CONTAINER WITH ADHESIVE LABEL

The present invention relates to a container for consumer goods. The container finds particular application as a container for smoking articles.

It is known to package consumer goods such as, for example, elongate smoking articles in containers formed from folded laminar blanks. For example, elongate smoking articles, such as cigarettes and cigars, are commonly sold in hinge lid packs having a box for housing the smoking articles and a lid connected to the box about a hinge line extending across the back wall of the container. An inner frame is often provided within the container. Such packs are typically constructed from one-piece laminar cardboard blanks. In use, the lid is pivoted about the hinge line to open the pack and so gain access to the smoking articles held within the box.

It would be desirable to provide a novel container for consumer goods wherein the container can provide the consumer with additional information.

According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a container for consumer goods, comprising: an outer housing comprising a box, and a lid movable between a closed position and an open position; an inner frame having a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position, the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall; and a removable adhesive label affixed to the second portion of the inner frame; wherein the inner frame comprises at least one indicium at least partially covered by the adhesive label, the at least one indicium being positioned transversely adjacent the cut out.

The container according to the invention is advantageous because it enables a consumer to access additional information not visible on the outer housing, by removing an adhesive label from the inner frame of the container when the lid is in the open position.

The term “indicium” (and plural “indicia”) is used to refer to a discrete element, or repeating elements or patterns that has at least one of a visual or haptic component. The at least one indicium may be in the form of text, images, letters, words, logos, patterns or a combination thereof. The at least one indicium may comprise a brand or manufacturer logo. The at least one indicium may include material allowing a consumer to access further information. For example, the at least one indicium may include details of a website, telephone number or email address.

The term “underlies” is used herein to mean that a first portion of the container is closer to the interior of the container than an overlapping second portion of the container.

That is, the first portion underlies the second portion. Conversely, the term “overlies” can be used to mean that the second portion of the container is closer to the exterior of the container than the first portion. In this case, the second portion overlies the first portion.

The outer housing comprises a box and a lid. Preferably, the box has an opening through which the consumer goods are accessible. The box may comprise a box front wall, a box left side wall, a box right side wall, a box back wall and a box bottom wall. The inner frame may comprise an inner frame front wall, an inner frame right side wall and an inner frame left side wall. A portion of the inner liner extends outside of the box and underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position. Preferably it is the front wall of the inner frame that extends above the top of the front wall of the box.

The terms “front”, “back”, “upper”, “lower”, “side”, “top”, “bottom” and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of containers according to the invention refer to the container in an upright position with the lid at the top end and the consumer goods accessible from the upper end at the front. The terms “left” and “right” are used with reference to side walls of the container when the container is viewed from the front in its upright position.

The consumer goods within the container are typically wrapped in an inner liner. The inner liner and consumer goods together form an inner package. In order to access the consumer goods within the inner liner, typically a pre-perforated section of the inner liner is removed by the consumer upon first opening the pack. Preferably, the inner frame is mounted between the box and the inner liner. Prior to first opening, the filled container may be wrapped in an outer wrapper.

The design of the container itself need not be altered to account for the addition of the indicium and adhesive label. The at least one indicium and adhesive label can therefore readily be incorporated into wrapped containers for consumer goods without the need for any significant modification of existing apparatus, techniques and container blanks. Advantageously, the adhesive label may be applied to the inner frame outside the manufacturing and assembly of the container according to the invention. In particular, the label may be already applied onto the inner frame at a printer or converter. Then, the inner frame may be, for example, stack fed into regular packaging machinery. Alternatively, where the inner frame is supplied and cut from a wheel, the label application may be performed in the area of the unwinding of the inner frame material. In this way, no adaptations to modern, high speed packaging machinery need to be made in order to take advantage of the present invention.

~~In one embodiment~~As mentioned in the first aspect, the inner frame comprises a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall. The cut out

in the front wall of the inner frame facilitates removal of the consumer goods from the box. The cut out in the front wall may be any desired shape. For example, the cut out in the front wall may be semicircular or rectangular. The cut out may be located at any desired position on the front wall. For example, the cut out may be positioned in the centre of the front wall, between the centre of the front wall and one edge of the front wall or at one edge of the front wall.

The cut out in the front wall may have any desired width. Preferably, the cut out in the front wall comprises between about 30 percent and about 90 percent of the width of the front wall.

The at least one indicium may be on the front wall of the inner frame. In order to increase the available surface area of the inner frame to which the at least one indicium may be applied, at least one of the front wall of the inner frame and the front wall of the container may be adapted such that a greater area of the inner frame is exposed upon opening the container. For example, a panel may be unfolded during the opening or closing of the container, revealing additional communication space.

As mentioned in the first aspect, ~~T~~the at least one indicium ~~may be~~is positioned transversely adjacent the cut out. If the at least one indicium is positioned transversely adjacent the cut out, the at least one indicium is adjacent the cut out in the transverse direction of the container. That is to say, the at least one indicium may be positioned on the front wall of the inner frame to one side of the cut out. Alternatively, if the cut out is positioned in the centre of the front wall or between the centre of the front wall and one edge of the front wall, the at least one indicium may be positioned on the front wall on both sides of the cut out.

The at least one indicium may be positioned longitudinally adjacent the cut out. If the at least one indicium is positioned longitudinally adjacent the cut out, the at least one indicium is adjacent the cut out in the longitudinal direction of the container. For example, the at least one indicium may be positioned on the visible area of the front wall of the inner frame underneath the cut out.

The at least one indicium may be positioned transversely adjacent the cut out and longitudinally adjacent the cut out. For example, the at least one indicium may be positioned on the front wall of the inner frame both underneath the cut out and to one or both sides of the cut out. The at least one indicium may be shaped around the cut out. For example, if the cut out is positioned in the centre of the front wall or between the centre of the front wall and one edge of the front wall, the at least one indicium may be U-shaped. For example, if the cut out is positioned at one edge of the visible area of the front wall, the at least one indicium may be L-shaped.

If the at least one indicium comprises more than one indicium or part of an indicium, the indicia or parts may be on the same or different portions of the inner frame, and may have the same or different sizes and shapes.

The removable adhesive label is preferably positioned such that the at least one indicium is not visible to the consumer until the adhesive label is removed. Preferably, the

between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the bundle or bundles of smoking articles housed inside the container.

The length, width and depth of containers according to the invention may be such that, in the closed position, the resultant overall dimensions of the container are similar to the dimensions of a typical disposable hinge-lid pack of twenty cigarettes.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a height of between about 60 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a height of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the height is measured from the top wall to the bottom wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a width of between about 12 mm and about 150 mm, more preferably a width of between about 70 mm and about 125 mm, wherein the width is measured from one side wall to the other side wall of the container.

Preferably, containers according to the invention have a depth of between about 6 mm and about 100 mm, more preferably a depth of between about 12 mm and about 25 mm wherein the depth is measured from the front wall to the back wall of the container (comprising the hinge between box and lid).

Preferably, the ratio of the height of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 3 to 1 and 5 to 1.

Preferably, the ratio of the width of the container to the depth of the container is in between about 0.3 to 1 and about 10 to 1, more preferably between about 2 to 1 and about 8 to 1, most preferably between about 2 to 1 and 3 to 1.

As well as housing a bundle of smoking articles, the container may further comprise other consumer goods, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer goods may be attached to the outside of the container, contained within the container along with the smoking articles, in a separate compartment of the container or combinations thereof.

The exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be printed, embossed, debossed or otherwise embellished with manufacturer or brand logos, trade marks, slogans and other consumer information and indicia.

A further aspect of the invention is directed to the use of an adhesive label to cover an indicium provided on an inner frame of a container for consumer articles comprising a box and a lid, the inner frame comprising a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, and the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position and wherein the at

least one indicium is positioned transversely adjacent the cut outadhesive label is affixed to the second portion of the inner frame.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of using an adhesive label to cover an indicium provided on an inner frame of a container for consumer articles comprising a box and a lid, the inner frame comprising a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, and the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position, and wherein the at least one indicium being positioned transversely adjacent the cut outadhesive label is affixed to the second portion of the inner frame.

The invention will be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a front view of a container according to an embodiment of the present invention, with an adhesive label in place on the front wall of the inner frame; and

Figure 2 shows the container of Figure 1, with the adhesive label almost entirely removed from the front wall of the inner frame.

Figure 1 shows a container 100 according to an embodiment of the invention. The container 100 is a rectangular parallelepiped and comprises a box 101 and a lid 103 that is hinged to the box 101 along a hinge line extending substantially horizontally along the back wall of the container 100. The box 101 comprises a box front wall 105, a box left side wall, a box right side wall 107, a box back wall and a box bottom wall.

An inner frame 109 is mounted within the box 101 of the container 100. The inner frame 109 comprises an inner frame front wall 111, an inner frame left side wall and an inner frame right side wall 113 which are connected to the inner surface of the box front wall 105, box left side wall and box right side wall 107, respectively. In this embodiment, the front wall 111 of the inner frame 109 includes a cut out 115 at the top free edge of the front wall.

A bundle of cigarettes 117 is housed in the inner frame 109 in the box 101 of the container 100. The cut out 115 in the front wall 111 of the inner frame 109 facilitates removal of the cigarettes 117 from the box 101. The bundle of cigarettes 117 may be wrapped in an inner liner (not shown). The overall size and construction of the box 101, lid 103 and inner frame 109 are substantially the same as that of a known hinge lid cigarette pack.

In Figure 1, the lid 103 is in an open position. The upper side of the box 101 is open to provide an upper opening through which the cigarettes 117 can be removed. The lid 103 has a lid front wall 119, a lid left side wall, a lid right side wall 121, a lid back wall and a lid top wall. When the lid 103 is in the closed position, the container 100 is closed, and the free edges of the walls of the lid 103 abut the free edges of the walls of the box 101. In the

closed position, the walls of the lid 103 therefore form extensions of the corresponding walls of the box 101 to define the walls of the container 100.

The terms “front”, “back”, “upper”, “lower”, “side”, “top”, “bottom” and other terms used to describe relative positions of the components of containers 100 according to the

CLAIMS

1. A container for consumer goods, comprising:

an outer housing comprising a box, and a lid movable between a closed position and an open position;

an inner frame having a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position, the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall; and

a removable adhesive label affixed to the second portion of the inner frame;

wherein the inner frame comprises at least one indicium at least partially covered by the adhesive label, the at least one indicium being positioned transversely adjacent the cut out.

~~2. A container according to claim 1, wherein the inner frame comprises a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall.~~

~~3~~2. A container according to claim ~~2~~1, wherein the cut out in the front wall comprises between about 30 percent and about 90 percent of the width of the front wall.

~~4. A container according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the at least one indicium is positioned transversely adjacent the cut out.~~

~~5~~3. A container according to ~~any of~~ claims 1 or 2 ~~to 4~~, wherein the at least one indicium is positioned longitudinally adjacent the cut out.

~~6~~4. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the adhesive label has substantially the same appearance as the inner frame.

~~7~~5. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the adhesive label comprises a resealable adhesive.

~~8~~6. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the adhesive label comprises a portion, adjacent an edge of the label, without adhesive.

~~9~~7. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one indicium is printed on the inner frame.

~~10~~8. A container according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one indicium is debossed on the inner frame.

~~11~~9. A container according to any of the proceeding claims, further comprising an inner package of smoking articles within the box, wherein the inner frame is between the front wall of the inner package and the front wall of the box.

~~12~~10. A container according to claim ~~11~~9, wherein the at least one indicium is formed by at least one cut out in the inner frame, such that the inner package is visible through the at least one indicium cut out.

~~13~~11. A container according to claim ~~11 9~~ or claim ~~12~~10, wherein the inner package is substantially a different colour from the inner frame.

~~14~~12. Use of an adhesive label to cover an indicium provided on an inner frame of a container for consumer articles comprising a box and a lid, the inner frame comprising a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, and the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position and wherein the at least one indicium is positioned transversely adjacent the cut out~~adhesive label is affixed to the second portion of the inner frame~~.

~~15~~13. A method of using an adhesive label to cover an indicium provided on an inner frame of a container for consumer articles comprising a box and a lid, the inner frame comprising a first portion mounted within the box and a second portion extending outside the box, and the inner frame comprising a front wall, the front wall having a cut out extending from the top edge of the front wall, wherein the second portion of the inner frame underlies the lid when the lid is in the closed position, and wherein the at least one indicium being positioned transversely adjacent the cut out~~adhesive label is affixed to the second portion of the inner frame~~.