

RETRACTABLE LABEL

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/757698, filed Jan. 6, 2006, which is entirely incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention generally relates to a label, more particularly to a retractable label.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Containers may be used to hold solids, liquids and gases. Containers have countless uses, such as holding, for example, material of medicinal utility (e.g., pills), refreshments (e.g., water, soft drinks), and food items. Some containers comprise a cap for sealing the contents therein, while others, such as, e.g., a container comprising a syringe, have plungers on one end and a needle on the other for injecting a drug into a patient.

[0006] Manufacturers and distributors typically need to provide health and safety information about a container's content to consumers. For instance, a pharmacy may need to provide detailed information regarding the proper use of a drug, or a soft drink manufacturer may need to provide nutritional details. Such information is typically provided on displays affixed to the outer surface of a container. These displays are commonly referred to as labels.

[0007] As the necessity to provide more information on labels increases, labels have become more crowded, making the information printed on them difficult to read. Some manufacturers have attempted to solve this problem by resorting to smaller text sizes, which leads to further difficulty in reading and understanding the labels. This can have serious consequences in cases where the information on a label is essential to the well being of a consumer.

[0008] There have been attempts at making labels more readable. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,884,421 ("the '421 patent"), which is entirely incorporated herein by reference, teaches a rotatable label that allows an improvement in the presentation of information printed on a label. As another example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,866,219 ("the '219 patent"), which is entirely incorporated herein by reference, discloses a system comprising a base member and a fold out pamphlet. The base member may be attached to a container, and the pamphlet can be removed from the base member and reapplied for future use. As still another example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,360,462 ("the '462 patent"), which is entirely incorporated herein by reference, discloses a product information label system that comprises an information package, wherein the information package may be extended through a window when the container is rotated in one direction and retracted when the container is rotated in the opposite direction. This provides the advantage of concealing the information package if the information provide thereon is confidential.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The invention will be better understood from the Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments and from the appended drawings, which are meant to illustrate and not to limit the invention, and wherein:

[0010] FIGS. 1A and 1B are schematic side views of a container comprising a retractable label, in accordance with a

preferred embodiment of the invention. FIG. 1C is a schematic, cross-sectional top-down view of FIG. 1A, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention;

[0011] FIGS. 2A and 2B are schematic side views of a container and a cap, the cap comprising a retractable label, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. FIG. 2C is a schematic, cross-sectional top-down view of FIG. 2C, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention;

[0012] FIGS. 3A and 3B are schematic side views of a syringe comprising a retractable label, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. FIGS. 3C and 3D are schematic, cross-sectional side views of FIG. 3A, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention; and

[0013] FIG. 4A is a schematic side view of a jar having a cap with a retractable label, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. FIG. 4B is a schematic side view of a product container having a cap with a retractable label, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. FIG. 4C is a schematic side view of a product container having a retractable label, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0014] Label systems available in the art have several limitations. For example, the base member and label combination of the '219 patent opens the possibility for the label getting misplaced and, as a consequence, unavailable when it is required. As another example, the extendable and retractable label of the '462 patent requires that the user twist an outer sleeve in relation to the container to either extend or retract the label, which poses a problem for individuals with physical ailments (e.g., arthritis or carpal tunnel syndrome) that make it difficult to carry out this operation. As still another example, a limitation of the retractable label of the '421 patent is that the amount of information printed on the label does not increase significantly in relation to a non-retractable label provided directly on a container.

[0015] Additionally, limitations of prior art label systems pose several problems. For example, in some cases extra informational material (e.g., pamphlet) is supplied with a first container in order to provide information about the first container and/or the content(s) of the first container. This information material may be affixed to a larger second container housing the first container. A problem in this case is that the informational material may get lost once the second container is opened to remove the first container. As another example, large containers—larger than what is needed to contain a substance—may be used in cases where large labels are affixed to the container to provide information about the container and/or its content(s). This is problematic because it leads to increased costs. Additionally, large containers occupy more space in a storage facility than smaller containers, which can lead to the requirement of additional storage facilities, thus leading to further increases in costs.

[0016] Accordingly, there is a need in the art for improved container labels. In particular, there is a need to present container information in a coherent fashion without limiting the content that is provided on the container label. This need presents itself in various contexts. For instance, pharmacies may need to present patients with personalized (or customized) detailed instructions for the proper usage of a particular drug.