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POINT-OF-PURCHASE PROMOTIONAL ARTICLE

This is a regular application filed under 35 U.S.C. §111(a) claiming priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) (1), of provisional application Ser. No. 60/746,106, filed May 1, 2006, and incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention generally relates to point-of-purchase promotional articles, more particularly, to a promotional hang tag supportable upon or supported by merchandise via integration of anchor and anchor receiving elements thereof, and more particularly still, a promotional hang tag having a portion thereof separable from a clasp or anchoring portion of the merchandise supported promotional hang tag.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Considerable resources are directed to product promotions. As a threshold matter, merchandise and/or product labeling, marking, and packaging are critical initial and ongoing considerations. Arguably, naming, visual identity creation, branding and cross-branding are essential ingredients for strong marketplace differentiation intended to influence the purchasing behavior of consumers.

A variety of well-known point-of-purchase and promotional products are available. For instance, vehicles for advertising and promoting products, grabbing the attention of consumers, and/or prompting impulse or first time purchases include, but are hardly limited to, static clings, tent cards, shelf talkers, hanging mobiles, bottle neckers, hanging tags, instant redeemable coupons, etc.

With regard to equipping, adorning, outfitting, etc. a product with a promotional article, as for instance by causing same to be supported, carried, suspended, adhered, dangled etc. therefrom, or thereby, as the case may be, form generally fits function. As should be readily appreciated, unique problems are present within any given class of promotional device, article, or assembly, e.g., hang tags on the one hand versus a bottle necker on the other hand, and, occasionally, a “solution” to a particular “problem” warrants a shift in approach or tactic, i.e., replacing or supplanting one approach for another, e.g., a switch from a hang tag to a bottle necker or vice versa.

Hang tags are ubiquitous market place communication devices. A fundamental consideration for such tags are their interface with a product, i.e., the merchandise. For a class of articles that are supported by a portion or element of a product, or product package (i.e., danglers), the articles are typically characterized by either a band, e.g., a fixed length or reversibly expandable element, which tensioningly engages the merchandise or portion thereof, or by selectively integratable or cooperatively engageable components (e.g., clasp or clasp elements) which wrap about or ensnare at least a portion of the merchandise.

Numerous tagging or marking articles contemplate tag and tail sections which cooperate in some fashion so as to loop about or otherwise capture at least a portion of an article of manufacture. For example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,016,059 (Stevens), 4,149,329 (Graves), 5,129,617 (MacWilliamson), and 6,401,304 (Dossett) generally disclose merchandise tagging articles having an indicia bearing portion from which extends a tail or strap portion. Operatively, a barbed or otherwise configured free end of the strap is received for retention within an aperture of the tag portion so as to form a

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suspending or clasp structure for the article. Commonly, the barbed or otherwise configured free end of the strap is received within a stylized aperture (e.g., see Stevens, or MacWilliamson), or a more traditional geometrically shaped aperture such as a rectangle (e.g., see Graves) or a circle (e.g., see Dossett), with the nature of the barbed insertion there-through being one of compliant deflection (i.e., substantial deformation of elements of the free end of the strap upon aperture engagement and initial ingress).

Beyond merchandise tagging, a further, well-known tagging environment is that associated with luggage or baggage, more particularly, “handled” articles. For instance, U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,550,295 (Anania), 3,837,101 (Young), 4,142,310 (Groselak et al.), 4,630,384 (Breen), and 5,381,617 (Schwartz et al.), are all generally directed to self-locking baggage or luggage tags. Characteristically, such articles are known to have an elongate configuration, an indicia bearing area generally intermediate the end portions thereof, an aperture for receiving a free end of the article therethrough, and a portion or segment adapted to form an interference fit with the aperture. In this tagging environment, free strap ends, highly stylized (e.g., Anania and Young) or otherwise (e.g., Schwartz et al.), may be received within an aperture, highly stylized (e.g., Anania and Young) or otherwise (e.g., Schwartz et al.), some of which cooperatively engage same so as to form an interference fit (e.g., Anania and Young). Alternately, opposing side edges of an intermediate portion of the article may be adapted, via inclusion of a series of spaced apart slits (e.g., Groselak et al.) or slots (e.g., Breen), for forming an interference fit with an aperture of the article.

In light of the foregoing, and no doubt numerous alternative tagging solutions, there remains a need for quick, intuitive, instinctive, self-locking in/for a tagging article. Furthermore, there remains room for improvement with regard to a reliable, secured locked interface for portions or elements for such devices, namely, the interface between the engageable elements thereof, advantageously, a less is more solution. Additionally, and in furtherance of merchandise differentiation, it is believed advantageous to produce a printed marking tag via a sheet fed or web press, with or without over-laminates, that yield attention grabbing promotional vehicles. Further still, it is believed desirable to provide a promotional hang tag having a selectively disengageable flag, coupon, etc., more particularly, an article having an advantageous tension between the aforementioned characteristics or qualities, e.g., an article possessing a quick, supremely efficient clasp forming portion, and a reliably secure clasp so formed which can readily withstand disintegration of a marketing premium element thereof. Yet further still, it is believed particularly advantageous to provide a promotional article for selectively accompanying packaged snacks in lieu of integrally formed or direct promotional package print, more generally, it is believed advantageous to provide a novel mechanism or article to deliver promotions on a snack bag or the like.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A promotional hang tag having clasp and flag portions, and advantageously but not necessarily, a line-of-weakness delimiting the portions in furtherance of disengaging the flag portion from the clasp portion, is provided. The clasp portion includes an anchor and an anchor retainer. The anchor retainer includes an elongate slot and opposingly paired slits extending from opposing ends of the elongate slot. The elongate slot is characterized by an axis of elongation and is