June 6, 1967 R. NESBIT 3,323,708

COMPARTMENTED ENVELOPE

Filed Oct. 28, 1965

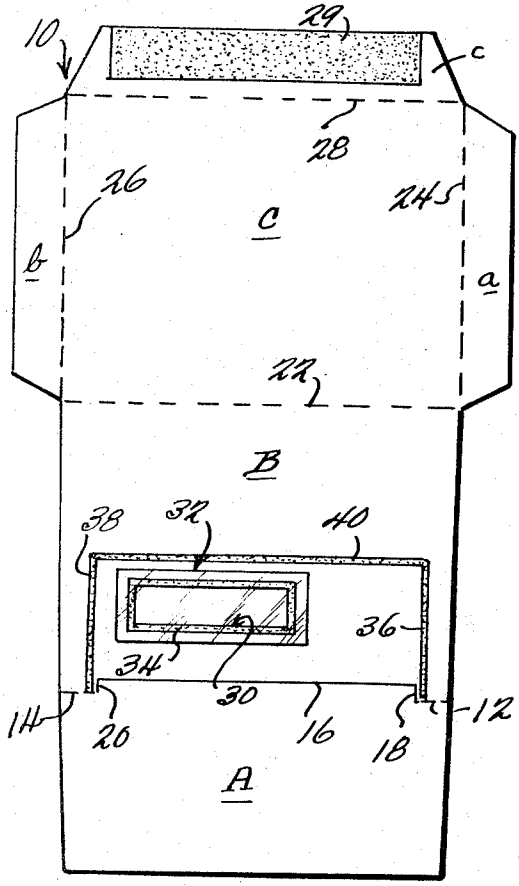


Fig. 1

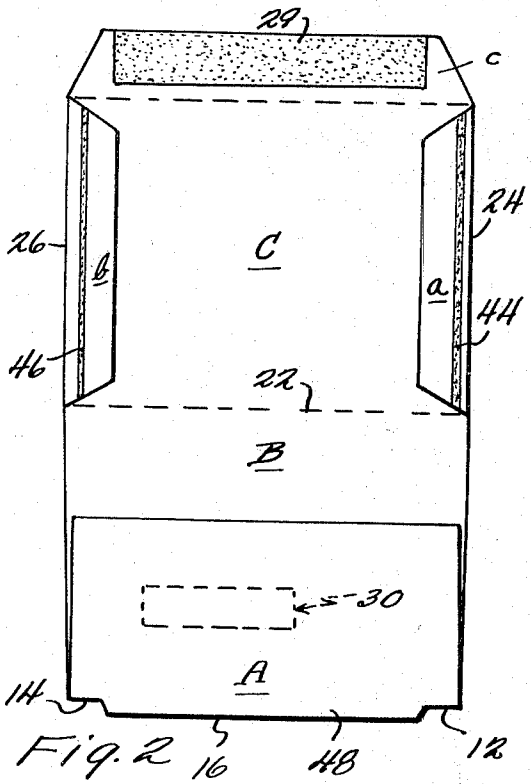


Fig. 2

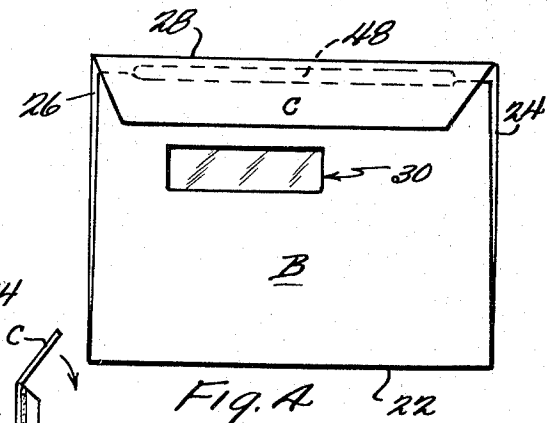


Fig. 4

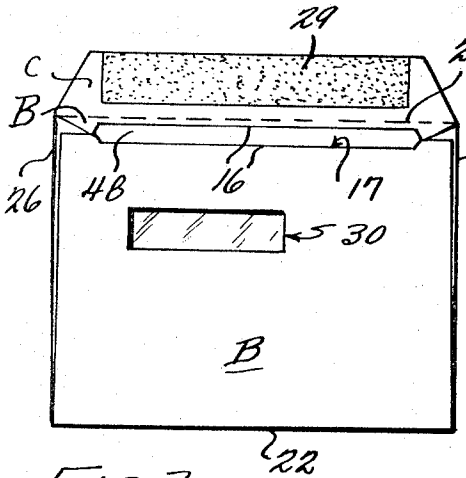


Fig. 3

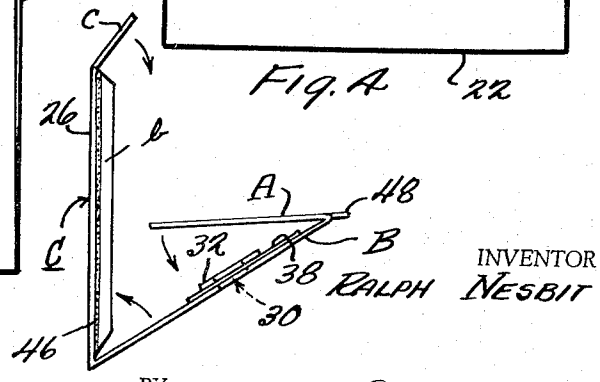


Fig. 5

INVENTOR
RALPH NESBIT

BY Cushman, Darby & Cushman
ATTORNEYS

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COMPARTMENTED ENVELOPE

Ralph Nesbit, Richmond, Va., assignor to Hammermill Paper Company, Erie, Pa., a corporation of Pennsylvania

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A compartmented mailing envelope having a small front compartment overlying a larger rear compartment and a single top flap which seals the open upper ends of both campartments simultaneously. The two compartments are formed from a single blank folded sequentially about two fold lines which are parallel to the ends of the blank so as to define three overlying panels. The front compartment is defined by the front and intermediate panels, the opening thereinto being defined by a slit in the blank generally along a portion of the fold line between these panels. The opening into the rear compartment is defined by the rear panel and the fold line between the front and intermediate panel.

This invention relates to compartmented envelopes and in particular to envelopes having a plurality of campartments which can be sealed by a single closure flap. Envelopes of this kind have particular utility for the mailing of first class and third class mail.

It is the primary object to provide an improved compartmented envelope and a blank therefor which is simple and economical in construction and in use.

It is a more specific object to provide a compartmented mailing envelope composed of a generally rectangular blank which is folded along two transverse lines and cut partially along one of the lines in a manner to form one compartment overlying another compartment, the access opening of one of the compartments being defined by the cut.

The invention will be understood from the following detailed description taken with the drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of an envelope blank embodying the principles of the present invention;

FIGURES 2, 3 and 4 are plan views showing the blank of FIGURE 1 in various stages of folding; and

FIGURE 5 is a side elevational view of the blank in a partially folded condition.

Referring to FIGURE 1 there is shown a flat paper blank **10** which, when folded in the manner to be described, forms a two-compartment envelope having a single closure flap sealing both compartments. The blank **10** is of generally rectangular shape and is defined by three generally rectangular body panels A, B and C and three flaps *a*, *b* and *c*.

The dividing line between panels A and B extends generally transverse of the blank **10** and consists of two short straight fold lines **12** and **14** extending inwardly from opposite sides of the blank and a long straight cut line **16** connecting the inner ends of fold lines **12** and **14**. Preferably, the cut line **16** is slightly offset from the fold lines **12** and **14** in the direction of the panel B and includes two end portions **18** and **20** which extend downwardly to the inner ends of the fold lines **12** and **14**. The purpose of the cut line **16** is to form an access slot **17** (FIGURES 2 and 3) for the smaller compartment in the complete envelope.

The dividing line between panels B and C consists of a straight fold line **22** extending transversely across the blank **10**. The fold line **22** is so spaced from the dividing line between panels A and B that panels B and C are substantially the same size and are both considerably larger than panel A. The reason for the latter relationship is that the compartment which will be formed partially by panel A ordinarily will be smaller than the other compartment.

Flaps *a* and *b* extend outwardly from the opposite sides of panel C, and are foldable toward the viewer along straight fold lines **24** and **26**, respectively. The fold lines **24** and **26** are generally coextensive with the side edges of panel B and extend from the ends of the transverse fold line **22** to the upper edge of the blank **10**. The flap *c* is foldable toward the viewer along a transverse fold line **28** and is provided with a wide strip of adhesive **29**.

A window **30** is provided in the panel B at a location below the transverse midline of the panel and may be slightly offset to the left as viewed in FIGURE 1. A transparent window panel **32** covers the window **30** and is held in place by a layer of adhesive **34** which has been applied to the panel B around the periphery of the window **30**.

Three strips **36**, **38** and **40** of adhesive are applied to the panel B for the purpose of securing panel A to panel B after panel A has been folded into place. The strips **36** and **38** are disposed slightly inwardly from the side edges of the panel B and extend parallel thereto. The lower ends of the strips **36** and **38** terminate just above the fold lines **12** and **14**, and their upper ends terminate just above the upper edge of the window panel **32**. The strip **40** extends transversely of the blank between the upper ends of the strips **36** and **38**.

Closure flap *c* is provided with adhesive **29**, and the surface of flaps *a* and *b* which are hidden from view in FIGURE 1 are provided with adhesive **44** and **46**, respectively.

A sequence of steps which will convert the blank **10** shown in FIGURE 1 to a two-compartment envelope are illustrated in FIGURES 2, 3 and 4. First, panel A is folded toward the viewer along the fold lines **12** and **14**. At the same time the flaps *a* and *b* are folded toward the viewer along their fold lines **24** and **26**, respectively, so as to expose to view the surfaces of these flaps which are coated with adhesive **44** and **46**. The panel A now lies against the panel B and covers the window **30** in the latter as seen in FIGURE 2. As a result of the offset relationship between the cut line **16**, **18**, **20** and the fold lines **12** and **14**, a projecting lip **48** is formed which is integral with panel A. The panels A and B are then secured together by means of the adhesive **36**, **38** and **40** thereby forming the smaller of two compartments. Access to this small compartment is had only through the slot **17** which is now defined between the adjacent edges of panels A and B as a result of the cut lines **16**, **18** and **20**.

Next, the lower part of the blank **10** of FIGURE 2 is folded toward the viewer along the fold line **22** and into engagement with the side flaps *a* and *b* to give the structure shown in FIGURE 3. The adhesive **44** and **46** on the latter contacts the marginal edges of panel A and that portion of each marginal edge of panel B which is not covered by panel A thereby securing panel B in parallel overlying relationship with panel A. This arrangement defines a large compartment having an access slot which is formed between panels A and C. The small compartment is now disposed within the large compartment with the access slot **17** disposed parallel to and slightly below the access slot for the large compartment. The lip **48** projects away from the slot **17** toward the upper edge of the envelope and serves to identify the slot **17** to the user and to facilitate the insertion of a paper, card or the like into the smaller compartment. It will be observed, also, that the window **30** now faces the viewer. Normally, the name and address of the recipient of the

envelope will be placed on the item inserted in the small compartment in a location such that it is visible through the window 30. However, the address may be placed directly on panel B in which case a window is not required.

Referring to FIGURE 4 it will be seen that the flap C will cover and seal the access slots to both compartments when it is folded toward the viewer along the fold line 28. More specifically, it will be seen that both compartments are sealed because the surface of the lip 48 is exposed and because the strip of adhesive 29 on the flap C is relatively wide. Thus, as the latter is folded downwardly the adhesive 29 first engages the lip 48 thereby sealing the large compartment and then engages a portion of panel B thereby sealing the small compartment.

FIGURE 5 shows the blank 10 in a partly folded condition and clearly illustrates the formation of the small compartment and the location of the lip 48. When the blank 10 is folded, the panels B and C form two exterior panels of the envelope, and the panel A becomes an interior panel. The small compartment is thus defined by panel A and part of panel B, and the large compartment is formed by panel C and the combination of panel A with panel B. In order that the walls of the compartments not interfere with each other the combined longitudinal dimension of panel C with the end flap *c* is greater than the longitudinal dimension of panel B, and the longitudinal dimension of panel A is no greater than the longitudinal dimension of panel B. The transverse dimension of the side flaps *a* and *b* can be quite small, and their combined dimension should be less than the transverse dimension of panel C so that they will not overlap when folded into place.

It will be observed that the length of the small compartment may be varied by changing the spacing between the adhesive strips 36 and 38. The width may be varied by moving the adhesive strip 40 toward or away from the fold lines 22. Of course, the width and length may also be varied by changing the size of panel A.

It will be seen from the drawing, especially FIGURES 2, 3 and 4 that panels A and B are slightly trapezoidal in shape with the result that the side edges of the blank 10 do not coincide when folded.

When large numbers of envelopes are manufactured it is convenient to apply the various adhesives in sequence along with the folding operations. For example, the blanks 10 may be first cut out of paper and then placed in a suitable machine which fans them out and applies adhesive 29 in a wet state to all the closure flaps C. The fanned out blanks are then transferred continuously, as by means of a conveyor chain, to a separating station during which time the adhesive 29 dries. After being separated the blanks 10 are slotted to form the cut lines 16, 18 and 20 and the window 30. Then the adhesive 34, 36, 38 and 40 is applied to the panel B, and the window panel 32 is secured in place while the adhesive 34 is still wet. Following this, the small inner compartment is formed by folding panel A into place while the adhesive strips 36, 38 and 40 are still wet. As already indicated, the size of the small compartment can be varied by changing the positions of the strips 36, 38 and 40. The envelope is completed by folding the side flaps *a* and *b*, applying adhesive strips 44 and 46 thereto and folding the already secured panels A and B along the fold line 22.

The primary use of the envelope is for mailing a brochure, catalogue, prospectus or the like together with an accompanying letter or card. The brochure or other large item will be placed in the large compartment by sliding the item along the exposed surface of flap *c* and panel C. The card or other small item is placed in the small compartment by sliding the item along the exposed surface of the lip 48. During this operation the lip 48 serves to identify the access slot 17 to the user and to guide the item into the slot 17. In the absence of the lip 48 the user would need to open the slot 17 by spreading apart its adjacent edges. As indicated previously, the lip 48 also serves to effect separate sealing of the two compartments when the closure flap *c* is folded, because the adhesive 29 engages both the lip 48 and a portion of panel B.

When the completely sealed envelope is slit along the fold line 22 with a letter opener or the like only the large compartment will be opened. The envelope is therefore well adapted for use in mailing the contents of the large compartment by third class mail, which can be opened for postal inspection, while simultaneously mailing the contents of the small compartment by first class mail.

It will be understood that various changes in the blank and in the completed envelope may be made without departing from the principles of the present invention. For example, the small compartment may be divided into several smaller compartments by providing additional strips of adhesive parallel to and spaced from the strips 36 and 38. Accordingly, the details of the disclosed embodiment of the invention are exemplary of the principles involved and are not intended to be limiting except as they appear in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A blank for forming a compartmented envelope comprising: a flat generally rectangular sheet having a longitudinal dimension and a transverse dimension and defined by two end panels and a center panel which is integral with both said end panels; a side flap projecting laterally from each side edge of one end panel beyond the side edge of the other panels, the combined transverse dimensions of said side flaps being substantially less than the transverse dimension of said one end panel; an end flap projecting from the remaining edge of said one end panel, the combined longitudinal dimension of said one end panel and said end flap being greater than the longitudinal dimension of said center panel, and the longitudinal dimension of said other end panel being no greater than the longitudinal dimension of said center panel; a fold line extending transversely across said blank and defining the dividing line between said one end panel and said center panel; the dividing line between said center panel and the other end panel extending generally transversely across said blank and being formed in part by at least one fold line and at least in part by one cut line, said fold line and said cut line being continuous with each other; said blank thereby being adapted to form a first compartment when said other end panel is folded toward the viewer into engagement with said center panel, said cut line then defining an access slot into the first compartment, said blank being further adapted to form a second compartment when said center panel and said other end panel are folded as a unit toward the viewer into engagement with said one end panel.

2. A blank as in claim 1 wherein said cut line extends a substantial portion of the transverse dimension of said blank and is continuous at each end with a fold line which extends to the adjacent side edge of the blank.

3. A blank as in claim 2 wherein said cut line includes a straight portion of substantial length in the transverse dimension and two shorter end portions which extend generally toward said center panel whereby folding of said other end panel into engagement with said center panel forms a lip extending longitudinally of said blank.

4. A compartmented envelope comprising: first and second exterior panels integral along a first fold line and disposed in overlying relationship, the edge of said first panel remote from said fold line extending beyond said second exterior panel and defining a closure flap; a first compartment formed between said second exterior panel and an interior panel which is integral with said second exterior panel along a second fold line which is parallel to said first fold line; said interior panel having been folded along said second fold line into engagement with said second exterior panel so as to lie between said exterior panels, said first compartment having an access slot extending along a portion of said second fold line between

said interior panel and said second exterior panel and defined by an edge portion of those two panels, said interior panel being secured near its other edges to said second exterior panel; a second compartment formed between said first exterior panel and the combination of said interior panel with said second exterior panel, said second compartment having an access slot close to and generally parallel to said access slot for said first compartment whereby folding of said closure flap closes both access slots.

5. A compartmented envelope as in claim 4 wherein said portion of said interior panel defines a lip which projects beyond said corresponding edge portion of said second panel toward said closure flap thereby presenting a surface which will be engaged by said closure flap when the same is folded and whereby said lip serves as a guide

for the insertion of material into said first compartment.

6. A compartmented envelope as in claim 4 wherein said first exterior panel has a side flap extending along each edge, said side flaps being folded inwardly and secured to the combination of said interior panel with said second exterior panel.

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JOSEPH R. LECLAIR, *Primary Examiner.*

DAVID M. BOCKENEK, *Examiner.*