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Method For Manufacturing A Set Of Embossing Rollers

The present invention relates to a method for manufacturing a set of embossing rollers for a device for embossing
5 packaging materials that has two rollers, according to the preamble of claim 1, and to a set of embossing rollers manufactured according to the aforementioned method, as well as to the use of these embossing rollers in a device for embossing packaging materials.

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Packaging foils for the tobacco industry or the food industry have been embossed by means of embossing roller devices for some time already, the foils being e.g. so-called inner liners that are wrapped around a number of
15 cigarettes, or packaging materials for chocolate, butter, or similar foods, electronic components, jewelry, or watches.

Originally, the so-called inner liners consisted of pure aluminum foils like e.g. household foils, and embossing was
20 achieved by passing them between two rollers of which at least one was provided with a relief, the so-called logos. Until about 1980, such a roller pair mostly consisted of a steel roller on which a relief was formed and of a counter-roller of a resilient material, e.g. rubber, paper, or
25 acrylic glass. By impressing the relief of the male roller into the counter-roller = female roller, the mirror-inverted impression was produced.

For more sophisticated logos, the relief of the male roller
30 was transferred to a layer on the female roller and the indentations corresponding to the raised portions were etched out or otherwise carved out. Recently, laser has also been used for this engraving process.

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Since this manufacture of female rollers is demanding, after about 1980, when US 5 007 271 to the applicant of the present invention was filed, a so-called pin-up/pin-up system has increasingly been used where two identical steel
5 rollers having a very large number of small teeth interlock and emboss the paper passing therethrough. Logos are produced by partly or entirely removing teeth on one roller.

Furthermore it was thus possible to produce the so-called
10 satinizing where a matt and thus also more precious appearance of the surface is produced by the large number of small indentations created by the teeth.

EP 0 114 169 1 discloses an embossing device which is
15 situated after a printing device and which has a male metal embossing roller and a female counter roller made of resilient material, whereby the depressions in the female roller are bigger than the elevations on the male roller. This device is not foreseen for embossing without previous
20 printing. The method of manufacture of both rollers is not disclosed apart from the fact that a laser can be used for the manufacturing of the depressions.

US 5 269 983 A discloses also a pair of rollers with a metal
25 male and a resilient female roller.

DE 10 2005 056627 A1 discloses a method and device for the production of blanks for an innerliners for a group of cigarettes, comprising a pair of embossing rollers, having
30 elevations on one roller and corresponding depressions on the other roller. There is no disclosure as concerns the method of manufacture of the pair of rollers.

DE 43 42 737 A1 discloses a method and device for the
35 production of embossed innerliner blanks with a pair of

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rollers, wherein one roller is provided with an engraving on a part of its circumference, whereas the counter roller is provided with an engraving on its whole circumference. There is no hint at the method of manufacture of the embossing
5 rollers.

EP 2 327 502 A1 of the same applicant discloses a method and device for structuring embossing rollers by a laser device.

10 EP 1 658 965 A1 discloses an embossing device comprising two pairs of embossing rollers, one pair for satinizing a foil and a second pair for embossing graphics. The second pair of rollers can comprise a male roller and a resilient female roller, or rollers in the so-called pin up - pin down
15 configuration. There is no disclosure of a method of manufacture of such rollers.

In parallel to the developments in the embossing techniques, i.e. in the manufacture of the embossing rollers, a change
20 has also taken place with regard to the packaging materials in that the originally used all-metal aluminum foil was replaced by paper foils whose surfaces were coated for environmental considerations with increasingly thinner metal layers, the latter having lately been applied by sputtering.
25 In recent times, the metal layer on the inner liners has been further reduced and will eventually be omitted altogether in the future.

At the same time, attempts are being made to replace the
30 classical packaging system, where the cigarettes are packaged in innerliners and this package is inserted into a paperboard packet, by so-called soft packs where only a wrapping foil is provided that simultaneously fulfills the functions of keeping the cigarettes moist and protecting
35 them against exterior olfactory influences, on one hand, and

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of providing a certain stiffness for the mechanical protection of the cigarettes, on the other hand.

The developments in the manufacture of the embossing
5 rollers, particularly those made known by the applicant of the present invention, see e.g. US 7 036 347, have led to an ever increasing scope of decorative effects on the innerliners and to a larger diversity of advertisements that has not only been utilized in the cigarette industry but
10 also in the food industry. Lately, however, efforts are being made to strongly restrict or completely eliminate advertising for tobacco products so that it will no longer be possible to emboss the innerliners with promotionally effective designs to the former extent. Therefore,
15 possibilities are being sought for producing new decorative effects without using eye-catching embossings, gold rims or decorations of the kind.

Also being considered are new possibilities for product
20 identification, which has mainly been ensured in internationally established brand names so far. Today, so-called tactile effects are being used which are created by special surface structures of the papers or by special engravings. Both textiles and papers are provided with
25 expandable IR absorption optimized colors which create so-called pseudo-embossings. The purpose of this technique may be a perceptible relief formation e.g. for creating a velvety surface or a matte effect. In applications for food safe purposes, however, wetting techniques are questionable.

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In the case of tactile surfaces, the consumer identifies the product by means of his or her tactile sense. Furthermore, this can lead to Braille writings or for producing hidden security features. Information produced in a tactile manner
35 may e.g. be read out by means of laser radiation based on

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the surface-dependent reflectance. Furthermore, recent developments aim to produce audible effects that are produced by rubbing over the surface.

- 5 Another sector of the tobacco industry is concerned with the cigarette itself, e.g. with its mouthpiece, also called the tip.

As a result of the ever more restrictive legislation on
10 tobacco products and of the strive for further features such as tactile, acoustic, or different optical features, on one hand, and of the continually increasing diversity of different packaging materials such as aluminum foils, metal coated papers, tipping papers, hybrid foils, plastic foils,
15 paperboard, or cardstock, on the other hand, the conventional pin-up/pin-up embossing rollers where both the driven roller and the counter-rollers have a large number of teeth are still wholly and successfully utilizable for embossing inner liners but reach their limits with regard to
20 the aforementioned purposes.

Although known roller systems comprising a male roller having male structures and a female roller having female structures that are inversely congruent thereto may extend
25 the scope of decorative elements, their production is very cost-intensive and above all time-consuming due to the pairwise and matched manufacture so that their manufacture for the industrial embossing of e.g. metallized inner liners for the tobacco industry is not adequate.

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Moreover, fine embossing can only be ensured with a very expensive manufacture of such rollers. In addition, when a male roller and an inversely congruent female roller are used in this context, the foil therebetween will be crushed
35 to such an extent that tensions arise in the transversal

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direction that are unacceptable for tobacco product papers. Moreover a hardly controllable limit to perforation is reached and very high pressures are required for a high speed on-line process while the embossing times are in the
5 millisecond range. Ultimately there is a tendency to use thicker papers.

One object of the invention that arises from the preceding is to provide a method for manufacturing a set of embossing
10 rollers that allows fine embossing of the described, most diverse surface structures of the indicated materials of the most diverse kinds in an on-line process in a packing line. In this context, the term "fine embossing" means that the contours of the fine embossing structures of the rollers
15 exhibit an overall linear error of less than $\pm 10 \mu\text{m}$ and an angular error of less than 5° . This object is achieved by the method according to claim 1.

Another object of the invention is to keep deformations of
20 the embossed foils during the embossing of regularly arranged and uniform structures transversally to the running direction so small that the rollers can be used in an on-line process in a packing line. This object is achieved by the method according to claim 6.

25 Another object is to produce such a set of rollers on an industrial scale in the required precision and numbers. This object is achieved by the method according to claim 10. Further objects and advantages, such as the manufacture of
30 roller pairs for producing creasings, become apparent from the dependent claims and the following description.

The invention will be explained in more detail hereinafter with reference to drawings of exemplary embodiments.

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- Fig. 1 schematically shows a set of embossing
rollers of the pin-up/pin-up type according
to the prior art in an embossing device,
both rollers having teeth that project from
the cylinder,
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- Fig. 2 schematically shows a set of embossing
rollers of the pin-up/pin-down type
according to the prior art, the female
roller = pin-down roller being designed
inversely congruent to the male roller =
pin-up roller.
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- Fig. 3 schematically shows a set of embossing
rollers of the male-female roller type
according to the invention,
- 15
- Fig. 4 shows an embodiment variant of the set of
embossing rollers of Fig. 3,
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- Fig. 5 shows a further embodiment variant of the
set of embossing rollers of Fig. 3,
- Fig. 6 shows three different enlarged views of a
detail of the male roller of the embossing
set of Fig. 5,
- 25
- Fig. 7 shows an embodiment variant of the set of
embossing rollers of Fig. 5,
- 30
- Fig. 8 shows a further embodiment variant of the
set of embossing rollers of Fig. 3,

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- Fig. 9 shows a laser system for producing structures of male-female rollers according to the invention,
- 5 Figures 10-16 show embodiment variants of structures on the embossing rollers according to Fig. 3,
- Figures 17-20B show schematic sectional views of
10 embodiments of male and female structures that are not inversely congruent,
- Figures 21-35 show embodiment variants of roller pairs having zones for producing folding creases,
- 15 Fig. 36 schematically shows a first exemplary embodiment of a quick-change device for the rollers according to the invention in a perspective view,
- 20 Fig. 37 shows the assembled device of Fig. 21 in a sectional view,
- Fig. 38 schematically shows a second exemplary
25 embodiment of a quick-change device for the rollers according to the invention in a perspective view,
- Fig. 39 schematically shows a third exemplary
30 embodiment of a quick-change device for the rollers according to the invention in a perspective view, and
- Fig. 40 schematically shows a further exemplary embodiment of a quick-change device for the

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rollers according to the invention in a perspective view.

Fig. 1 shows an embossing device 1 according to the prior art with a set of two rollers 2 and 3 of the pin-up/pin-up type. In this configuration, the steel cylinders comprise projecting teeth 4 that are generally pyramidal and have an either square or rectangular base. In cigarette packing lines and other packing lines, such rollers by the applicant of the present invention have been used for over twenty years, the axle 5 of the driven roller 2 being fixedly supported whereas counter-roller 3 is driven and synchronized by the driven roller. In a known manner, such an embossing device may comprise more than two embossing rollers, e.g. one embossing roller and two counter-rollers.

In this case, axle 5 of counter-roller 3 is advantageously movable in all three dimensions such that one tooth of one roller may engage between four teeth of the other roller and a non-slipping self-synchronization is possible. In order to produce logos and authentication features, teeth of the driven roller are either completely or only partly removed, thereby creating an image that changes according to the angle of light incidence and on the viewing angle of the observer. Furthermore it is known to create authentication features on top or on the sides of the teeth by means of microengravings or alternatively to remove or modify certain teeth in a predetermined arrangement.

For producing authentication features or decorations on inner liners, i.e. on metal coated paper, the pin-up/pin-up rollers are very well suitable and have been successfully used for decades. As mentioned in the introduction, both the higher requirements with regard to the embossing precision and the adaptations to an ever growing diversity of

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packaging materials such as synthetic foils, hybrid foils, paperboard, or cardstock, and the expected more restrictive regulations on advertising and the new embossing types related thereto reveal the limits of pin-up/pin-up embossing roller devices.

Besides the devices using pin-up/pin-up rollers, i.e. two or multiple male rollers, embossings have also been carried out with male-female rollers or, as illustrated in Fig. 2, with so-called pin-up/pin-down roller pairs.

Device 7 according to Fig. 2 comprises two rollers 2 and 8 where male roller 2 may be the same as in Fig. 1 while female roller 8 is a so-called pin-down roller and indentations 9 correspond to teeth 4 on roller 2 in an inversely congruent manner. As in Fig. 1, roller 2 is driven by drive 6 while roller 8 is driven by teeth 4. In order to ensure a smooth embossing operation, the teeth and indentations have to be machined and adjusted to each other very precisely.

First male roller 2 is manufactured and brought into contact with a female roller steel cylinder in such a manner that the teeth of the male roller are reproduced on the female cylinder, and a photo lacquer or wax layer or the like is generally applied to the female cylinder. Subsequently, the indentations 9 in the female cylinder that correspond to teeth 4 are carved out, generally by etching. It is also known, however, to carve out the indentations on the female roller mechanically or by means of a laser system.

Based on these two general types of embossing rollers it is known to form, on their hard surfaces, a very large number of signs, images, letters or the like, generally referred to as "logos", as well as security features or authentication

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features that are often invisible by the naked eye and are readable by suitable optical apparatus.

Due to the very complex technology required for the
5 manufacture of a male-female roller pair according to the prior art, the application of the latter for industrial purposes is very limited. Generally, such systems are made to specification or used for special purposes. Moreover, a conventional male-female roller system having inversely
10 congruent structures suffers from the serious disadvantage, among others, that particularly after the embossing of row structures the foil will exhibit a distortion in the transverse direction that makes its subsequent processing in a packing line very difficult. In addition, the resulting
15 transverse tensions may cause the foil to be perforated, thereby making it unsuitable for use in the food sector or in the tobacco industry.

Based on the foregoing description, a primary requirement
20 for a substantial improvement of the embossing possibilities and quality and mainly also for an application in the on-line process is that the surface structures of the rollers, particularly of the female rollers, can be manufactured in a larger diversity as well as more rationally and in
25 particular more precisely. Whereas the precision might be ensured according to the prior art by very expensive etching or mechanical machining procedures, this is not the case for the rational and thus also faster manufacture of the male-female rollers in a large diversity of surface structures.

30 Furthermore, another requirement consists in taking measures in order to reduce the transverse tensions in the embossed foil, which appear more frequently with inversely congruent structures, to such an extent that they do no longer impair
35 the subsequent processing.

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One solution consists in shaping the surface structures of the rollers of a set independently of each other rather than first shaping the male roller and then the female roller in a physically dependent relationship. Currently, this is preferably achievable with the required precision and within the required production time by means of a suitable laser system that allows manufacturing not only male rollers but also female rollers rationally, precisely, and above all in a large variety of shapes and independently of each other.

It has been recognized that the individual manufacture of male and female rollers allows to achieve a reduction of the transverse tensions due to the fact that the female structures are not inversely congruent, i.e. do not exactly correspond to the associated male structures. Due to the fact that the dimensions and shapes of the male structures, e.g. teeth, do not exactly correspond to those of the indentations in the female roller, not only the quality of the embossing is improved but also a sufficient reduction of the transverse tensions in the embossed foil is achieved.

Especially in the case of the embossing of two tipping webs on respective rollers, this may cause warping of the foil web that may have consequences particularly with regard to the cutting operation. According to WO-2011/098376 to the applicant of the present invention, which refers to pin-up/pin-up rollers exclusively, this problem may be solved in that the logo lines on the two tipping webs are arranged in mutually offset positions. The result is that no tensions are created when the tipping webs are being cut and that the tipping web portions can subsequently be glued around the cigarette mouthpiece without problems to form a tip where no seam is visible.

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In the case of the male-female rollers according to the invention, this applies not only to the embossing of relatively narrow tipping webs but more generally to embossing structures arranged in rows.

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Fig. 3 shows a schematized illustration of an embossing device 10 according to the invention comprising a male roller P11 and a female roller M11 as well as an enlarged illustration of their surface structures, where rhombic
10 coarse structures GP1 and GM1 are depicted, see also Figures 10 to 16.

Since the coarse structures are not teeth, the driving force is transmitted from male roller P11 that is driven via belt
15 drive 6 to female roller M11 by means of gearwheels 39 and 40.

In the embodiment variant of Fig. 4, the rollers P11E and M11E exhibit a coarse structure GPE and GME that consists of
20 the capital letter "E".

In the embodiment variant of Fig. 5, the rollers P11W and M11W exhibit the same coarse structure GPE and GME that consists of the capital letter "E" as well as an emblem W.
25 In Fig. 6, this emblem W on male roller P11W is shown in different views: in Fig. 6A in a top view, in Fig. 6B in a perspective view, and in Fig. 6C in a sectional view.

Fig. 7 shows an embodiment variant of the roller pair of
30 Fig. 5 where the two rollers P11B and M11B are provided in addition to the "E" shapes and emblem W with positioning marks 27 and 28 allowing to synchronize the rollers and the embossed material by means of a camera.

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Fig. 8 shows a pair of embossing rollers P11L and M11L having no structures except the emblem and which are also provided with marks 27 and 28.

5 In Fig. 9 an exemplary laser system is schematically illustrated which allows producing the coarse and fine structures shown in Figs. 10 - 16 that are suitable for a continuous fine engraving = macrostructuring process. The depicted laser device L12 comprises a laser 12 that is
10 connected to a control circuit 13 that controls laser 12 and a deflection unit 14 which may comprise beam splitters as well as acousto-optical or electro-optical modulators or polygon mirrors. Deflection unit 14, focusing optics 15, and deflection mirror 16 form engraving unit 17 that is linearly
15 displaceable in the X axis as symbolically indicated by the X arrow. Alternatively, the entire laser device L1 may be displaceable in the X axis.

Control circuit 13 is connected to a position detector 18
20 for detecting and evaluating the data of the rotating workpiece 22, in this case an embossing roller blank. The workpiece is driven by a drive 23, which is symbolized by rotation angle ϕ . By the combination of the linear displacement of the engraving unit and of the rotation of
25 the roller a constant helical line SL is created that allows a uniform machining.

The application of a deflection unit that may e.g. comprise one or multiple beam splitter(s) as well as electro-optical
30 or acousto-optical modulators or one or multiple polygon mirror(s) allows splitting the initial laser beam into two or multiple laser beams impinging on two or multiple tracks simultaneously but at such a mutual distance that they do not interfere. Moreover, the time interval between the

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impingement of the individual pulses can be chosen large enough to avoid a thermal overload.

By the application of short pulse lasers whose laser pulses
5 are comprised between 10 femtoseconds and 100 picoseconds,
the energy is applied in a very short time period so that a
so-called "cold ablation" becomes possible where the
material is evaporated very quickly without unacceptable
heating of the adjacent material. The undesirable liquid
10 state of the material that produces crater edges and
splashes can thus be almost completely avoided. The desired
structures are generated on a computer that controls the
laser system so that it is of no importance whether a
surface structure for a male roller or for a female roller
15 is produced. For the rollers, i.e. their surface, e.g. a
suitable steel, hard metal, or ceramic material is used.

In Figs. 10 - 16, a few structures among the very large
diversity of possible surface structures are illustrated. In
20 each of these Figures, coarse structures GP1 and GM1 are the
same as illustrated in Fig. 3 whereas the superposed fine
structures vary. The depicted rhombi 21 of the coarse
structures comprise male ridges 22P and female grooves 22M.
Exemplary dimensions are a longitudinal diagonal of 4 to 6
25 mm, more particularly 4.6 mm, and a transverse diagonal of
1.5 mm to 3 mm, more particularly 2.0 mm, whereas the width
of the ridges and grooves 22 is equal to approximately 0.2
mm. In the enlarged views, the female structure is shown on
the left of the drawings and the male structure on the right
30 and the structures are illuminated from the bottom left.

As appears particularly in the enlarged views, respective
fine structures FP and FM are superimposed on coarse
structures GP1 and GM1, the fine structures varying in their
35 shapes. In Fig. 10, the fine structure FPQ consists of

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squares. The pitch of the squares, i.e. their recurrent spacing, amounts to about 0.04 mm. As will be apparent in Figs. 17 - 20, the male and female structures are not exactly inversely congruent but their shapes and dimensions differ from each other by a certain amount.

In Fig. 11, the fine structure FPD and FMD is diamond-shaped instead of square. The dimensions in Fig. 11 are slightly larger than in Fig. 10, i.e. the pitch of the fine structuring is 0.07 mm here while it is understood that it may be smaller, e.g. 0.05 mm, or larger.

In Fig. 12, the fine structure FPRh and FMRh is rhombic. Here also the dimensions are the same as previously.

In Fig. 13 the fine structure FPR and FMR is round. Here also the pitch of the fine structure may amount to 0.07 mm.

In Fig. 14 only coarse structure GP1 and GM1 is shown, without any fine structures. Such a structure is particularly suitable for producing tactile structures that are not only well perceptible but also have an esthetically pleasing appearance. In this manner, e.g. signs in Braille or acoustically utilizable structures may be produced.

In Fig. 15 it is illustrated that no fine structure is superposed on male coarse structure GP1 whereas a fine structure FM (Q,D,Rh,R) is superposed on female coarse structure GM1 that is square, diamond-shaped, rhombic or round, as shown above, or may include an emblem as according to Figure 5 or another decoration of the kind.

In Fig. 16 it is illustrated that a fine structure FP (Q,D,Rh,R) is superposed on male coarse structure GP1 whereas female coarse structure GM1 has no fine structure.

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It will be noted that the depicted embodiments only represent a small fraction of all possible shapes both of the coarse structures and of the fine structures. Based
5 thereon, a very large number of different structures can be produced which may e.g. consist of few separate logos or logotypes or the like on which a fine structure may be superposed. In addition thereto, a microstructure may be superposed in a known manner in order to produce e.g.
10 authentication features or other distinctive features that are generally invisible to the naked eye.

Figs. 17 - 20B schematically show some possibilities of how the female structure may differ from the male structure. For
15 a better representation and visualization, the surface structures are shown as being tooth-shaped and enlarged so as to illustrate the deviations more clearly.

First, in order to be able to indicate the voluntary
20 deviations, the errors, i.e. the manufacturing tolerances have to be specified. As previously mentioned, one goal of the improvements in the roller manufacture among others is to produce more precise and suitable structures for fine embossing, and thus the problem of achieving small
25 manufacturing tolerances arises. These tolerances are also influenced *inter alia* by the surface quality of the rollers and it is therefore advantageous to use a hard surface. Thus, the rollers may be full hard metal rollers or metal rollers provided with a hard metal surface, or full ceramic
30 rollers or metal rollers provided with a ceramic surface. All of these materials are particularly suitable for fine machining by means of a laser system. In most cases it is advantageous to provide the surface of the embossing rollers with a suitable protective layer.

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For example, for the intended machining by means of a laser system, in the case of an embossing roller having a length of 150 mm and a diameter of 70 mm, errors of 2-4 μm in the direction of rotation and of $\pm 2 \mu\text{m}$ in the axial direction
5 would be desirable and in height, for a tooth height of 0.1 mm, an error of 0.5 to 3 μm . For two opposed tooth flanks forming an angle of e.g. 80° , an angular error of less than 3° is desirable. Thus, for new rollers, a maximum linear error of $\pm 5 \mu\text{m}$ results, so that the manufacturing
10 deviations may attain approx. 10 μm .

Since these values are strongly influenced by the measurements and the manufacture, however, only a linear deviation of the male structures from the female structures
15 of 15 μm and more and an angular deviation of 4° and more can be qualified as a voluntary difference. The upper limit of the difference of the structures is set by the condition that the cooperation of the two rollers may not be impaired.

20 The voluntary difference between the respective associated structures on the male roller and those on the female roller is strongly dependent upon the material being embossed. Thus, for example, the linear difference for embossing a foil having a thickness of about 30 μm is around 40 μm and
25 for embossing cardstock having a thickness of about 300 μm around 120 μm .

In Figures 17 - 20B it is illustrated that it is advantageous for certain structures if the rollers are
30 arranged at a certain constant distance from each other. For a pin-up/pin-up roller system, such a constant spacing in the form of a depression on one of the rollers, i.e. of a reduction in diameter at least on the width of the foil, by 0.02 to 0.2 mm is described in WO 2011/161002 A1 to the
35 applicant of the present invention.

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In the cases according to Figures 17 - 20B, the diameter of one of the rollers, advantageously of the male roller, is reduced at least on the width of the foil by an amount of
5 over 0.02 mm relative to the remainder of the roller. In this manner a more uniform embossing can be produced. In Figures 17 - 20B this depression or reduced diameter of the male rollers is denoted by an 'S'.

10 Alternatively, instead of a depression, other spacing means may be provided, e.g. an electronic or mechanical spacing control.

According to Fig. 17, female roller M23 has a surface
15 structure SM23 where two opposed flanks of the indentations form an angle α_{23} and the male roller P23 has a structure SP23 where two opposed flanks of the teeth include an angle β_{23} and β_{23} is smaller than α_{23} . These angles may have a value of 10° to 110° and a difference of more than 4° .

20 Female roller M24 in Fig. 18 has a female structure SM24 whose grooves N24 have a plane groove bottom. Male roller P24 has a surface structure SP24 whose teeth T24 are rounded.

25 Female roller M25 in Fig. 19 has the same surface structure SM24 as previously whereas the teeth T25 of male roller P25 have flattened tips.

30 Fig. 20 shows a further embodiment variant where female roller M26 has a surface structure SM26 with rounded grooves N26 while teeth T26 in the surface structure SP26 of male roller P26 are also rounded but have a smaller radius than grooves N26.

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Fig. 20A shows a further embodiment variant where female roller M27 has a surface structure SM27 with a rounded groove N27 while key T27 in surface structure SP27 of male roller P27 is also rounded but has a smaller radius than
5 groove N27.

Fig. 20B shows a further embodiment variant where female roller M28 has a surface structure SM28 with rounded grooves N28 while the teeth T28 in surface structure SP28 of male
10 roller P28 are also rounded but have a smaller radius than grooves N28.

The embodiment variants according to Figures 21 to 35 have also been produced according to the principle that the
15 female structures are not exactly inversely congruent to the male structures. These variants refer to roller pairs including zones for creating creasings. The creasings may serve decorative purposes too. Such creasings are advantageous in cases where it is difficult to wrap the foil
20 around objects such as tobacco products without interfering with the on-line packaging process.

In Figures 21 to 35, respective devices 80 having a roller pair 81P and 81M are illustrated where male roller 81P is
25 driven by drive 6 and synchronized to the female roller by means of gearwheels 39, 40. All rollers in the depicted exemplary embodiments have a basic structure consisting e.g. of triangles TP or TM and a number of creasing zones 82, e.g. four, which may exhibit different structures having a
30 decorative effect also.

Thus, the creasing zones of roller pair P81R1 and M81R1 of Fig. 21 have a grid structure R where the grids of the male roller are raised and those of the female roller are
35 recessed. In order to serve as creasings, these structures

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are generally more raised and recessed, respectively, than the triangle structures. This applies to all depicted creasing structures.

- 5 Inversely, the creasing zones of roller pair P81R2 and M81R2 of Fig. 22 have recessed grid structures on the male roller and raised grid structures on the female roller.

10 The grid structures of the creasing zones of P81R3, M81R3 of Fig. 23 correspond to those of Fig. 21 with the difference that the creasing zones do not extend up to the edges of the rollers.

15 The creasing zones of roller pairs P81LR1-3 and M81LR1-3 of Figures 24 - 26 include radially arranged ridges W projecting either from the male roller or from the female roller, with corresponding indentations on the female or male roller. The creasing zones on roller pair P81LR3 and M81LR3 are shorter than the length of the rollers.

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25 The creasing zones of roller pairs P81LL1-3 and M81LL1-3 of Figures 27 - 29 include longitudinally arranged ridges L projecting either from the male roller or from the female roller, with corresponding indentations on the female or male roller. The creasing zones on roller pair P81LL3 and M81LL3 are shorter than the length of the rollers.

30 The creasing zones of roller pairs P81Z1-3 and M81Z1-3 of Figures 30 - 32 include teeth Z projecting either from the male roller or from the female roller, with corresponding indentations on the female or male roller. The creasing zones on roller pair P81Z3 and M81Z3 are shorter than the length of the rollers.

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The creasing zones of roller pairs P81K1-3 and M81K1-3 of Figures 33 - 35 include teeth K having a round cross-section and tapering conically toward their tips, and projecting either from the male roller or from the female roller, with
5 corresponding indentations on the female or male roller. The creasing zones on roller pair P81K3 and M81K3 are shorter than the length of the rollers.

From the schematically illustrated Figures 17 - 20B it
10 follows that due to the fact that the structures of the female rollers are not inversely congruent to the structures of the male rollers, i.e. that the dimensions and also the shapes of the structures of the male roller and the associated structures of the female roller are different
15 from each other, a reduced crushing of the foil between the two rollers results, thereby strongly reducing or entirely eliminating any distortion of the embossed foil in the transverse direction in a number of embossing types.

20 This offers the significant advantage that in spite of the required high pressures between the rollers a perforation of the foil is avoided and its subsequent processing in a packing line is facilitated. Only thus it is possible to use such rollers analogously to the known and frequently used
25 pin-up/pin-up rollers in an on-line process in a packing line. In the case of the embossing of tippings or of structures arranged in webs, it is advantageous to mutually offset the structural elements on the two webs.

30 The male-female rollers of the prior art were always manufactured in pairs, and due to the fact that the female rollers were shaped inversely congruent to the male rollers, each time one of the rollers had to be replaced, it was inevitable to replace the other roller too. With the method
35 according to the invention, which allows an individual

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manufacture, it is possible to exchange either the male roller or the female roller separately, which is an important advantage not only on account of the differences in wear behavior but also with regard to the design possibilities.

Quick-change devices for the usual pin-up/pin-up rollers are known from US-6 665 998 to the applicant of the present invention and have been used in the majority of all cigarette paper embossing devices worldwide ever since. In these devices, the axle of the counter-roller is movable in all three coordinate directions in order to allow a self-synchronization of the embossing rollers.

The quick-change device 30 of Figures 36 and 37 comprises a housing 31 having two seats 32 and 33 intended to receive respective roller supports 34 and 35. Roller support 34 serves for mounting the male roller 36 that is driven by the non-represented drive 6, and roller support 35 serves for mounting the female roller 37. According to Fig. 20, roller support 34 is inserted into seat 32 and roller support 35 into seat 33. Housing 31 is closed by means of a closure plate 38.

In the present example, as in the examples according to Figures 3 - 8, the female roller is driven by the driven male roller 36 via gearwheels 39 and 40 located at one end of the rollers. In order to ensure the required high precision of the synchronization, the gearwheels are very fine. However, other synchronizing means, e.g. electric motors, may also be used.

In the sectional view of Fig. 37 it is visible that on the external drive side, on the left of the drawing, roller axle 41 of male roller 36 is rotatably supported in a needle

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bearing 42 in roller support 34 and on the other side in a ball bearing 43. The two ends 44 and 45 of the roller support are retained in corresponding openings 46 and 47 of the housing and of the closure plate, respectively. For a
5 precise and unequivocal insertion and positioning of the roller support in the housing, the housing bottom has a T-shaped groove 48 to which a T-shaped key 49 on the bottom of the roller support corresponds.

10 On one side, on the left of the drawing, the roller axle 50 of female roller 37 is supported in a wall 51 of roller support 35, and on the other side in a second wall 52 of the roller support. The edges 53 of cover 54 of the roller support are shaped as keys that are insertable into the
15 corresponding T-shaped groove 55 in housing 31, and one of the sidewalls 51 fits into a corresponding opening 56 in the housing wall.

The depicted versions where the second roller is driven via
20 gearwheels require an adjustment of the rollers after mounting them in the roller support. This is e.g. achieved by means of the gearwheels.

In the embodiment variant of the quick-change device 59 of
25 Figure 38, housing 60 does not have a closure plate but a wall 61 with a lower semicircular opening 62 and an upper approximately rectangular opening 63. The two rollers and the roller supports are the same as previously, and the T-shaped groove for receiving the female roller support and
30 the T-shaped groove 48 in the housing bottom are also the same. The rear openings are similar to the forward openings 62 and 63 according to the drawing. In this embodiment also the roller supports are unequivocally and precisely fastened in the housing.

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In the embodiment variant of Fig. 39, quick-change device 64 comprises two identical roller supports 65 and 66 having each a T-shaped key 49, one roller support 65 being guided and retained at the bottom and the other roller support 66
5 at the top of housing 67. The two roller supports are secured by means of a closure plate 68 having an opening 69 for receiving one roller end.

In the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 40, quick-change device
10 70 comprises a housing 71 having two opposed side walls 72, 73 in each of which two openings 74, 75 are arranged in order to receive the axles 76, 77 of the two embossing cylinders 36, 37 with gearwheels 39 and 40. In this strongly simplified schematic drawing it is visible that first the
15 roller is inserted into the housing and then the axle is introduced and fastened. Furthermore it follows from this example that a quick exchange is also possible without roller supports.

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Claims

1. Method for manufacturing a set of embossing rollers for a device for embossing packaging materials that has two
5 rollers, characterized in that the embossing roller set comprises a male roller having a male surface structure including structural elements and/or logo structures and a female roller having a female surface structure that is associated to the surface structure of the male roller for
10 the common embossing operation with the male roller, and is designed in view of using the embossing rollers for fine embossing in the on-line process, whereby the associated female surface structure is produced independently of a previously produced or physically pre-existing male surface
15 structure.
2. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the contours of the roller surface structures are manufactured for a fine embossing process with an overall linear error of
20 less than +/- 15 μm and an angular error of less than 4°.
3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the surface structures of the embossing rollers are shaped such that during on-line embossing of regularly
25 arranged and uniform embossing patterns in a packing line, no residual tensions are created in the packaging material in the direction transversally to the running direction of the rollers.
- 30 4. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the surface structures of the embossing rollers are shaped such that the embossed foil is provided with a tactually perceptible embossing pattern.

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5. Method according to claim 4, characterized in that the tactually perceptible embossing pattern includes special signs such as Braille or acoustically utilizable signs.

5 6. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the dimensions of the structural elements of the male roller, on one hand, and the dimensions of the associated structural elements of the female roller, on the other hand, deviate from one another by a determined
10 amount without however impairing their cooperation.

7. Method according to claim 6, characterized in that the voluntary deviations of the linear dimensions of the structural elements of the rollers from each other are
15 greater than 15 μm and/or the angles of the edges of the structural elements deviate more than 4° from each other.

8. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that in order to reduce the transverse
20 tensions in the embossed material, the logo structures of the embossing rollers are arranged and designed such that during the passage of a foil web between the embossing rollers, at least two sections can be embossed on the foil web in such a manner that the logo structures embossed on
25 one section are offset relative to the respective logo structures on the other section in the running direction.

9. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 8, characterized in that raised positioning marks (27) are
30 produced on the male roller and associated recessed positioning marks (28) on the female roller, or vice-versa.

10. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 9, characterized in that the surface structures of the

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embossing rollers are produced by means of a femto- or picosecond laser system.

11. Method according to claim 10, characterized in that on
5 the surface of the rollers a coarse structure and a superposed fine structure are produced.

12. Method according to claim 10, characterized in that on
the surfaces of the roller pairs, zones for creating
10 creasings are produced, raised creasing structures being produced on one roller and associated recessed creasing structures on the other roller, the creasing structures being more raised or recessed, respectively, than the other structures.

13. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 12,
characterized in that one of the embossing rollers is
manufactured at least on the width of the packaging material
web with a diameter that is reduced relative to the
20 remainder of the embossing roller by an amount S, the value of S being greater than 0.02 mm.

14. Method according to any one of claims 1 to 13,
characterized in that the packaging material is suitable for
25 packaging foods and pharmaceuticals, or is tipping paper, cigarette paper, innerliner or innerframe paper, hybrid paper, a synthetic foil, or paperboard or cardstock for packaging tobacco products.

30 15. Embossing roller set comprising a male roller (P11, P11B, P11E, P11L, P11W, P23-28, 36, P81-R1-3; LR1-3; LL1-3; K1-3) and a female roller (M11, M11B, M11E, M11L, M11W, M23-28, 37; M81-R1-3; LR1-3; LL1-3; K1-3) manufactured according to the method of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the
35 structural elements (GP1, GPB, GPE, GPL, GPW, FP-Q,D,Rh,R)

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on the male roller and the associated structural elements (GM1, GMB, GME, GML, GMW, FM-Q,D,Rh,R) on the female roller are not inversely congruent and deviate by a defined amount of more than 15 μm linearly and 4° angularly.

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16. Embossing roller set according to claim 15, characterized in that at least the surface of the rollers consists of metal, hard metal, or ceramics, and the surface is possibly provided with a protective layer.

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17. Embossing roller set according to claim 15 or 16, characterized in that one of the embossing rollers is connected to the other embossing roller by synchronizing means, preferably gearwheels (39, 40).

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18. Embossing roller set according to one of claims 15-17, characterized in that the two embossing rollers (P81-R1-3; LR1-3; LL1-3; K1-3), (M81-R1-3; LR1-3; LL1-3; K1-3) include mutually corresponding zones (82) having raised resp.

20 recessed structures (R, W, L, Z, K) for the creation of creasing zones, these structures being more raised or recessed, respectively, than the other structures.

19. Use of an embossing roller set according to claims 15 to 18 in an embossing device, characterized in that the embossing device is integrated on-line in a packing line either directly or via a robot.

20. Use according to claim 19, characterized in that the rollers are arranged at a determined mutual distance of preferably more than 0.02 mm.

21. Use according to claim 19 or 20, characterized in that the embossing roller set is arranged in a quick-change device (30, 59, 64, 70) that is designed such that the

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embossing rollers (36, 37) are exchangeable individually and independently of each other.

22. Use according to claim 21, characterized in that the
5 embossing rollers (36, 37) are rotatably retained in
respective roller supports (34, 35; 65, 66) and the roller
supports are fastened in unequivocal positions in a quick-
change housing and are individually and independently
removable, one end of the male roller support (34) being
10 supported in a needle bearing (42) and its other end in a
ball bearing (43).

23. Use according to claim 21 or 22, characterized in that
the lower part of one of the roller supports (34, 65) has a
15 key (49) and the bottom of the housing (31, 60, 67) a
corresponding groove (48).

24. Use according to claim 23, characterized in that the
upper part of the other roller support (66) has a key (49)
20 and in the upper part of the housing (67) is arranged a
groove (48), or the edges (53) of its upper side form a T-
shaped key and the upper side of the housing (60) has a T-
groove.

25. Use according to claim 22, characterized in that the
quick-change device (70) comprises a housing (71) with two
opposed walls (72, 73) each having two openings (74, 75)
with fastening means for receiving and fastening the axles
(76, 77) of the rollers (36, 37).

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