

SLIDE AND SHELL CONTAINER WITH LEDGE

The present invention relates to a container for rod-shaped consumer items, in particular smoking articles, such as cigarettes.

In the prior art, lifting means for consumer items in containers are known, in particular lifting means for smoking articles, such as cigarettes and cigars.

Generally, the packing of elongated, rod shaped consumer items such as smoking articles, in particular cigarettes, tends to be very compact. This helps to adequately protect the pack contents and to reduce the amount of material needed. This can reduce cost and waste. Nevertheless, the removal of the first consumer item, in particular a smoking article, from a full pack requires a higher force than of subsequent consumer items, due to frictional forces that can have a negative impact on the quality of the consumer item when removed. Furthermore, some consumers prefer not to touch the filter end of a smoking article.

The prior art discloses a container for smoking articles. According to the construction of that container, the dimension of the container in the longitudinal direction of the smoking articles, is longer than the length of the smoking articles, such that the smoking articles can move up and down in the container. A step is provided at the bottom wall of the container, beneath an opening, such that by shaking the container, a smoking article can be arranged on the step and protrudes through the opening such that it may be grasped by a consumer.

FR 1 203 196 A discloses a cardboard container for the semi-automatic distribution of packaged articles, comprising a box and a slide which is arranged inside the box and is movable in the vertical direction. A flap, which is connected to the slide, may engage the articles when the slide is lifted by pulling on a gripping means. Thus, the articles may be lifted out of the box.

GB 1 375 393 A discloses a dispenser for articles, such as cigarettes, wherein an ejection device in the form of a slider with an integral arm for engaging the cigarettes in the package is provided.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved way of removing one or several rod-shaped consumer items from a container.

According to the present invention a container for rod-shaped consumer items is provided, wherein a top wall of the container comprises an opening, and the container further comprises a ledge, which is arranged below the opening, wherein the top wall is adapted to be movable in the vertical direction relative to the ledge, in between a lower position and an upper position. The container has an inner slide and an outer shell, wherein the slide is vertically movably arranged in the shell, wherein the shell comprises the ledge and the slide comprises the top wall with the opening, and wherein the ledge protrudes through a cut-out into the slide. The cut-out may be

formed by a cutting line in a blank or may be any other type of opening. In particular, the shell comprises a bottom and side walls.

Due to the movability of the top wall in the vertical direction, the height of the container or the position of the consumer items in the container relative to the ledge can be varied, such that at least one of the consumer items can be arranged on the ledge, for example by shaking or tilting the container when the top wall is in the upper position. When the top wall is returned into the lower position, the at least one consumer item remains on the ledge and protrudes through the opening which is arranged above the ledge. Thus, the at least one consumer item can be grasped by a consumer. The other consumer items remain covered and protected by the top wall and are secured inside the container.

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 opening at the top end. The terms "left" and "right" are used with reference to left and right side walls of the container when the container is viewed from the front in its upright position. The consumer items contained in the container may be removed from the upper end of the container. The term "longitudinal" refers to a direction from bottom to top or vice versa, namely the vertical direction defining the height of the container in an upright orientation. The term "transverse" refers to a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction across the front side wall or the back side wall.

The rod-shaped consumer items are in particular extending substantially in the vertical longitudinal direction of the container. The size of the opening is preferably at least the size of the projection of the ledge in the direction from the opening to the ledge. In particular, the size of the opening substantially corresponds to the cross-section of the consumer items or is slightly larger. Preferably, the consumer items are cylindrically shaped with a circular cross-section. In particular, the consumer items are smoking articles in the form of cigarettes.

Preferably, in the upper position, the distance in the longitudinal direction in between the upper end of the ledge and the top wall is greater than the length of the rod-shaped consumer items such that at least one consumer item can be arranged on the ledge, the container being arranged that when the top wall is returned in the lower position, the at least one consumer item, which is arranged on the ledge, protrudes through the opening in the top wall. Thus, the top wall in the upper position enables a movability of the consumer item onto the ledge.

In one embodiment, the container comprises an inner slide and an outer shell, wherein the slide is vertically movably arranged in the shell, and wherein one of the slide or shell comprises the ledge, and the other one of the slide and the shell comprises the top wall with the opening. The ledge may be integral or an additional part with respect to the slide or shell.

In particular, the shell encloses the slide at least partially.

The shell may comprise a top wall and side walls while having an open bottom, and the slide may comprise a bottom wall, at least one side wall and the ledge. Thus, the height of the container can be varied which allows an arrangement of the at least one consumer item on the ledge when the top wall, that is the shell, is lifted with respect to the slide.

Preferably, the slide has a bottom wall with the cut-out for the ledge of the shell. In particular, the cut-out may further extend in at least one side wall, preferably in two adjacent side walls of the slide. The slide preferably comprises at least one side wall connecting the bottom wall and the top wall.

In particular, the ledge may be formed by a folded edge of the shell. A cut may be provided which extends perpendicular over a vertically extending edge of the shell, such that a section of the shell below the cut can be folded towards the inside of the shell, to provide the ledge. Alternatively, the ledge may be formed by an additional element or flap that is attached to the vertically extending edge of the shell.

In one embodiment, two parallel cuts are provided in the shell which extend over the vertical extending edge of the shell, such that the portion of the shell in between the cutting lines can be folded towards the inside of the shell and forms the ledge. Thus, the lower end of the edge of the shell providing the ledge will remain in its position. This may advantageously improve the stability of the container when standing in an upright position.

In a further embodiment, an elastic element is provided below the consumer items. Preferably, the elastic element is adapted to bias the consumer items towards the movable top wall. In such an embodiment, moving the top wall towards the lower position compresses the elastic element. In addition, the consumer items may also be moved towards the lower position, with the exception of the one or more consumer items that are located on the ledge, which remain in their initial position and protrude from the opening in the top wall when the top wall is moved into the lower position. When the top wall is released, the elastic element that is provided below the consumer items may push the top wall back into the upper position. The elastic element may be for example a spring or a block of foamed material. Preferably, a movable bottom wall is provided between the elastic element and the consumer items.

In one embodiment, an elastic means is provided in between the bottom wall of the shell and the bottom wall of the slide. Preferably, the elastic means provides a force to lift the top wall, in particular by forcing the bottom wall of the slide away from the bottom wall of the shell. The elastic means may in particular be spring or a block of foamed material. A releasable locking means may hold the slide in the lower position. In particular, the consumer activates the releasable locking mechanism, for example by a relative movement of the slide to the shell, or

by a pressure applied to a wall of the container, and then the elastic means provides the lifting force for lifting the slide.

In another embodiment, the elastic means may provide a force to lower the top wall to the lower position, such that the container is automatically returned in its initial position.

In one embodiment, the shell comprises a cut-out for allowing the consumer to engage the slide. Thus, the cut-out allows that a consumer can grasp the side of the front or back side wall of the slide while same is arranged in the shell. In particular, cut-outs at opposite walls of the shell may be provided to allow that the slide can be grasped from two opposite sides. Thus, by means of the cut-out the movement of the slide can be effected more easily by the consumer, in particular when no other force, such as by an elastic means, is provided to the slide.

In one embodiment, a stopping means enables a dead stop in the upper position of the top wall, such that the top wall is in its lifting end position in the upper position. In particular, the dead stop enables that the top wall is inhibited from being further lifted than the upper position under normal conditions. Furthermore, the dead stop can also enable that the top wall is locked in the upper position and remains locked until a certain force for lowering the top wall applied to the slide or shell is exceeded.

The dead stop prevents that the container is inadvertently disassembled. In particular, flaps provided on the shell and the slide side walls extending in different directions and adapted to engage with each other in the upper position may constitute the stopping means.

In one embodiment, the container comprises a plurality of consumer items extending in the upright, longitudinal direction of the container, wherein the width and the depth of the container is smaller than the longitudinal length of the consumer items. The longitudinal length of the consumer items is the main extension direction of the rod-shaped consumer items. In particular, the consumer items are arranged with the longitudinal length substantially extending in the vertical direction. This form of the container prevents that the consumer items fall over or are provided in an unoriented manner in the container, even when the container is relatively empty. Further, this form of the container facilitates subsequent arrangement of the consumer items on the ledge, as the consumer items are provided substantially in the desired longitudinal orientation next to the ledge.

In one embodiment, the ledge is arranged adjacent to two side walls of the container. In particular, the ledge is arranged at the folding line defining an edge of the container. Thus, the position of the consumer item on the ledge is defined by the adjacent side walls. The ledge is either connected to the two side walls, or connected to a bottom wall of the container.

The distance from the bottom of the container to the ledge, when the top wall is in lower position is preferably substantially the same or less than the relative distance of the top wall in

the lower position and the top wall in the upper position. Thus, the protruding length of a consumer item through the opening of the top wall in the lower position is substantially the same or less than the height of the ledge. Furthermore, different ledges with different heights can be provided, such that several consumer items are provided with different lifting heights through one or several openings in the top wall.

In one embodiment, the size of the ledge is adapted such that only one consumer item with its longitudinal axis extending in the upright direction can be arranged thereon. Thus, each operation of the lifting feature of the container provides one separate consumer item to the consumer, which may easily be grasped. However, in other embodiments also several consumer items with parallel extending longitudinal axes can be arranged on the ledge. In particular two, three, four, five or more consumer items can be arranged at the same time on one ledge.

In one embodiment, an additional side wall that is located between the container outer side wall and the consumer items is provided, wherein the additional side wall is adapted to be movable towards the ledge. This may facilitate the movement of the consumer items onto the ledge, when the top wall is in the upper position. In some embodiments, the consumer can move the movable side wall. Therefore, in particular an opening in the outer shell is provided, to allow access of the consumer to the side wall of the slide. Preferably, the movable side wall is the side wall opposite the ledge in the transverse direction. The movability of the side wall is in particular in the direction which is substantially perpendicular to the lifting direction of the top wall in between the lower and upper position.

Alternatively to providing a movable side wall, the consumer items may just be moved by gravity onto the ledge, in particular by inclining the container.

In one embodiment, an elastic means is provided between the additional side wall and the container outer side wall, wherein the elastic element is adapted to elastically force the movable side wall in the direction of the ledge. The elastic means may in particular be a spring or a block of foamed material. Preferably, the movable side wall is part of the slide, and the elastic means is arranged in between parallel side walls of the slide and the shell.

In one embodiment, the opening in the top wall is covered by a lid, which is actionable upon movement of the top wall. In particular, "actionable" means that the lid is adapted to open by a force applied by a protruding consumer item, which is lifted through the opening, or to open by the relative movement of the top wall with respect to the remaining parts of the container. In particular, the lid is a hingeable lid, which hingedly depends from one edge of the opening.

In one embodiment, the container comprises several consumer items which are wrapped in an inner liner, wherein the inner liner is provided with perforation lines to facilitate the opening of the inner liner. The inner liner facilitates the packing of the consumer items in the container. A

bundle of consumer items in the inner liner may be provided and then at least one blank of the container may be wrapped around the bundle of consumer items. In particular, at least the blank of the slide is wrapped around the consumer items, and then the shell is provided around the slide, either by wrapping or by inserting the slide in the shell. Further, the inner liner may provide that the consumer items remain fresh, in particular when the inner liner is hermetically sealed around the consumer items. The perforation lines in the inner liner can be torn open by relative movement in the container in one embodiment. Additionally or alternatively, a pull tab may be provided on the inner liner in the region of the opening of the container to enable the opening of the inner liner. In particular, a section of inner liner connected to the pull tab may be delimited by weakening lines, such that the pulling of the pull tab tears the inner liner open.

The consumer items within the container may be wrapped with an inner liner, which is visible above the upper edge of a side wall of the container when the container is open.

Containers according to the invention may be in the shape of a rectangular parallelepiped, with right-angled longitudinal and right-angled transverse edges. Alternatively, the container may comprise one or more rounded longitudinal edges, rounded transverse edges, bevelled longitudinal edges or bevelled transverse edges, or combinations thereof. For example, the container according to the invention may comprise, without limitation:

- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front side wall, and/or
- One or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the back side wall.
- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front side wall, and/or
- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the back side wall.
- One longitudinal rounded edge and one longitudinal bevelled edge on the front side wall, and/or
- One transverse rounded edge and one transverse bevelled edge on the back side wall.
- One or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the front side wall and one or two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on the front side wall.
- Two longitudinal rounded or bevelled edges on a first side wall or two transverse rounded or bevelled edges on the second side wall.

Where the container comprises one or more rounded edges and is made from a laminar blank, preferably the blank comprises three, four, five, six or seven scoring lines or creasing lines to form the rounded edge in the assembled container. The scoring lines or creasing lines may be either on the inside of the container or on the outside of the container. Preferably, the scoring lines or creasing lines are spaced apart from each other by between about 0.3 mm and 4 mm.

Preferably, the spacing of the creasing lines or scoring lines is in function of the thickness of the laminar blank. Preferably, the spacing between the creasing lines or scoring lines is between about 0.5 and about 4 times larger than the thickness of the laminar blank.

Where the container comprises one or more bevelled edges, preferably the bevelled one or more edges have a width of between about 1 mm and about 10 mm, preferably between about 2 and about 6 mm. Alternatively, the container may comprise a double bevel formed by three parallel creasing lines or scoring lines that are spaced apart such that two distinct bevels form on the edge of the container.

Alternatively to a container with a rectangular transverse cross section, the container may have a for example a polygonal cross section such as triangular, quadrangular or hexagonal, or a cross section which is oval, semi-oval, circular or semi-circular.

Where the container comprises a bevelled edge and is made from a laminar blank, the bevel may be formed by two parallel creasing lines or scoring lines in the laminar blank. The creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged symmetrically to the edge between a first wall and a second wall. Alternatively, the creasing lines or scoring lines may be arranged asymmetrically to the edge between the first wall and the second wall, such that the bevel extends further into the first wall of the container than into the second wall of the container.

The container may be formed from any suitable materials including, but not limited to, cardboard, paperboard, plastic, metal, or combinations thereof. Preferably, the cardboard has a weight of between about 100 grams per square metre and about 350 grams per square metre.

Containers according to the invention may be used as packages for a variety of consumer items. In particularly preferred embodiments, containers according to the invention are used to package smoking articles. Containers according to the invention may be advantageously used to package smoking articles including, but not limited to, known lit-end cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos, heated smoking articles comprising a combustible fuel element or heat source and an aerosol-generating substrate (for example cigarettes of the type disclosed in US-A-4,714,082) and smoking articles for use with electrical smoking systems (for example cigarettes of the type disclosed in US-A-5,692,525).

Through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold different total numbers of smoking articles, or different arrangements of smoking articles. For example, through an appropriate choice of the dimensions thereof, containers according to the invention may be designed to hold a total of between ten and thirty smoking articles.

Containers according to the invention may hold one, two, three four or five separate bundles of consumer items. The separate bundles may be arranged substantially parallel to the

front side wall and to the back side wall or substantially perpendicular to the front side wall and to the back side wall.

Within a bundle, the smoking articles may be arranged in different collations, depending on the total number of smoking articles, the dimensions of the smoking articles or the cross sectional shape of the container. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in a bundle in a single row of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten. Alternatively, the smoking articles may be arranged in two or more rows. The two or more rows may contain the same number of smoking articles. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: two rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten; three rows of five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten; or four rows of four, five, six or seven. Alternatively, the two or more rows may include at least two rows containing different numbers of smoking articles to each other. For example, the smoking articles may be arranged in: a row of five and a row of six (5-6); a row of six and a row of seven (6-7); a row of seven and a row of eight (7-8); a middle row of five and two outer rows of six (6-5-6); a middle row of five and two outer rows of seven (7-5-7); a middle row of six and two outer rows of five (5-6-5); a middle row of six and two outer rows of seven (7-6-7); a middle row of seven and two outer rows of six (6-7-6); a middle row of nine and two outer rows of eight (8-9-8); or a middle row of six with one outer row of five and one outer row of seven (5-6-7).

Containers according to the present invention may hold smoking articles of the same type or brand, or of different types or brands. In addition, both filterless smoking articles and smoking articles with various filter tips may be contained, as well as smoking articles of differing length (for example, between about 40 mm and about 180 mm), diameter (for example, between about 4 mm and about 9 mm). In addition, the smoking articles may differ in strength of taste, resistance to draw and total particulate matter delivery. Wherein the container comprises more than one bundle, each bundle within the same container may hold the same or different types of smoking articles as listed above.

Preferably, the dimensions of the container are adapted to the length of the smoking articles, and the collation of the smoking articles. Typically, the outer dimensions of the container are between about 0.5 mm to about 5 mm larger than the dimensions of the bundle of smoking articles housed inside the container.

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 the first side wall to the second 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 side wall to the back side wall of the container.

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 1 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.

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. Alternatively, or in addition, the exterior surfaces of containers according to the invention may be at least partially covered with lacquer, metallisation, holograms, luminescent material, or any other materials that alter the feel, odour or appearance of the container.

Where the inner housing of a container according to the present invention contains one or more bundles of smoking articles, the smoking articles are preferably wrapped in an inner liner of, for example, metal foil or metallised paper.

Where the container comprises smoking articles, the container may further comprise waste-compartments (for example for ash or butts) or other consumer items, for example matches, lighters, extinguishing means, breath-fresheners or electronics. The other consumer items 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.

Once filled, containers according to the invention may be shrink wrapped or otherwise over wrapped with a transparent polymeric film of, for example, high or low density polyethylene, polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, polyvinylidene chloride, cellulose film, or combinations thereof in a conventional manner. Where containers according to the invention are over wrapped, the over wrapper may include a tear tape. The tear tape is preferably positioned sideways around the container, such that once the tear tape has been removed, the opening is accessible. Alternatively, the tear tape may be provided lengthways around the container.

The invention will now be further explained by means of exemplary embodiments, which are shown in the following Figures.

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of the first embodiment of a container according to the invention.

Figure 2 shows a perspective view of the first embodiment of the container according to the invention with a lifted smoking article.

Figure 3 shows a cross-sectional view of the embodiment of the container with the top wall in the upper position.

Figure 4 shows a cross-sectional view of the embodiment of the container with the top wall in the lower position.

Figure 5 shows a blank for a slide of a container according to the first embodiment.

Figure 6 shows a blank for a shell for a container according to the first embodiment.

Figure 7 shows a cross-sectional view of a container comprising elastic means for lifting and for the movable side wall.

In Figure 1, a container 1 according to a first embodiment of the invention is shown. The container comprises a shell 2 and a slide 3 arranged slidable in the vertical longitudinal direction 100 in the shell 2. The shell 2 comprises four side walls, namely a front side wall 4, a left side wall 5, a right side wall 6 (see Figure 3), a back side wall and a bottom wall 7. In particular, the shell 2 is open at its upper end, and the container 1 is closed at its upper end by the top wall 8 of the slide 3, which however comprises an opening 9. The top wall 8 forms the top wall of the container. The opening 9 is arranged adjacent to two upper edges of the top wall 8. The shell 2 is further provided with a cut-out 10 in its upper front side wall 4, wherein a further corresponding cut-out may be provided in the back side wall of the shell 2 in some embodiments. Due to the cut-out 10, at least one of the side walls of the slide 3 can be grasped, namely the front side wall 11, and in some embodiments the back side wall. A ledge 12 is provided in the lower region of a longitudinally extending edge between the side walls 4, 5 of the shell 2. In particular, the ledge 12 is formed by two parallel cuts 13, 14, which extend generally perpendicular over the edge of shell 2. Thus, a portion of side walls 4, 5 of the shell 2 can be folded to the inside, such that it protrudes into the slide 3 and forms a ledge 12 on which at least one consumer item 15, in particular in the form of a smoking article, more particular in the form of a cigarette, can be arranged.

In Figure 1, the container 1 is shown in the state before the lifting process. The slide 3 and its top wall 8 forming the top wall of the container 1 are in the lower position. In Figure 2, the slide 3 is again in the lower position, but a consumer item 15 is already lifted.

The lifting process and further details of the container 1 will now be explained with respect to Figures 3 and 4, which show schematic cross sections of the container 1.

Starting from the stage as shown in Figure 1, the consumer grasps the slide 3 while holding the outer shell 2 and lifts the slide 3, such that its top wall 8 is arranged in a upper position as shown in Figure 3. The slide 3 comprises in addition to the top wall 8, the front side

wall 11 and a back side wall, further a left side wall 16, a right side wall 17 and a bottom wall 18. When the slide 3 is in the upper position as shown in Figure 3, the bottom wall 18 is arranged at least substantially at the height of the upper edge of the ledge 12 in the longitudinal direction 100 from the bottom wall 7 of the shell 2. Thus, in this lifted configuration, the consumer items 15 may move in a transverse direction 200, such that at least one consumer item 15 is arranged on the ledge 12. The movement of the consumer item 15 may be effected by gravitational forces, namely by slightly lowering the container side on which the ledge 12 is provided, or by acceleration force, namely by shaking or tapping the container 1.

In the lower position of the slide 3, the consumer items 15 would not be able to move onto the ledge 12, as their lower ends are in a lower position than the ledge 12, while the top wall 8 of the slide 3 prevents movement of the consumer items 15 to the top.

The inner slide 3 comprises a cut-out 19, which allows the ledge 12 to protrude into the slide 3 at least in the lower position of the slide 3. Thus, the cut-out 19 allows the relative vertical movement of the slide 3 with respect to the shell 2.

Starting from the state of the container 1 as shown in Figure 3 wherein the at least one consumer item 15 is arranged on the ledge 12, the slide 3 can be lowered again into the lower position as shown in Figure 4. Thus, while all consumer items, which are arranged under the top wall 8 of the slide and not on the ledge 12, will move together with the slide 3 into the lower position, the at least one consumer item 15 which is arranged on the ledge 12 will remain in the upper position on the ledge 12 and will protrude through the opening 9 provided in the top wall 8 of the slide 3. Thus, the consumer items 15 are in an arrangement as shown in Figure 4 or Figure 2, and the at least one consumer item 15 which protrudes through the opening 9 can be easily grasped by the consumer.

In Figure 5, a blank 20 for the slide 3 is shown in a plan view. The blank 20 comprises a front panel 21, which forms the front side wall 11 of the slide 3, a left side wall panel 22, which forms the left side wall 16 of the slide 3, a back wall panel 23 which forms the back side wall of the slide 3, and a right side wall panel 24, which forms the right side wall 17 of the slide. The panels 21, 22, 23, 24 depend from each other via folding lines.

A vertically extending fixation tab 25 depends from the right side wall panel 24 and is adapted to be fixed, in particular by means of adhesive, to the inside of the front side wall panel 21. The blank 20 further comprises an inner top wall panel 26 depending from the top of the front side wall panel 21, and an outer top wall panel 27, depending from the top of the back side wall panel 23. The outer top wall panel 27 is adapted to be folded on top of the inner top wall panel 26, such that they form together the top wall 8 of the slide 3. A cut-out 28 is provided in the outer top wall panel 27 defining the opening 9 of the slide 3. The inner top wall panel 26 comprises

such a shape that it is not provided in the region of cut-out 28, when the blank 20 is folded to form the slide 3. The inner top wall panel 26 and the outer top wall panel 27 are connected to each other by means of adhesive in the assembled slide 3.

An inner bottom wall panel 29 depends via a folding line from the lower side of the front side wall panel 21, and an outer bottom wall panel 30 depends via a folding line from the lower side of the back side wall panel 23. The outer bottom wall panel wall 30 comprises a cut-out 31 which forms the lower part of the cut-out 19 of the slide 3. The upper part of the cut-out 19 of the slide 3 is formed by the cut-out 32 which is provided at the folding line in between the front side wall panel 21 and the left side wall panel 22. The inner bottom wall panel 29 is adapted such that it does not extend in the region of the cut-out 31, when the slide 3 is in the assembled state. The inner bottom wall panel 29 and the outer bottom wall panel 30 form together the bottom wall 18 of the slide 3, and are particularly fixed by means of adhesive to each other. Furthermore, a cut-out 33 is provided in the back side wall panel 23, to define a stopper flap 34. The stopper flap 34 foldingly depends from the outer bottom wall panel 30. The stopper flap 34 is adapted to engage with a protrusion or flap provided on the inside of the shell 2, to enable a dead stop for the movement of the slide 3 in the shell 2.

In Figure 5, a blank 35 for the shell 2 is shown in a plan view. The blank 35 for the shell 2 comprises a front side wall panel 36, which forms the front side wall 4 of the shell 2, a left side wall panel 37, which forms the left side wall 5 of the shell 2, a back side wall panel 38, which forms the back side wall of the shell 2, and a right side wall panel 39, which forms the right side wall 6 of the shell 2. The panels 36, 37, 38, 39 depend from each other via folding lines which are arranged in the longitudinal direction.

Furthermore, an inner flap 40 depends from the upper side of the back side wall panel 38, wherein the inner flap 40 will be folded towards the inside of the back side wall panel 38 in the assembled state of the shell 2. Preferably, the inner flap 40 is fixed by means of adhesive to the inside of the back side wall panel 38. The inner flap 40 provides an engagement portion for the stopper flap 34, when the slide 3 is in the upper position with respect to the shell 2. In particular, the upper edge of the stopper flap 34 engages the lower edge of the inner flap 40 in this position.

Inner and outer bottom panels 41, 42 depend from the lower side of the front side wall panel 36 and back side wall panel 38, respectively, and form the bottom wall 7 of the assembled shell 2. The inner and outer bottom panels 41 and 42 are adapted to be connected by means of adhesive. A fixation tab 43 depends via a folding line from the right side wall panel 39, and is adapted to be attached to the inside of the front side wall panel 36. Furthermore, dust flaps 44, 45 are provided at the lower side of the left and right side wall panel 37, 39. The dust flaps 44,

45 are adapted to be arranged on top of the inner bottom panel 41 and prevent dust and particles from entering or exiting the shell 2. The cut-out 10 is provided at the top of the front side wall panel 36, while a further cut-out 46 is provided in the back side wall panel 38 and inner flap 40 extending over the folding line in between these panels. In particular, the cut-out 46 is symmetrically provided with respect to the folding line in between the back side wall panel 38 and inner flap 40.

Extending across the folding line in between the front side wall panel 36 and the left side wall panel 37, two parallel cuts 13, 14 are provided, which are arranged perpendicular with respect to the folding line. The ends of the respective cuts 13, 14 are connected by folding lines 47, 48, such that the cuts 13, 14 and the folding lines 47, 48 form a substantially rectangular portion of the blank 35. In the assembled shell 2, the portion delimited by the cuts 13, 14 and folding lines 47, 48 will be folded towards the inside of the shell 2, to form the ledge 12.

In Figure 6, a further embodiment of a container 1 according to the invention is shown. The container generally corresponds to the container of the former embodiment, wherein the differences to the previous embodiment will be explained in the following. In particular, an elastic means 49, preferably in the form of a spring, is arranged in between the bottom wall 7 of the shell 2 and the bottom wall 18 of the slide 3. The elastic means 49 forces the slide 3 upwardly in the longitudinal direction 100. In particular, a locking means may be provided, such as engaging panels of the slide 3 and shell 2, which maintains the slide in the lower position, however, when the locking means, in particular the panels, disengage, the slide will automatically move to the upper position as shown in Figure 6.

A further modification in the embodiment according to Figure 6 is that the right side wall 17 of the slide 3 is movable in the transverse width direction 200. This serves the purpose that consumer items, which have been omitted for the sake of clarity in Figure 6, can be moved in the transverse direction 200 when the slide 3 is in the upper position, such that at least one consumer item will be arranged on the ledge 12. An elastic means 50, preferably in the form of a spring, is provided in between the right side wall 6 of the shell 2 and the right side wall 17 of the slide 3. Thus, the consumer items 14 are automatically moved in the transverse width direction 200. However, in other embodiments alternatively or additionally an opening may be provided in the right side wall 6 of the shell 2, such that the consumer can engage the movable right side wall 17 of the slide 3 and apply pressure on it to move the consumer items onto the ledge 12.

It is emphasized that the features regarding the elastic means 49, the elastic means 50, and regarding the opening in the right side wall 6 can be provided as well separate from each other, as each of these features provides a separate beneficial effect.

The opening 9 of the slide 3 may be covered by a hingeable lid 51, which depends via a folding line either from the top wall 8 of the slide 3 or from any of the adjacent side walls to the opening 9, wherein the lid 51 may be adapted such that it automatically opens by being pushed by the consumer item which is protruding through the opening 9 when the slide 3 is returned to the lower position with a consumer item 15 arranged on the ledge 12.

Not shown in the embodiments and the Figures, the consumer items, in particular in the form of smoking articles, may be comprised in an inner liner, which comprises cuts or perforation lines in particular in the region of the opening 9 and the ledge 12 to allow that individual consumer items 14 can move by means of the ledge 12 through the opening 9. Further, this inner liner may comprise a pull tab, which protrudes through the opening 9 and can be removed by the consumer before operating the lifting feature of the container 1 for the first time. Several consumer items can be lifted at the same time by means of the ledge 12, however, it is preferred that the number of consumer items which are lifted is 10% or less from the total number of consumer items initially provided in the container. Thus, only a small fraction of the consumer items will be lifted by the lifting operation, thus providing small dispensing amounts of consumer items.

The preferred material for forming the blanks 20, 35 is cardboard, however, other sheet-like materials such as polymers or metal may be used as well. Furthermore, it is also possible to not use foldable blanks, but to provide an integrally formed shell or slide, in particular formed by means of polymer injection molding.

In one embodiment, the maximum lifting height of the slide with respect to the shell is about 13 mm. The height of the container in the longitudinal direction 100 is preferably between about 85 mm and about 105 mm, while the width in the transverse direction is about 85 mm as well. The depth of the container is preferably about 18 mm. The upper edge of the ledge is preferably arranged in a distance of about 24 mm with respect to the bottom wall of the shell. The cut-out in the slide regarding the ledge corresponds in its height to the upper end of the ledge 12. The cut-outs 10, 14 provided at the upper edge of the front and back side walls of the shell have preferably a height of about 12 mm.

Claims

1. A container for rod-shaped consumer items,
wherein a top wall of the container comprises an opening, and the container further comprises a ledge, which is arranged below the opening,
wherein the top wall is adapted to be movable in the vertical direction relative to the ledge, in between a lower position and an upper position,
wherein the container comprises an inner slide and an outer shell, wherein the slide is vertically movably arranged in the shell, wherein the shell comprises the ledge, and the slide comprises the top wall with the opening, and wherein the ledge protrudes through a cut-out into the slide.
2. The container according to claim 1, wherein in the upper position, the distance in between the upper end of the ledge and the top wall is greater than the length of the rod-shaped consumer items, such that at least one consumer item can be arranged on the ledge, the container being arranged that when the top wall is returned in the lower position, the at least one consumer item, which is arranged on the ledge, protrudes through the opening in the top wall.
3. The container according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the container comprises an inner slide and an outer shell, wherein the slide is vertically movably arranged in the shell, and wherein one of the slide or the shell comprises the ledge, and the other one of the slide and the shell comprises the top wall with the opening.
4. The container according to anyone of the previous claims, wherein the slide has a bottom wall, which comprises the cut-out for the ledge of the shell.
5. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the shell comprises a cut-out for allowing the consumer to engage the slide.
6. The container according to anyone of the previous claims, wherein an elastic means is provided below the consumer items.
7. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein a stopping means enables a dead stop in the upper position of the top wall, such that the top wall is in its lifting end position in the upper position.

8. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the container comprises a plurality of consumer items extending in the upright direction of the container, wherein the width and depth of the container is smaller than longitudinal length of the consumer items.
9. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the ledge is arranged adjacent to two side walls of the container.
10. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the size of the ledge is adapted such that only one consumer item with its longitudinal axis extending in the upright direction can be arranged thereon.
11. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein a side wall of the container is movable towards the ledge to facilitate the movement of the consumer items onto the ledge, when the top wall is in the upper position.
12. The container according to claim 11, wherein an elastic means is provided, which is adapted to elastically force the movable side wall in the direction of the ledge.
13. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the opening in the top wall is covered by a lid, which is actionable upon movement of the top wall.
14. The container according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the container comprises several consumer items which are wrapped in an inner liner, wherein the inner liner is provided with perforation lines to facilitate the opening of the inner liner.