, which also provides the benefits described above with respect to the location of the substantially transparent portion 29 relative to the graphic display 50e of the first product 12f.

[00034] While FIGS. 1-5 refer to products 12 that may be in the form of baby diapers or training pants, these are shown and described as such only in exemplary rather than limiting fashion. It is understood, therefore, that the products 12 may instead be in the form of other types of disposable absorbent products such as, and without limitation, adult diapers, incontinence guards, or feminine hygiene products (e.g., heavy and light incontinence pads, pantliners).

[00035] Referring now to FIGS. 6 and 6A, another exemplary product 72 is illustrated, in the form of a catamenial or feminine hygiene product. Product 72 is made up of a body portion 74 comprising a backsheet 76, a topsheet 78, and an absorbent structure or core 80 disposed between the backsheet and topsheet 76, 78, as well as an outer wrapping element 81 that encloses the body portion 74 when folded (FIGS. 6A and 6B). The body portion 74 of product 72 has, in use, a front panel 82 that is predominantly worn on the front side of the wearer (e.g., a woman), a back panel 84 that is predominantly worn on the rear side of the wearer, and a crotch panel 86 that is typically worn around the crotch area of the wearer. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 6, 6A, and 6B refer to similar features. FIG. 6A illustrates an exemplary folding of the product 72 in which the resulting product is a bifolded structure, enveloped by the outer wrapping element 81. FIG. 6B shows a variation of this embodiment in which a product 83, similar in most respects to product 72, is a trifolded structure enveloped by an outer wrapping element 81'. In the embodiments illustrated at FIGS. 6A and 6B, each of the exemplary outer wrapping elements 81, 81' has a graphic display 70a, 70b (FIGS. 7 and 8) on its outer surface that includes a plurality of squiggly lines and irregular spots, although these are exemplary and therefore not intended to be limiting.

[00036] With reference to FIGS. 7 and 8, an exemplary package 90 is illustrated containing, in its interior, a stack of compressed products 72 (FIGS. 6 and 6A). Those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that, while package 90 contains products of the type associated with FIG. 6A, it may alternatively contain products similar to the products 83 associated with FIG. 6B, or variations thereof. For ease of understanding, like reference numerals in FIGS. 7 and 8 refer to similar features in any of the preceding figures, the description of which may be referred to for an understanding of the features of the embodiment shown in FIGS. 7 and 8 as well. Package 90 includes an end wall 95 having a substantially transparent portion 97 surrounded by a pair of larger substantially opaque portions 99. In the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the substantially transparent portion 97 is in the form of an elongated strip and includes a seal 103, similar to the seal 33 of FIGS. 1 and 4.

[00037] The elongated strip-shaped substantially transparent portion 97 in the embodiment of FIG. 7 (or for the substantially transparent portion 29 of FIGS. 1 and 4) may have a width "w," that is no greater than about 25mm or even no greater than about 7mm, for example. A variation of this embodiment is contemplated that includes no seal 103 at all, or which instead has a seal or similar structure that is located elsewhere in the package 90. It is also contemplated that the shape and location of the substantially transparent portion 97 on the end wall 95 may be different from that shown in FIG. 7. Yet in another variation, shown in FIG. 8, an end wall 96 may have a plurality of substantially transparent portions 97a that are spaced from one another. In that embodiment, the graphic display 70b of at least the first one of the products in the stack is arranged so as not to be visible through the substantially transparent portions 97a.

[00038] In the embodiments of FIGS. 7 and 8, no portion of the graphic display 70a, 70b on the outer wrapping element 81 of the first one of the products 72 (i.e., the product closest to and in direct contact with the interior surface of end wall 95, 96) is visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a. The graphic display 70a, 70b is instead in contact with the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96. This facilitates reading or otherwise obtaining information from any indicia 35 that may be present at the seal 103 or in any other portion of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, as discussed above with respect to the embodiment of FIG. 4. In addition, hiding of the graphic display 70a, 70b behind the substantially opaque portions 99 of the end wall 95, 96 may be desirable in situations in which a marketer or manufacturer of the products 72 wants the potential buyer to see only specific parts or characteristics of the products but not others. For example, a marketer may want the potential buyer to know that the outer wrapping element 81 has a predetermined color e.g., pink, by making that color visible through the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a, while hiding a graphic display 70a, 70b that is present on the surface of the outer wrapping element 81. This may be desirable as a way to pleasantly surprise the user of the product 72 with an unexpected ornamental feature (i.e., the graphic display 70a, 70b) of the products 72. Yet additionally, a marketer may desire to prevent the graphic display 70a, 70b from being visible through one or both of the substantially transparent portions 97, 97a so as to make the package of products 72 discrete, rather than flashy, while making each of the products 72 ornamentally appealing once they are removed from the package.

[00039] With respect to FIG. 9, an exemplary process for packaging a stack of disposable absorbent products is schematically illustrated. The process includes obtaining a stack 120 of disposable absorbent products 122, compressing the stack (arrows 124), and

enclosing the compressed stack with a sheet 130 of flexible polymeric material. The sheet 130 is then sealed along a pair of confronting substantially transparent edge portions 132, thereby forming a seal 134 on the finished package 136 of the products 122. The edge portions 132 define an exemplary substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at an end wall 142 of the package 136. Notably, this exemplary method includes placing the edge portions 132 relative to the stack 120 such that no portion of a graphic display 144, on at least the first one of the products of the stack 120, is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

[00040] A variation of the above-discussed process is schematically illustrated in FIG. 10, in which like reference numerals refer to similar features of the embodiment of FIG. 9. In the process illustrated in FIG. 10, the compressed stack 120 is inserted into a preformed open bag 152 made of a flexible polymeric material. The exemplary preformed bag 152 has an opening 155 that includes substantially transparent edge portions 162. Once the stack 120 is inserted into the open bag 152, same is closed and sealed along the substantially transparent edge portions 162, thereby resulting in the formation of the substantially transparent, elongate portion 140 located at the end wall 142 of the package 136, which may or may not have a seal 134. In this exemplary process, the insertion of the stack 120 into the open bag 152 is such that no portion of the graphic display 144 is visible through the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 when the package 136 is finally formed.

[00041] A contemplated variation of the processes described in association with FIGS. 9 and 10 is such that the seal 134 may be located in a different wall, other than one of the end walls of the formed package 136. To that end, the orientation of the stack 120 relative to the sheet 130 (FIG. 9) or open preformed bag 152 (FIG. 10) would be different

from that shown in the figures but still fall within the scope of the present disclosure, so long as any transparent portions at one or both of the end walls of the package 136 does not permit the graphic display 144 of an immediately adjacent product 122 to be visible therethrough.

[00042] While the above-discussed processes refer to a package 136 in which the resulting transparent portion 140 is in the form of an elongated strip, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that the resulting substantially transparent portion 140 of package 136 may have other shapes or dimensions and be present in any number other than one. Similarly, the processes described with respect to FIGS. 9 and 10 are intended to be exemplary rather than limiting, and the products described with respect to FIGS. 1-8 may be packaged by any other suitably chosen methods, so long as they result in packages having the features described in the present disclosure.

~~[00043] Exemplary embodiments of the invention are described as follows, in non-limiting fashion:~~

1. A package of disposable absorbent products, comprising:
an enclosure defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior, and including a top wall, a bottom wall disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls disposed opposite one another; and
a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product contacting said first end wall from said interior, wherein:
~~said first end wall has a first substantially transparent portion,~~

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~~16. The method of either of claims 14 or 15, further comprising:~~

displaying information on the substantially transparent portion, the information being associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.

17. The method of any of claims 14 to 16, wherein the flexible polymeric material has at least a second substantially transparent portion, the method further comprising: positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.

Other embodiments are also contemplated for uses and methods for making a package of disposable absorbent products according to any of claims 1 to 13, as described above.

[00044] From the above disclosure of the general principles of the present invention and the preceding detailed description of exemplary embodiments, those skilled in the art will readily comprehend the various modifications to which this invention is susceptible. Accordingly, this invention is intended to be limited only by the scope of the following claims and equivalents thereof.

~~EP 12 772 974.7~~ ~~159 013 v4/mfa~~
~~SCA Hygiene Products AB~~ ~~April 30, 2014~~

~~AMENDED~~ CLAIMS

1. A package (10; 90; 136) of disposable absorbent products (12; 72; 83; 122),
comprising:

an enclosure (11; 130) defined by a flexible polymer material, having an interior (26), and including a top wall (18), a bottom wall (20) disposed opposite said top wall, first and second sidewalls (24) disposed opposite one another and extending between said top and bottom walls, and first and second end walls (15, 16; 95; 96) disposed opposite one another; and

a compressed stack of disposable absorbent products (12; 72; 83; 122) in said interior and exerting an expansion force against said end walls from said interior, said compressed stack including a first disposable absorbent product (12f) contacting said first end wall from said interior,

wherein:

said first end wall (15; 95; 96) has a first substantially transparent portion (29; 97; 97a; 140),

said first disposable absorbent product (12f; 72; 83; 122) includes a first graphic display (50, 50e; 70a, 70b; 144) on an outer surface thereof facing said first end wall,

characterized in that

no portion of said first graphic display is visible through said first substantially transparent portion of said first end wall.

2. The package (10) of claim 1, wherein said graphic display comprises a plurality of individual figures (50c, 50e) spaced from one another, none of said figures being visible through the substantially transparent portion (29) of said first end wall.

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3. The package (10) of claim 1 or 2, wherein:
said compressed stack has a second disposable absorbent product (12p) contacting said second end wall (16) from said interior, said second disposable absorbent product having a second graphic display (55) on an outer surface thereof and facing said second end wall,
said second end wall has a portion (57) that is substantially transparent, and
no portion of said second graphic display is visible through said substantially transparent portion of said second end wall.
4. The package (10; 90; 136) of claim 3, wherein said first and second graphic displays are at least substantially similar.
5. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 4, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products in said stack includes a graphic display on a respective outer surface thereof at least substantially similar to said first graphic display.
6. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 5, wherein said substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip (29; 97; 140) having a width no greater than about 25mm.
7. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 6, further comprising identifying indicia (35) on said substantially transparent portion.

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8. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 7, wherein said substantially transparent portion includes a seal (33; 103; 134) of said enclosure.
9. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 8, wherein at least one of said first or second sidewalls (24) or said top or bottom walls includes a second substantially transparent portion (37).
10. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1, 2 or 4 to 9, wherein said second end wall is substantially opaque.
11. The package (10; 90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 10, wherein each of said disposable absorbent products is selected from the group consisting of incontinence pads, feminine pads, training pants, baby diapers, and adult diapers.
12. The package (10) of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product (12a) includes a front panel (44), a back panel (46), and a crotch panel (48) between said front and back panels, said first graphic display (70a; 70b) being located on at least one of said front or back panels.
13. The package (90; 136) of any of claims 1 to 11, wherein said first disposable absorbent product (72; 83; 122) includes a front panel (82), a back panel (84), a crotch panel (86) between said front and back panels, and an outer wrapping element (81; 81') enveloping said front, back, and crotch panels, said first graphic display (70a; 70b) being located on said outer wrapping element.

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14. The package (10; 90; 136) of claim 1, wherein:

the first substantially transparent portion is an elongated strip portion, and
each of said disposable absorbent products includes a graphic display on a respective outer
surface thereof.

15. A method of packaging a stack of compressed disposable absorbent products (12;
72; 83; 122), at least a first one of the disposable absorbent products located at an end of
the stack having a graphic display (50, 50e; 70a, 70b; 144) on an outer surface thereof, the
method comprising:

enclosing the compressed stack with a flexible polymeric material having at least
one substantially transparent portion (29; 97; 97a; 140), so as to define an enclosure (11;
130) having an interior (26) and further having a top wall (18), a bottom wall (20) disposed
opposite the top wall, a pair of sidewalls (24) disposed opposite one another and extending
between the top and bottom walls, and a pair of end walls (15, 16; 95; 96), the compressed
stack exerting an expansion force against the end walls from the interior; and

positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one
another such that:

- (a) the at least one substantially transparent portion is located at a first one of the end walls
of the enclosure,
- (b) the graphic display faces the first one of the end walls, and
- (c) no portion of the graphic display is visible through the at least one substantially
transparent portion.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
defining a seal (33; 103; 134) of the enclosure at the at least one substantially transparent
portion.
17. The method of claim 15 or 16, further comprising:
displaying information (35) on the substantially transparent portion, the information being
associated with the disposable absorbent products contained within the enclosure.
18. The method of any of claims 15 to 17, wherein the flexible polymeric material has
at least a second substantially transparent portion (57), the method further comprising:
positioning the compressed stack and flexible polymeric material relative to one
another such that the second substantially transparent portion forms part of at least one of
the top wall, bottom wall, or the sidewalls of the enclosure.

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FIG. 1

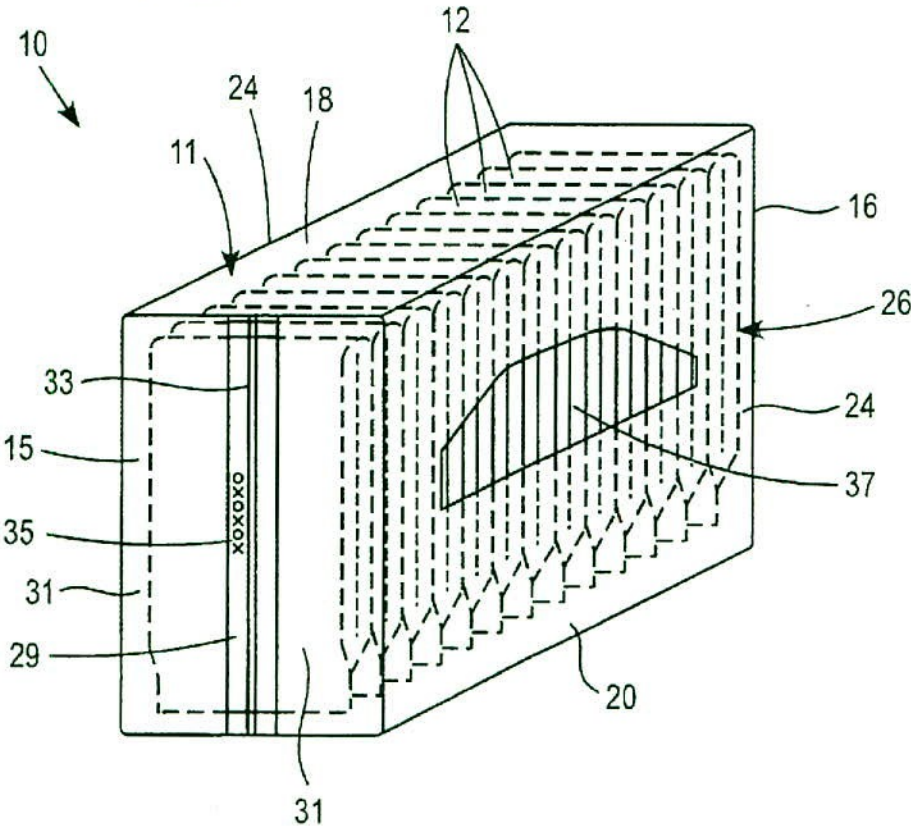


FIG. 1A

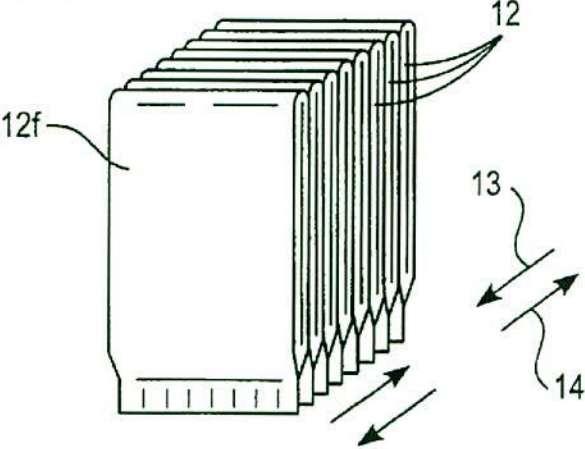


FIG. 2

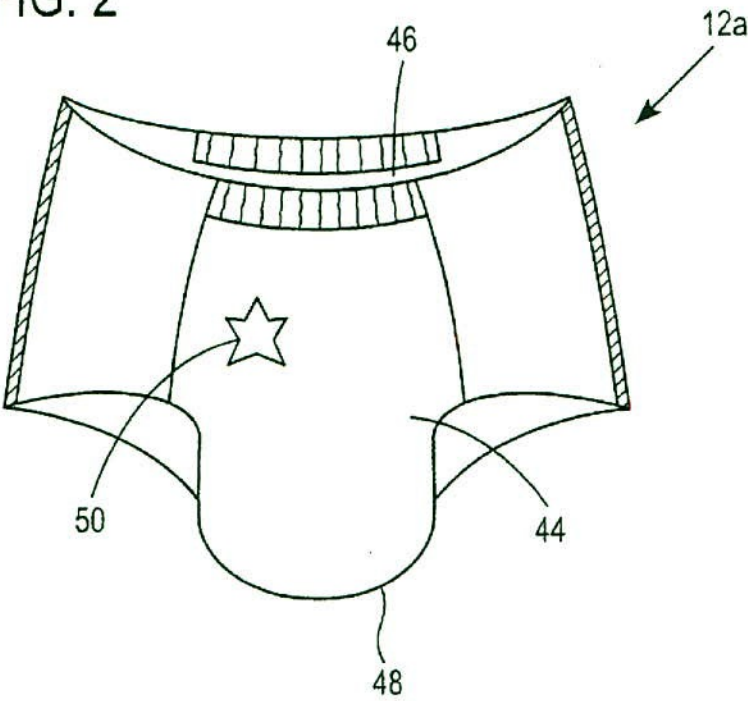


FIG. 3

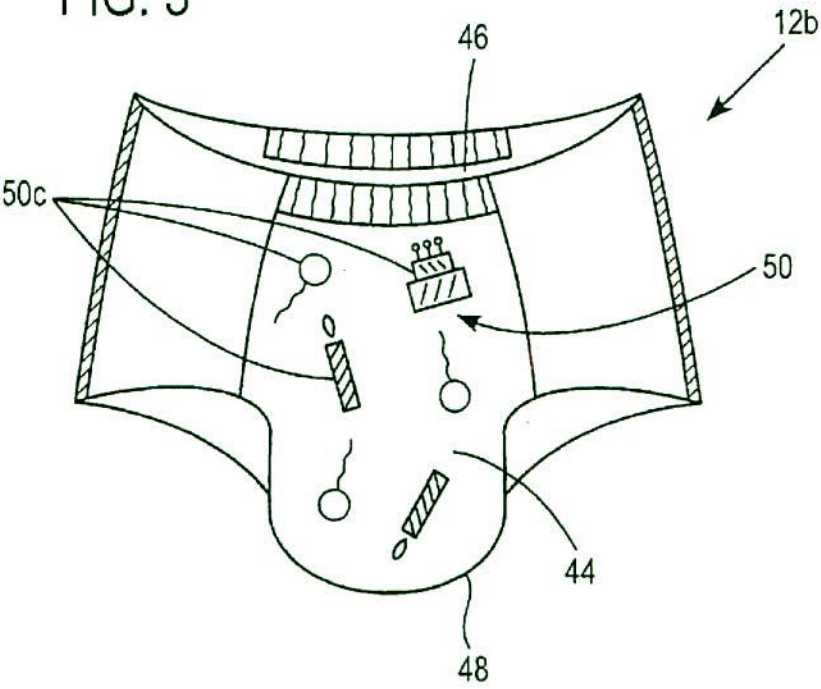


FIG. 4

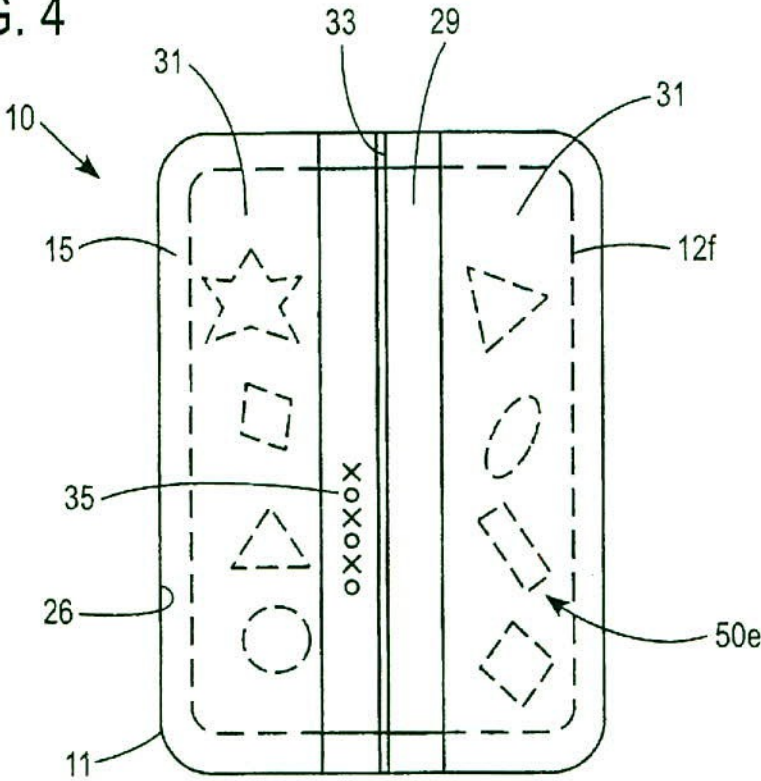


FIG. 5

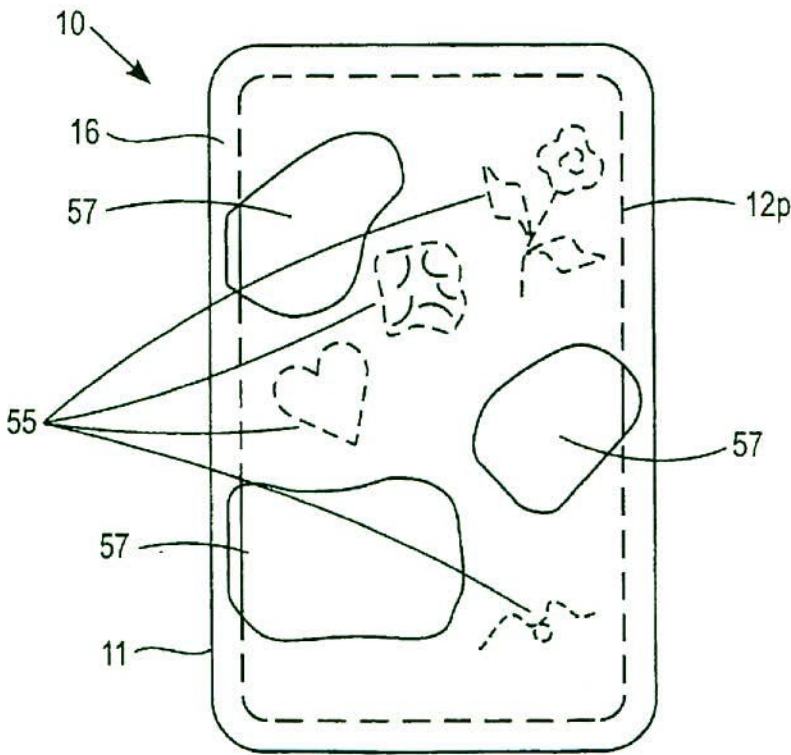


FIG. 6

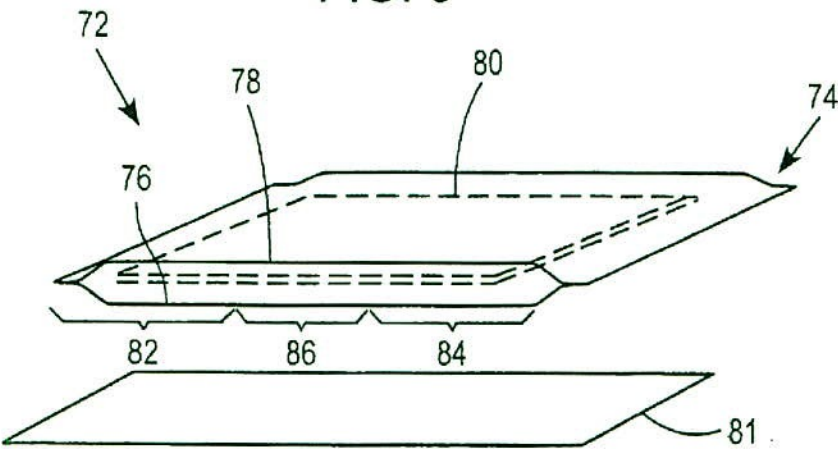


FIG. 6A

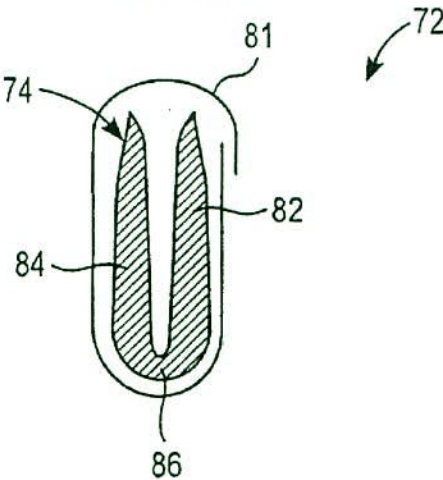


FIG. 6B

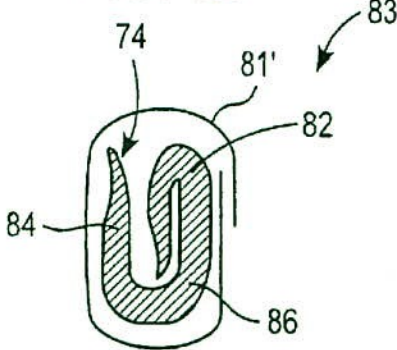


FIG. 7

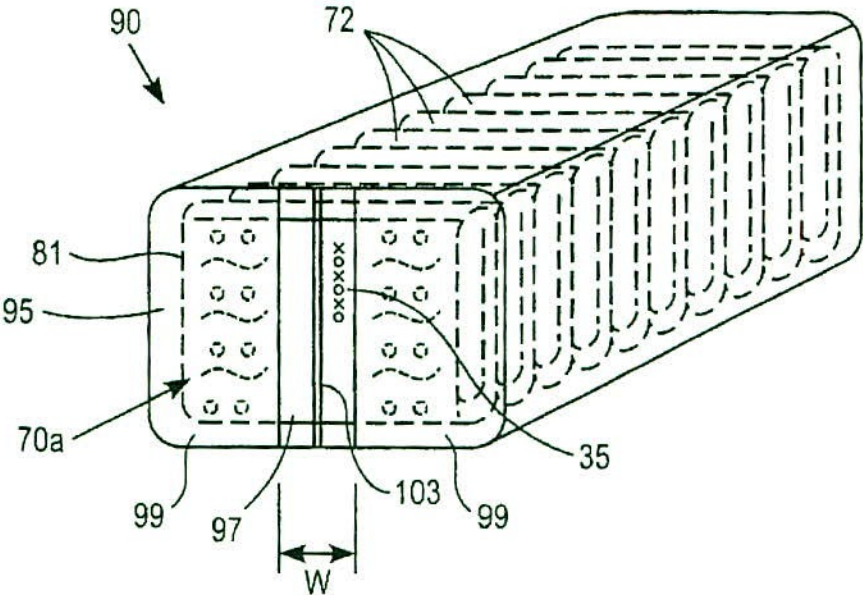


FIG. 8

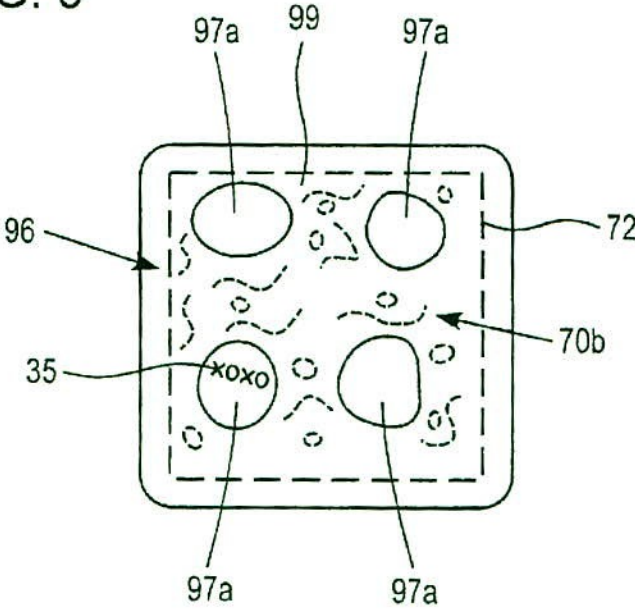


FIG. 9

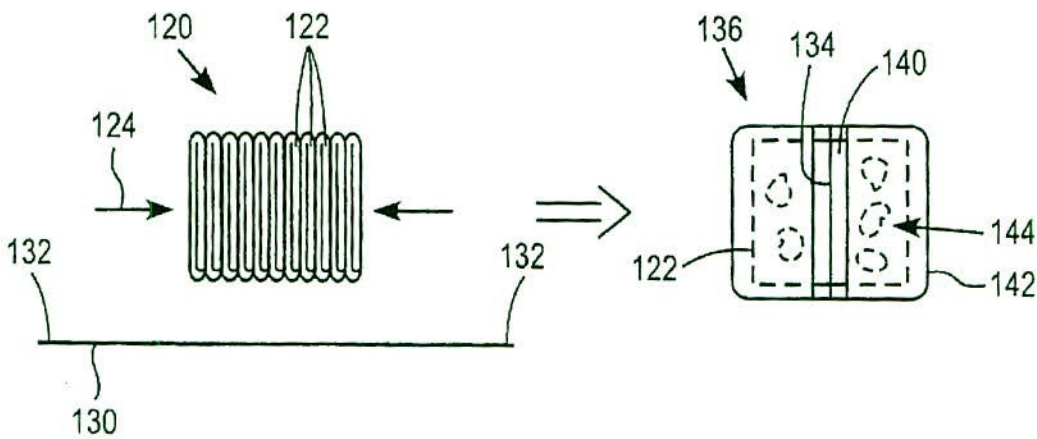
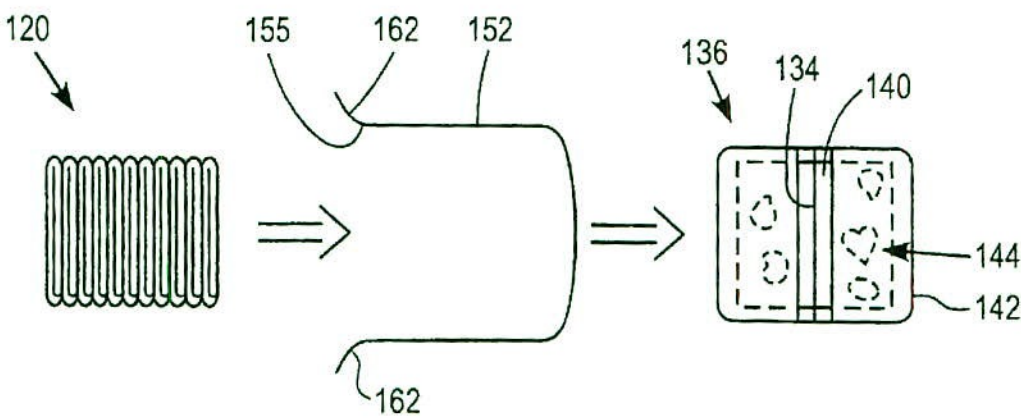


FIG. 10



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*** Conceptos Pagados ***

CANT. RENTISTICO	CONCEPTO	Vr.UNDITARIO	Vr.CONCEPTO
1 50005-01-03 CAMBIO DE MODALIDAD Y MODIFICACIONES	EN CREACION CORRECCION A SOLICITUD EN TRAMITE / MODIFICA	132.000.00	132.000.00
			\$132.000.00

SON: **CIENTO TREINTA Y DOS MIL PESOS MONEDA CORRIENTE***

Responsable: _____

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