

Striker Widths

Striker widths! A technicality that many collectors normally don't concern themselves with, I would imagine, except, perhaps, in instances of startling contrasts. Still, they're quite significant. In some cases, they can indicate age; in others, errors.

In the early covers, notably Diamond, the strikers were often hand-applied, leading to uneven and even slanted strikers/[1]...not to mention that, say, on the earlier Diamond Quality's, for example, the striker material was applied right *over* the staple...making it a depressing process decades later for the collector trying to remove said staple.

Early strikers, in general, were much wider than the strikers we're used to seeing on covers these days. [2] Sometimes, these "wide-strikers" get up to 10mm+, whereas today's strikers are usually in the 5-6mm range. The changeover from wide to slim occurred around 1935, as vending machines were beginning to become common. The vending machine (for some reason) demanded a shorter matchbook all around, so that's where we also see the changeover from the XL size (Extra-Long), or 'Tall', to the shorter version that we have had ever since. Even so, Superior carried their wider strikers on for quite a bit longer, it should be noted.[3]

Occasionally, one runs across a cover with an ultra-thin striker [4], but I haven't seen anything to indicate such was some company's norm at any time. I rather suspect it could possibly be due to some quirk in the manufacturing process--the end of the striker roll, an error in the cutting process, or...? Indeed, as I look at some Uniglo examples, you can see the area 'allotted' for the striker, but the actual striker is much smaller...suggesting that it wasn't planned that way.

