Description

The present invention relates to combinations constituted by a gift or "surprise" and its casing of the type currently used, for example, for inserting gifts in chocolate eggs and like hollow food products, within the closure elements of jars, etc...

In a currently-used solution, the gift or surprise, which is usually constituted by several parts which are intended to be assembled to form a small toy, constitutes an element which is separate from the casing (barrel) which is intended to receive it. Such an arrangement is known, e.g. from Italian Utility Model 163428.

During the packaging stage, it is therefore necessary to insert the gift into the casing, which is usually constituted by two cup-shaped bodies, or by a cup-shaped body closed by a flat lid whose free edges can be snap interengaged.

The packaging operation has, therefore, to be carried out manually and, as well as having an adverse effect on the cost of the combination and of the product in which it is inserted, in practice this also prevents the packaging from being carried out in a controlled atmosphere, which would be desirable to ensure the hygiene of the final product.

The object of the present invention is to provide a combination comprising a gift (surprise) and its casing which can be packaged completely automatically. According to the present invention, this object is achieved by virtue of a combination comprising a gift (surprise) and its casing, such a combination having the features called for in Claim 1.

The casing can be produced so as itself to constitute, at least in part, a component of the gift.

According to a preferred solution, the gift may be constituted by several parts which can be assembled together, the parts being formed as appendages of the casing.

The casing is usually constituted by two complementary bodies (for example two bowl-shaped half shells or a cup-shaped shell of flattened shape closed by a flat cover) which are interconnected in a generally-hinged arrangement along homologous portions of their respective free edges.

Another subject of the invention is a method for packaging a combination, comprising a gift and its casing, of the type specified above, which method has the feature called for in Claim 5.

As already indicated above, this method can be carried out completely automatically, possibly in a controlled environment.

The invention will now be described, purely by way of non-limiting example, with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view which shows a combination comprising a gift (surprise) and its casing according to the invention, and

Figures 2 to 4 show three successive stages in the packaging of the combination according to the invention for insertion in a chocolate egg or like product.

In the drawings, a combination, generally indicated 1 is constituted by:

- a gift (surprise) constituted by a plurality of components 2, 3, and 4 which are intended to be fitted together, and
- a casing 5 constituted by two complementary bowl-shaped bodies which are connected in a generally hinged arrangement by a flexible sheet 6 which extends so as to connect homologous portions of the free edges of the two bowl-shaped bodies.

The gift included in the combination according to the invention is usually constituted by a small toy (for example a small airplane, car, etc.) which is intended to be formed by the snap-assembly of its constituent parts 2, 3 and 4.

This is, in itself, a widely-known solution in general use in so-called "surprises" which are inserted in chocolate eggs and in food packages. The presence of the surprise within the product is an attraction to the potential purchaser, particularly to children who, when they have opened the egg or package, reach the surprise container and can assemble the surprise itself.

The essential characteristic of the combination 1 of the invention is the fact that the components 2, 3 and 4 which form the gift are not separate from the casing 5.

On the contrary, the gift and its casing 5 constitute - essentially - a single unit, for example of moulded plastics material.

The term - essentially - as used above and in the claims which follow is intended to mean that not necessarily all the components constituting the gift and all the parts constituting the casing form a single unit. For example, it is possible (and included within the scope of the present invention) for some of the components of the gift to form a unitary element with a respective portion of the casing, whilst other components in turn form a unitary element with another part of the casing. Similarly, a solution may be envisaged in which the gift includes an additional component (for example a component of a different material) which is nevertheless inserted in the casing together with the elements formed in a single unit with the casing or a part thereof.

A part of the casing (for example one of the bowls) may itself be formed so as to constitute a component of the gift. For example, if the gift represents a small earth-moving vehicle, one of the bowl-shaped bodies may be shaped so as to constitute the body of the vehicle.

It can be seen from Figure 1 that all the components 2, 3 and 4 which are intended to form the gift

constitute appendages which extend from the free edge 7 of one of the bowl-shaped bodies by means of thin connecting bridges 8 which can be bent so as to enable the various elements 2, 3 and 4 to be folded into the respective portion of the casing 5.

This operation is carried out during the packaging of the combination as shown schematically in Figures 2 to 4.

In particular, Figure 2 shows how the components constituting the gift (which, on formation of the combination as a single unit, for example by means of a moulding operation, extend radially outwardly from the free edge 7) can be folded into the corresponding bowl-shaped body.

Figure 3 shows the stage at which all the appendages constituting the components which are intended to form the gift have been folded or bent into the bowl-shaped body.

At this point (possibly after the insertion of further elements, such as a sheet with instructions for the assembly of the gift) the other bowl-shaped body may be folded over to complete the closure of the casing as illustrated in Figure 4.

At this point the combination, with the gift securely protected by the casing defined by the bowl-shaped bodies, can be inserted in the product which is intended to receive it.

The whole packaging operation can be carried out automatically, possibly in a controlled environment.

After removing the combination from the product in which it has been inserted, the user can open the casing by opening out the bowl-shaped bodies and unfolding the components 2, 3 and 4 again.

The latter can then be separated from the bowl-shaped body to which they are connected by the breakage of the connecting bridges 8, and the gift can then be assembled.

As already indicated above, one or more parts of the casing 5 may also be used for this purpose.

Claims

1. A combination comprising a casing (5) and a gift adapted to be placed in the casing (5), characterised in that the gift and its casing (5) are constituted essentially by a single unit, and in that the casing includes at least one body (5) with a respective free edge (7) and in that the gift is formed, at least in part, as appendages which extend from the free edge (7) and which can be bent inwardly of the at least one body (5).

2. A combination according to Claim 1, characterised in that the casing (5) itself constitutes part of the gift.

3. A combination according to claim 1 or Claim 2, characterised in that the gift is constitued by several component (2, 3, 4) to assembled together and in that the component are formed as said appendages of the casing (5).

4. A combination according to Claim 1, characterised in that the casing is constituted by two complementary bodies (5) which are interconnected in a generally hinged arragement (6) along homologous portion of their respective free edges.

5. A method of packaging a combination according to any one of Claim 1 to 4, characterised in that it comprises the step of:

– forming the gift (2, 3, 4) and its casing (5) essentially as a single unit (1),

– bending said appendage forming, at least in part, said inwardly of the casing (5), and

– closing the casing (5) around the gift.

6. A method according to Claim 5, characterised in that it includes the step of forming the gift essentially in the form of appendage of its casing (5) which can be bent (8) into the casing itself (5).

Patentansprüche

1. Kombination, die ein Gehäuse (5) sowie ein Geschenk enthält, das dazu dient, um im Gehäuse (5) aufgenommen zu werden, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Geschenk und dessen Gehäuse (5) im wesentlichen von einer einzelnen Einheit gebildet werden, und daß das Gehäuse zumindest einen Körper (5) mit einer entsprechenden freien Kante (7) aufweist, und daß das Geschenk zumindest teilweise von Verlängerungen gebildet wird, die von der freien Kante (7) verlaufen und in das Innere des zumindest einen Körpers (5) gebogen werden können.

2. Kombination gemäß Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gehäuse (5) für sich einen Teil des Geschenks bildet.

3. Kombination gemäß Anspruch 1 oder 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Geschenk von mehreren Teilen (2, 3, 4) gebildet wird, die zusammengesetzt werden sollen, und daß die Teile als Verlängerungen des Gehäuses (5) ausgebildet sind.

4. Kombination gemäß Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gehäuse von zwei komplementären Körpern (5) gebildet wird, die längs übereinstimmender Teile ihrer entsprechenden freien Kanten zu einem im allgemeinen gelenkigen Aufbau (6) verbunden sind.

5. Verfahren zum Verpacken einer Kombination gemäß jedem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verfahren folgende Schritte enthält:

– Ausbilden des Geschenks (2, 3, 4) und seines Gehäuses (5) im wesentlichen als eine einzelne Einheit (1),

– Biegen der Verlängerungen, die zumindest teilweise das Geschenk bilden, in das Gehäuse (5),

constitute appendages which extend from the free edge 7 of one of the bowl-shaped bodies by means of thin connecting bridges 8 which can be bent so as to enable the various elements 2, 3 and 4 to be folded into the respective portion of the casing 5.

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In particular, Figure 2 shows how the components constituting the gift (which, on formation of the combination as a single unit, for example by means of a moulding operation, extend radially outwardly from the free edge 7) can be folded into the corresponding bowl-shaped body.

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The latter can then be separated from the bowl-shaped body to which they are connected by the breakage of the connecting bridges 8, and the gift can then be assembled.

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5. A method of packaging a combination according to any one of Claim 1 to 4, characterised in that it comprises the step of:

- forming the gift (2, 3, 4) and its casing (5) essentially as a single unit (1),
- bending said appendage forming, at least in part, said inwardly of the casing (5), and
- closing the casing (5) around the gift.

6. A method according to Claim 5, characterised in that it includes the step of forming the gift essentially in the form of appendage of its casing (5) which can be bent (8) into the casing itself (5).

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2. Kombination gemäß Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gehäuse (5) für sich einen Teil des Geschenks bildet.

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- Ausbilden des Geschenks (2, 3, 4) und seines Gehäuses (5) im wesentlichen als eine einzelne Einheit (1),
- Biegen der Verlängerungen, die zumindest teilweise das Geschenk bilden, in das Gehäuse (5),

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und

– schließer des Gehäuses (5) um das Geschenk.

6. Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verfahren einen Schritt aufweist, um das Geschenk im wesentlichen in Form von Verlängerungen seines Gehäuses (5) zu bilden, die in das Gehäuse (5) selbst gebogen (8) werden können.

Revendications

1. Combinaison comprenant un emballage (5) et un cadeau adapté à être placé dans l'emballage (5), caractérisée en ce que le cadeau et son emballage (5) sont constitués pratiquement par une seule unité, et en ce que l'emballage comprend au moins un corps (5) avec un bord libre respectif (7) et en ce que le cadeau est forme, au moins en partie, en tant qu'appendices qui s'étendent depuis le bord libre (7) et qui peuvent être courbés vers l'intérieur dudit au moins un corps (5).

2. Combinaison selon la revendication 1, caractérisée en ce que l'emballage (5) constitue lui-même une pièce du cadeau.

3. Combinaison selon la revendication 1 ou la revendication 2, caractérisée en ce que le cadeau est constitué par plusieurs pièces (2, 3, 4) destinées à être assemblées et en ce que les pièces sont formées en tant que lesdits appendices de l'emballage (5).

4. Combinaison selon la revendication 1, caractérisée en ce que l'emballage est constitué par deux corps complémentaires (5) qui sont reliés mutuellement en un agencement (6) généralement articulé le long de portions homologues de leurs bords libres respectifs.

5. Procédé d'empaquetage d'une combinaison selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend les étapes consistant à :

– former le cadeau (2, 3, 4) et son emballage (5) pratiquement en une seule unité (1),

– courber ledits appendices formant, au moins en partie, ledit cadeau vers l'intérieur de l'emballage (5), et

– fermer l'emballage (5) autour du cadeau.

6. Procédé selon la revendication 5, caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend l'étape consistant à former le cadeau pratiquement sous la forme d'appendices de son emballage (5) qui peuvent être courbes (8) dans l'emballage (5) même.