
Well, It Seemed Like a

One of the wonderful things about matchbooks is all the nifty innovations that manufacturers have come up with over the decades to make their product unique and...hopefully...more successful, and the industry's history is certainly full of such success stories—the Feature, the Matchorama, the Foilite, the Filigree, the Uniglo, and so on. But, as any businessman can tell you, 'success' is often a guessing game, a hit-or-miss proposition, as to which ideas will fly and which will flop. I offer, here, a look at some of the industry's more spectacular failures, as well as some of its lesser known crashes.

1920s:

-Blot-R-Match - Union Match Co. trademark for covers with insides designed to be ink blotters; 1928-1938; only 115 currently listed.

-Pocket Wallet - Lion trademark for its covers having 2 flaps which formed a pocket for loose matches; very few known; early 1920s.

1930s:

-22 “Feature” - Lion trademark for its 22-stick Feature covers; these are 30-stick sized covers. Few are known; introduced c. 1935.

-Puzzly Matches - Lion trademark for matchbooks whose matches made a picture when properly put together. Few known. c. 1930s

-Safe-T-Flap - Maryland Match Co. trademark for its covers with a T-shaped flap overlaying the matches; at least 22 are known. c. 1935-c.1942

PullQuick - Diamond trademark for its auto-ignitable matches; more box-like than matchbooks. The striker was on the inside, next to the match heads; when you pulled out the match, it automatically ignited; 1930s-1940s; one collection numbered 362 as of 10/89. PullMatch, by American Pullmatch Co./Canadian Pullmatch Co., was the same basic idea, but matchsticks are flat; 1936-1939

-33 “Feature” - Lion 40-strike-sized cover, but with 33 matches. Few are known. No dates available.

-Base Friction - Diamond trademark for covers with strikers where the fold normally is; late 1937-1942.

1940s:

-Disc Wheel Match Pack - Universal innovation where matches were pulled from a small boxed wheel. Very few known. 1940.

-Easel-Match - Lion trademark for its covers having a cut-out portion on the back panel which could be pushed out to allow the cover to stand up; Jim Moffett's, CA, collection numbered 103 as of 10/90. Often referred to as “Easel Backs” in the hobby. Also “Eez-L” (Lion spelled it two different ways) c. 1940s/1950s.

-Safe-T-Lite - Universal trademark for its covers with tear-out tabs on front and back panels; 121 currently listed. introduced in 1949. *[also referred to as Safety Tabs, Tear-Out Tabs, Pull Tabs]*.

Good Idea At The Time!

-Wagon Tongue - Lion trademark for its covers having a small insert with advertising that has to be lifted before you can get to the matches. Very few known. 1940s?

1950s:

-Double Length - Universal trademark for covers which folded out to a double length. Only 21 currently listed. Mid-1950s.

-Sticky Back - category for covers with an adhesive strip on back panel for attachment to cigarette back; from various manufacturers or distributors; also called Piggy Back; c. 1955-? 484 listed the last time I heard.

-Model - Lion trademark for its large die-cut covers; few produced; James Benes had 5 as of 10/01. 1956-?.

1960s:

-Classique - Universal trademark for Jewel-sized covers w/wooden matches glued in; only 33 known; introduced 1967.

1970s:

-Child Guard - Maryland Match Co. trademark for its child-safe matchbooks; if I've ever seen any of these in my collecting career, it can't have been more than one or two. 1977-1984.

-Softone - Diamond trademark for its Uniglo-like covers. Few actually produced. Apparently couldn't compete with Universal's very successful Uniglo line. 1970s?

-Lenticular - Atlas trademark for its 3-D type covers; these covers feature a design/picture in a plastic panel that moves when the cover is tilted; very few produced; introduced in 1974.

1980s:

-Classique 180 - Universal trademark for its 180-stick boxes.; this one may not have actually been a failure, as Universal simply went out of business in 1987. 1985-1987?

-Extend n'Ad - Universal trademark for its covers that featured peel-off labels for additional advertising. It never took off; only 87 listed as of 9/05. 1982-1987.

- Jupiter One-Eight - Universal trademark for its made-in-Belgium covers; glued-in 18 wooden matches; few varieties were produced. A last gasp effort from Universal before it went belly up. 1985-1987; 37 listed as of 11/05.

1990s:

-Classic Collectible Souvenir - Atlas trademark appearing immediately above striker; intent was to appeal to collectors; production only lasted from 1995-1996. There are some 200 known.

Well, this list isn't comprehensive, but it does give one a pretty good look at the industry's past foibles. But, it's true, you know—Nothing ventured—Nothing gained...especially in the world of business.