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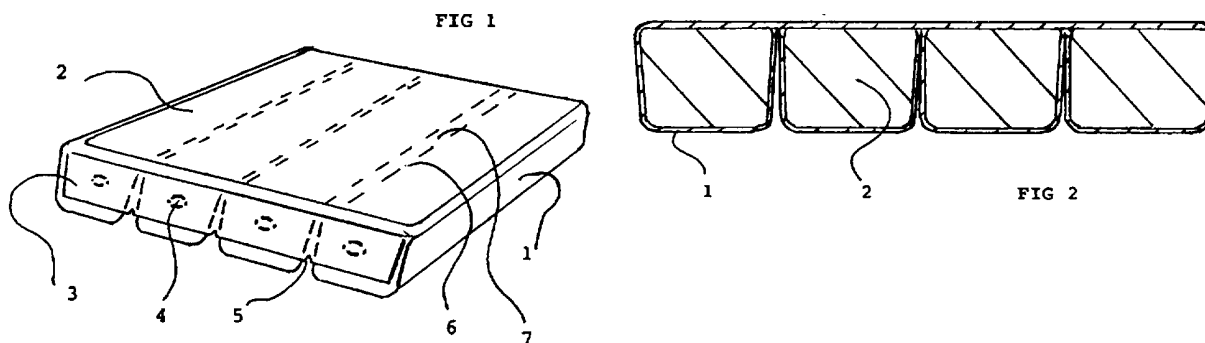
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(54) Abstract Title
Package for multiple articles

(57) A package for multiple articles 2 eg chocolate bars, biscuits comprises a flexible wrapper 1 which extends over the adjacent articles to form a flat surface, the wrapper extending around at least each article to provide separation therebetween, the separating portions of the wrapper being bonded 6 itself eg by adhesive or heat sealing to the flat surface. Preferably, tear lines are provided (7, Fig.3) which allow the articles to be separated from the package whilst still remaining wrapped. Alternatively, parallel lines of heat sealing or adhesive may be applied, these defining areas of weakness therebetween which facilitate separation of the articles from the package. The wrapper may be extended to form one or more end covering flaps 3, the flap(s) can be bonded to the ends of the package by adhesive and nicks 5 provided, aligned with the tear lines. The wrapper can be formed from plastics or paper material, aluminium foil or a combination of these materials. The flat surface allows relatively large format advertising to be displayed. An alternative embodiment comprises a top flat surface extending down only the sides of the outermost articles and bonded thereto, the articles being pre-wrapped (Fig.4).



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FIG 1

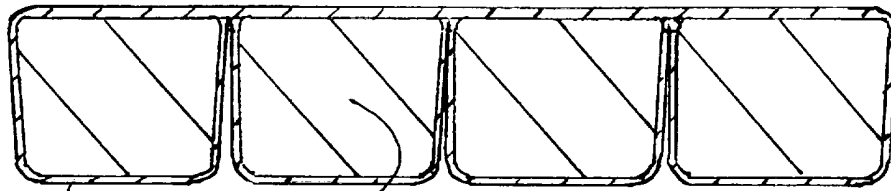
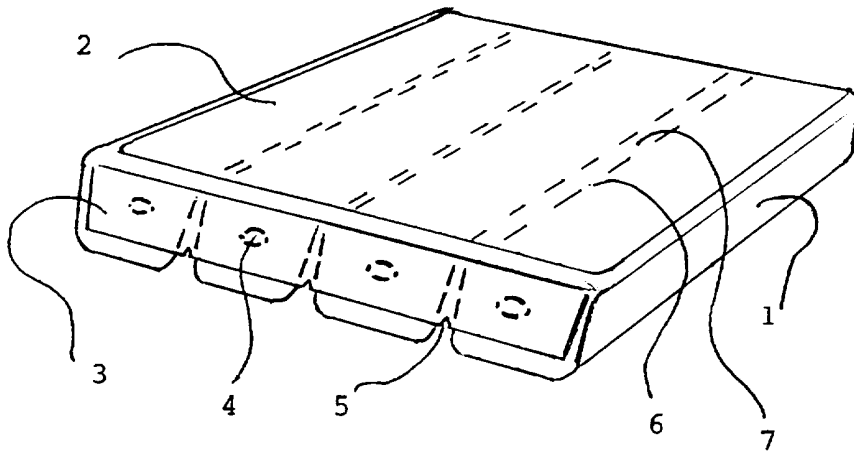


FIG 2

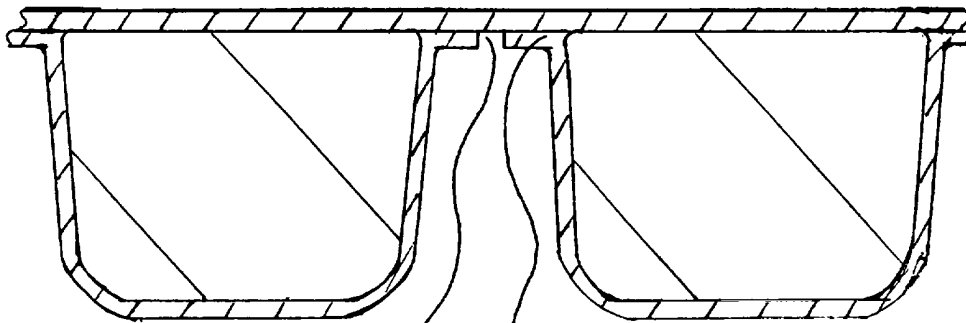
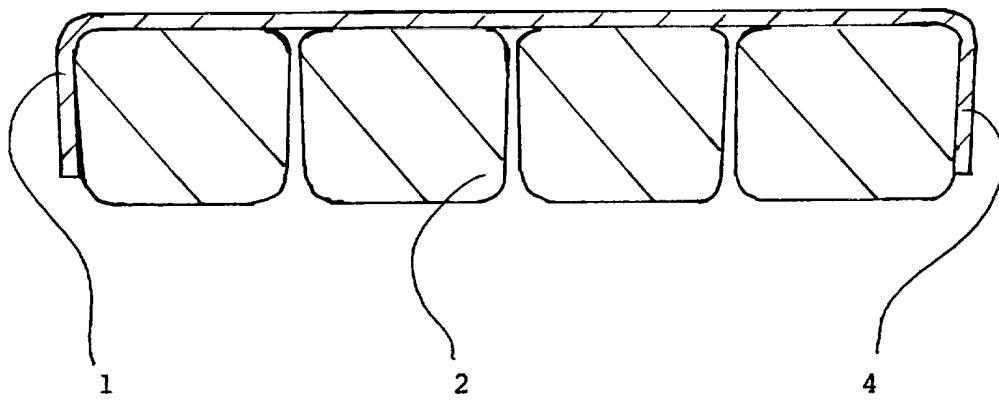


FIG 3

FIG 4



IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO PRODUCT PACKAGING

This invention is concerned with improvements relating to product packaging. In particular, the invention relates to the wrappings that are often to be found on consumables such as chocolate bars and biscuits, although this does not exclude non-consumables.

It is well known that these wrappings are used to protect the products within, to identify the brand and product composition and to put the marketing message across to the customer.

Although the products may be individually wrapped and sold in single units, often they are sold in multiple packs. Normally, an outer wrapper encapsulates the individually wrapped products, both for ease of portability and for marketing purposes. This provides a flat, continuous surface whereon the name of the product may be displayed, in a large format, on the top of the multiple pack, in order to attract the said customers.

However, the use of an outer wrapper results in unnecessary expense and wastage of the planet's valuable and finite resources. Also, companies are urged by governments and environmental bodies, i.e., E.C. Directives, to cut the packaging waste that would otherwise end up in landfill sites.

It is also known that there is available a method of wrapping, in which a multiplicity of products, such as childrens lollipops, are encapsulated between two sheets of flexible plastic. These are heat sealed, so providing individual compartments. The individually encapsulated lollipops may then be torn off before consumption. This avoids the wastage that occurs with the method previously described.

However, this has the disadvantage in that the multiple pack has a very uneven surface. Whilst this is not important on the underside of the multiple pack, it is desirable that the top of the multiple pack is flat as this is used for display, in large format, as hereinbefore described. The advertising message with this method is distorted and unclear.

An object of this invention is to provide a flat surface, for large format display purposes, on the top of a multiple pack, whilst dispensing fully, or in part, with an outer wrapper, so greatly reducing production costs and wastage. The top of each individual product, when encapsulated, may form an attractive display on the underside of the multiple pack. Thus, the product is clearly branded whilst in a single or multiple aspect.

According to the present invention there is provided a multiple pack whereby a packaging material traverses a multiplicity of products, each laid adjacent to another, so providing a flat surface which forms the top of a multiple pack. Means whereby a flexible packaging material may be wrapped around each individual product, so forming corrugations on the underside of the multiple pack. Means for releasably securing the partially or fully wrapped products to the top of the multiple pack in order that they may be removed from the multiple pack at a later time, whilst, at the same time, remaining encapsulated until ready for use.

The material which forms the flat surface on the top of the multiple pack, may be extended to cover one or more sides of the multiple pack.

The packaging may be made of any suitable material. Examples being a flexible plastic, metals such as aluminium foil, paper, card or any combination of these materials.

Preferably adhesives, of the type presently utilized, may be used to join the packaging material. These leave little or no indentations on the wrapping material. However any other method such as heat sealing, may be used.

Tear lines may be formed by any convenient means, an example is by the use of perforations. Where one piece of packaging material overlays another, it may be necessary, only, that one of the pieces is perforated. Alternatively, parallel lines may be formed in the packaging by bonding or heat sealing. As the gap between these is weaker, this forms a path of least resistance for a tear. Also, a small 'v' nick may be incorporated at the start of a tear line in order to facilitate a tear.

If desired any protrusions, formed where the packaging material has been joined, may be folded flat against the multiple pack. Also, if necessary, they may be bonded to the pack to give greater rigidity.

A specific embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 shows in perspective the multiple pack.

Figure 2 is a side elevational cross-section of the multiple pack

Figure 3 is an enlarged, side elevational cross-section of the multiple pack.

With reference to figure 1, the multiple pack comprises a wrapper 1 which traverses a multiplicity of chocolate bars 2, closely following the contours of three sides of each of the individual chocolate bars 2, thereby, meeting up with itself on the underside of the multiple pack 1. The two open ends of the multiple pack 1, formed as a result of this process, are then sealed by bonding together the top and the bottom ends of each, so forming a flap 3. Adhesive 4 then bonds both of the flaps 3 to the ends of the multiple pack 1. This provides greater rigidity. Small 'v' nicks 5 are formed in the ends of the flap.

Figure 2 shows a cross section of the wrapper 1 having been formed around the chocolate bars 2.

Figure 3 illustrates, in an enlarged cross-section, a means of bonding 6 the wrapper 1 to itself. Also, it shows a tear line 7 which is formed from a gap or cut.

A further embodiment is now described.

Figure 4 shows a cross section of the wrapper 1 traversing a multiplicity of pre-wrapped chocolate bars 2 and extending down the sides only. The ends are conveniently bonded 4, so forming a multiple pack. Otherwise this embodiment is similar to the previous embodiment.

CLAIMS

1. A multiple pack whereby a packaging material traverses a multiplicity of products, each laid adjacent to another, so providing a flat surface which forms the top of a multiple pack, means whereby a flexible packaging material may be wrapped around each individual product, or products, so forming corrugations on the underside of the multiple pack, means for releasably securing the partially or fully wrapped products to the top of the multiple pack in order that they may be removed from the multiple pack at a later time, whilst, at the same time, remaining encapsulated until ready for use.
2. A multiple pack as claimed in Claim 1 whereby the material which forms the flat surface on the top of the multiple pack may be extended to cover one or more sides of the multiple pack.
3. A multiple pack as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 whereby the packaging material forms an overlay, the underside of the overlay being perforated, so forming a line of least resistance, the upperside of the packaging is not perforated, so forming a continuous, unbroken, surface for display purposes.
4. A multiple pack as claimed in any preceding claim in which parallel lines are formed in the packaging by bonding with adhesive or heat sealing, the area between the parallel lines being weaker, so forming a path of least resistance for a tear.
5. A multiple pack as claimed in any preceding claim in which a small 'v' nick is incorporated at the start of a tear line.
6. A multiple pack as claimed in any preceding claim in which the protrusions, formed where the packaging material has been joined, may be folded flat against the multiple pack and bonded to the pack to give greater rigidity.
7. A multiple pack as claimed in any preceding claim whereby the packaging is made from plastic, metal foil, paper, card, or any combination of these materials.
8. A multiple pack substantially as herein described and illustrated in the accompanying drawings.



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Claims searched: All

Examiner: Mark.A.Pullen
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Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:
UK CI (Ed.Q): B8C (CU1, CU21, CW6, CW10, CW11, CW12, CW13, CW26, CXX)
Int CI (Ed.6): B65B 11/00, B65D 65/00, 65/02, 65/10, 65/12, 65/14, 75/00, 75/04, 75/14, 75/22, 75/24, 85/36, 85/60
Other: ONLINE : WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	GB 598432 (SCHUTTER)	

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
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