United States Patent [19]

Clipner

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[54] EASILY OPENABLE ENVELOPE

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **229/85;** 229/76

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B43m 5/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 229/76, 85

[56] **References Cited**

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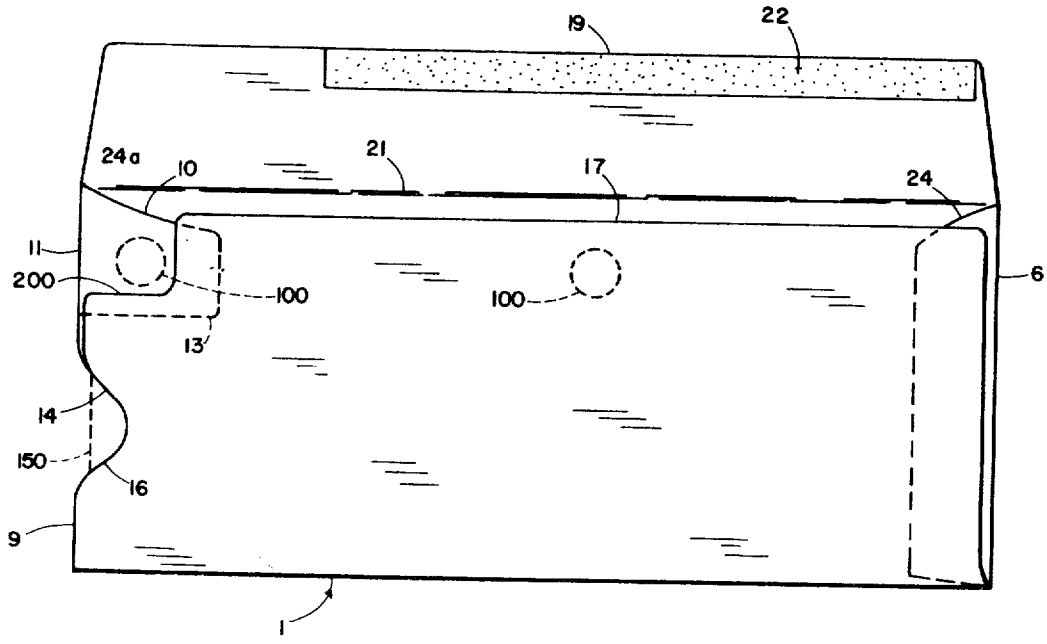
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Assistant Examiner—Stephen P. Garbe
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Hiram A. Sturges

[57] **ABSTRACT**

An easily openable envelope having a closeable insert opening on one edge and having on another edge an unsealed withdrawal opening partially closed by a tab attached to one panel of the envelope, the tab having a portion disposed between the front and back panels of the envelope, the tab not being sealed to the other panel for ease of withdrawal of contents past the tab. The other panel from one to which the tab is connected at a fold having an opening means exposing portions of the tab so that suction in an element of a contents insertion machine can pull the tab away from the first panel.

4 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



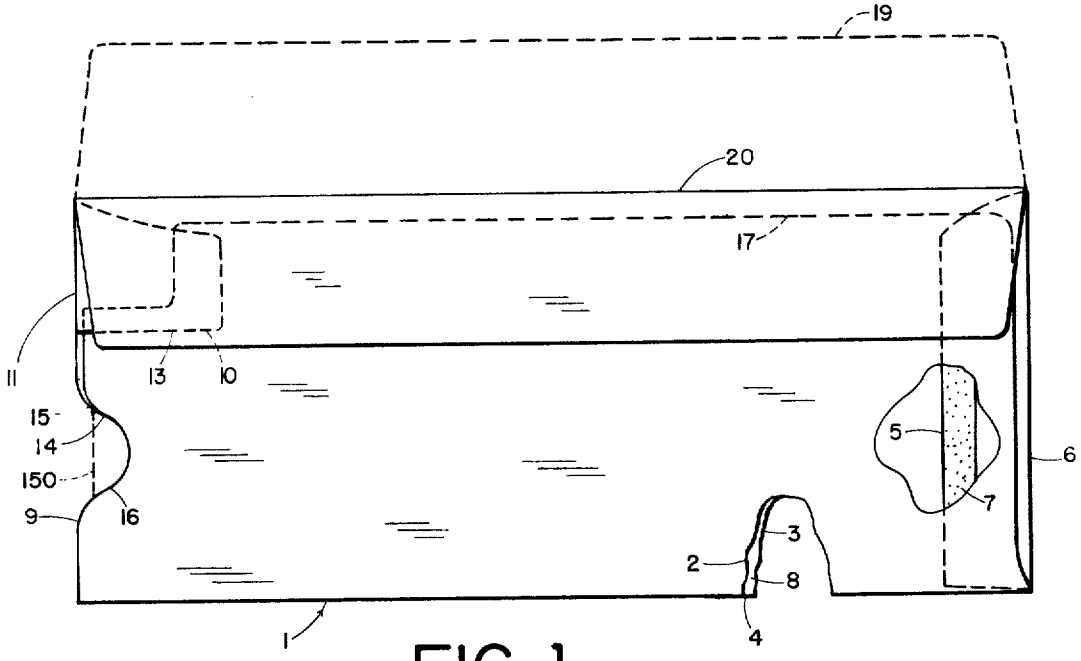


FIG. 1

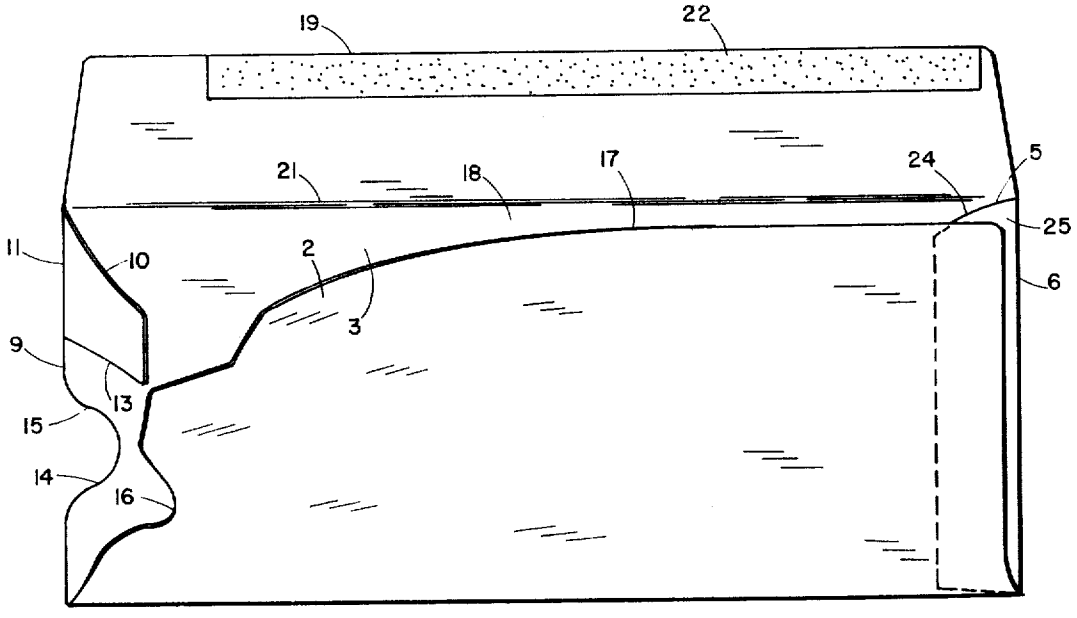


FIG. 2

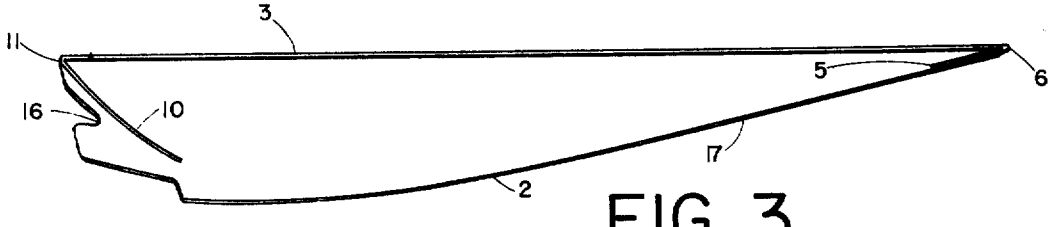


FIG. 3

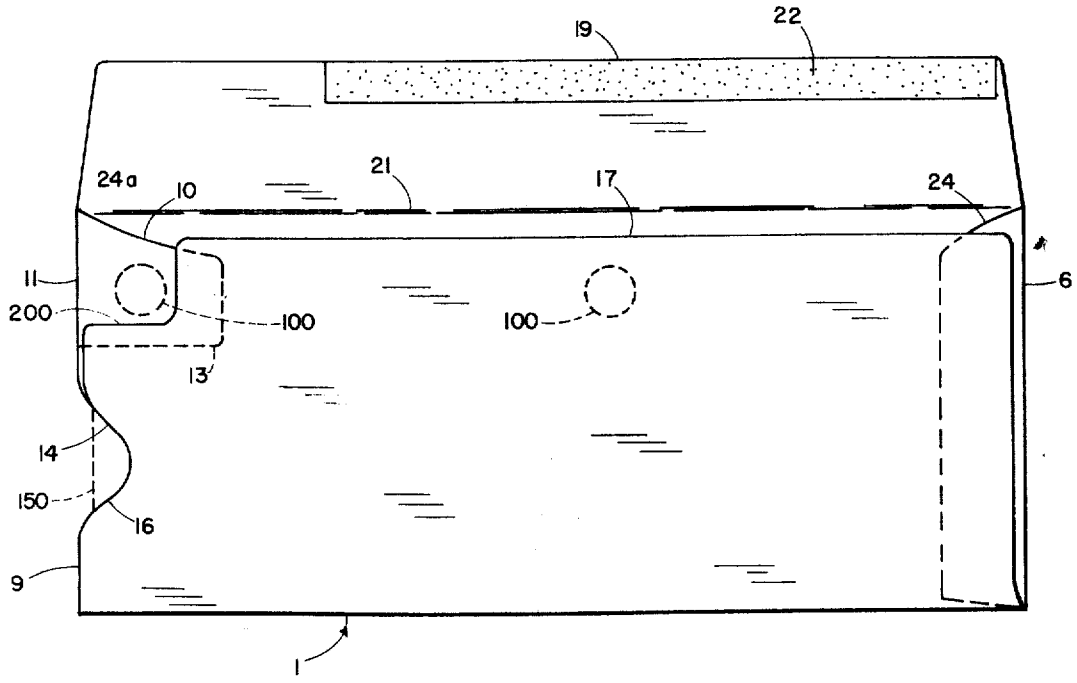


FIG. 4

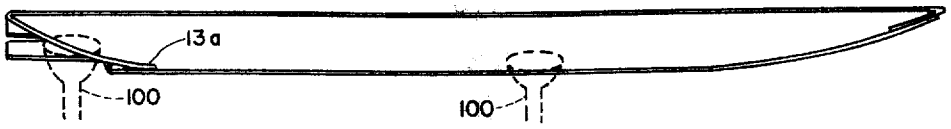


FIG. 5

EASILY OPENABLE ENVELOPE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention is in the field of envelopes used in the direct mail industry in which it has long been known that a better response to solicitations is achieved if the envelope is constructed in such a way that the contents can easily be removed. Envelopes for this purpose have long had notches in front and back panels disposed opposite each other for exposing a portion of the contents of the envelope to make it seem easy and inviting for the recipient to grasp the contents between the fingers at the notches for pulling the contents out through one end of the envelope through a withdrawal opening partially closed by a tab which is commonly sealed to one of the panels and integral with the other panel.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

The most common prior art envelope in this field is one in which the envelope is provided with the separate partially unsealed withdrawal opening on one of its edges and has a tab extending from a side edge portion of one panel of the envelope at the withdrawal opening, the tab having a weakened fold extending across and closing a portion of the withdrawal opening.

The purpose of such a tab is to retain the contents of the envelope and the purpose of providing perforations in the tab, in order to weaken it, is to make it possible for a user to pull the contents from the envelope at a time when the tab remains sealed to the other panel of the envelope by means of tearing the tab at the perforation along the weakened fold.

Pulling the contents against the weakened fold is enhanced by having notches in the panels of the envelope, the notches being opposite each other so that a person can get a good finger-grip on the contents.

However, it has been found that many users must pull the contents against the tab with a sharp impact many times before the tab will tear at its perforations.

The number of times that the opening person will need to pull the contents against the fold will vary with the strength of the hands of the opening person and also will vary with the amount of energy which they choose to exert at that particular time.

A great problem is that many of the persons who would try to open such an envelope are not particularly interested in opening the envelope at all, and so they do not try very hard. They give up easy, since they often have the viewpoint that the contents are probably "junk mail" of no real interest to them, and they tend to give up quickly and to quit fussing with the envelope. Soon they have thrown the envelope into the waste basket unopened.

To my knowledge, much thought has been given in industry to the problem of trying to make the perforated fold envelope open easier, but no acceptable way has been heretofore found. It has long been well-known that such an envelope would have a great value if it could open more easily. Indeed, thousands and thousands of such envelopes are used by insurance companies and have been used for many years. But the extent to which they are used in extremely small compared to the far greater extent they would be used if they could be more easily opened.

There is a vast need to be satisfied when an envelope can be provided of the general type described that will open without such difficulty, since such an envelope, if

it would work easier, would be extremely desirable for direct mail solicitation since such an envelope permits sufficient view of a tantalizing enclosure that the recipient tends to want to see what is inside. If the envelope not only appears to be unusually easy to open, but in true fact, actually opens easily, then there is a much higher likelihood that the recipient will bother to open the envelope and read the contents, rather than simply throwing the envelope into the waste basket. It is not sufficient that a proposed solution to this problem simply have an unsealed flap on one edge; this is because in conventional thought, an unsealed flap would extend completely along the edge, to the end, that unless it were perforated, it would resist opening to an undesirable extent.

Nor is it sufficient that such an unsealed flap might be a conventional flap substantially completely overlapped by one of the rectangular panels of the envelope, because it would not be possible to hold such a flap out of the way at times when it is desired to insert contents into the envelope in an automatic envelope-stuffing machine. This is because such machines hold the proper panel away from the other panel by gripping the upper panel with suction cups which are then moved upwardly to hold the two panels apart from the insertion of the contents, and because if the upper panel were of a conventional construction in the manner of its overlapping of the flap which is to be overcome to make possible the withdrawal of contents, then it would be impossible to apply suction cups in the standard and conventional way for holding the flap and its overlapping panel away from the opposite panel because the conventional overlapping panel would so completely overlap the flap that it would be impossible to reach the flap with a suction cup.

It is impossible to make use of the conventional flap in such an automatic machine because the suction cup lifting of the overlapping panel to spread the panels apart for stuffing would not at the same time lift the flap with the overlapping panel because they would not be connected, and because a serious problem then develops in the mechanical insertion of enclosures because only the back panel of the envelope would be lifted and the loose side flap would not be lifted, since it is not attached to the back panel, and then the unlifted flap would be struck by the contents as they are forced into the envelope which would wrinkle and tear the flap and jam and destroy the envelope.

No way has been found in the prior art to make the perforated tab easier to tear at the perforation in order to remove the contents with less difficulty. It is my understanding that it has not been possible to make the perforated tab type of prior art envelope in such a way as to be easier to open by means of weakening the tab still further at the perforations because of mechanical limitations of the roller perforators, the possible sizes of their teeth and the amount of penetration.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

An easily openable envelope having a closeable insert opening on one edge and having on another edge an unsealed withdrawal opening partially closed by a tab attached to one panel of the envelope, the tab having a portion disposed between the front and back panels of the envelope, the tab being unsealed or not excessively sealed to the other panel whereby it is easy to withdraw the contents past the tab since the tab need

not be torn asunder but need only be unfolded, the other panel having an opening means or notch exposing a portion of the tab so that suction in a suction cup element of an insertion-machine can pull the tab away from the first panel for insertion of contents without destruction of tab, envelope or contents.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side elevation of the backside of the envelope of this invention shown with its flap closed in full line and opened in dotted lines. Parts of the envelope are broken away to show other parts therebeneath, dotted lines indicate positions of the top of a back panel, of a sealed end flap, and of an unsealed tab, the position of a portion of the contents of the envelope is shown in dotted lines in a position in which such contents would be visible through finger notches.

FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the backside of the envelope of FIG. 1, but shown with its closure flap in open position and with its back panel and tab spaced an exaggerated distance from its forward panel for purposes of illustration.

FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the envelope with parts as shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a side elevation of the backside of the envelope of this invention shown with its closure flap open, but shown with its tab and back panel in a position for holding contents, dotted circles indicating the positions which suction cup elements of a content insertion machine would be in during a lifting of the back panel and tab away from the forward panel for making an open pocket into which to insert contents.

FIG. 5 is a top plan view of the envelope as shown in FIG. 1 with suction cup elements being shown in dotted lines.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The easily openable envelope of this invention has generally elongated rectangular panels 2 and 3 overlying each other and integrally connected along one of the longer edges thereof by a fold 4 which constitutes the bottom edge of the envelope.

One of the shorter edges at one end of the panels, for example, the panel 3, has a side flap 5 that is preferably folded inwardly on a fold 6 to be positioned between the panels.

The flap 5 is provided on the outer face thereof with adhesive 7 that makes sealing contact with, for example, the panel 2 to close that end of the envelope pocket 8.

The envelope has its other end 9 provided with a small tab 10 which extends from the panel 3. The tab 10 of the present envelope is near the upper corner thereof and is folded inwardly between the panels 2 and 3 by means of a fold 11.

The end 9 of the envelope is, therefore, open between the bottom fold 4 and the adjacent side edge 13 of the tab 10, to constitute the major portion of a removal opening 14 for the envelope when the tab 10 is unfolded, as later to be described.

To facilitate removal of the contents of the envelope from the opening 14, the corresponding end edges of the panels 2 and 3 are each provided, intermediate the bottom fold 4 and the tab 10, with registering finger notches 15 and 16.

The panel 2 has an edge 17 disposed opposite the bottom fold 4, the edge 17 being normally unconnected with respect to the panel 3, to provide an insert opening 18 coextensive with the width of the envelope, and through which the enclosure is inserted initially into the envelope, as later described. Extending along the insert opening 18 and integral with the panel 3 is an extension providing a closure flap 19, adapted to be folded as indicated at 20, in FIG. 2 on a score 21, seen in FIGS. 2 and 4.

In the illustrated instance the closure flap 19 has a stripe 22 of adhesive, as seen in FIGS. 2 and 4, by which it is sealed to the panel 2 upon moistening thereof. As an alternative the closure flap 19 and panel 2 may be provided with pressure sealing gum, to provide a pressure seal, if desired. With a pressure sealing gum, no moisture is required.

The upper edge 17 of the panel 2 terminates short of the score 21 to provide a larger insert opening 18, but the panel is of a height to overlay a substantial part of the tab 10 so as to tend to hold the tab 10 into the folded position shown in FIGS. 1 and 4 to prevent the contents of the envelope from accidentally coming out during mail handling by pushing aside and unfolding the tab 10 at times when this is unwanted.

The upper edge 24 of the side flap 5 and the upper edge 24 a of the portion of the tab 10 which is closest to the fold 11, both extend above the edge 17 of the panel and preferably up to the score 21.

The ends of the insert opening 18 are definitely defined by the folds 6 and 11 of the side flap 5 and tab 10, respectively, so that the folds provide guides to guide an enclosure into the envelope while providing an insert opening of large size.

It is important to observe that the adhesive 22 on the closure flap 19 is so disposed that it cannot contact the tab 10 whereby it cannot prevent the tab 10 from being easily pushed aside as contents of the envelope are removed.

The enclosure or contents of the envelope are seen in FIGS. 1 and 4 in dotted lines at 150 and are visible through the finger notches 14 and 16. The contents are available to be gripped through the finger notches 14 and 16. When an addressee receives the envelope, the exposed portion of the enclosure 150 at the notches 15 and 16 is quickly noticed. As the addressee pulls on the contents the tab 10 will unfold and move out of the way easily since no force need by applied for the tearing or destruction or severing of the tab 10.

This ease of pulling out the enclosure 150 from the envelope is very important because many of the addressees consider the contents to be junk mail in the first place and they are very much inclined to throw it in the waste basket without opening it, or with the risk that even minor difficulty in pulling the contents out might cause them to throw the contents in the waste basket unopened.

The enclosure 150 can be replaced in the envelope to use it as a filing jacket by simply tucking the tab 10 back in to its original position.

Referring now to FIGS. 4 and 5 it will be seen that suction cup elements illustrated diagrammatically in dotted lines at 100 can engage respectively an upper portion of the back panel 2 and can engage the tab 10 without interference from the back panel 2 by engaging the tab 10 through an opening means or notch 200 in the back panel 2, the latter notch being disposed along

side that portion of the tab **10** which is closest to the fold **11.**

In an automatic content insertion machine, not shown, suction cup elements of the type shown at **100** are common. They operate by engaging the back panel of an envelope and pulling it away from the forward panel to open the envelope for the insertion of contents through the insert opening **18,** but they would not operate with the tab of this invention without the provision of a suitable opening means or notch as shown at **200** to permit a suction cup to engage with the flap itself.

It is important to observe that the tab **10** is sufficiently flexible and the contacting faces of the tab **10** and of the panel **2** are at least substantially unattached so that the withdrawal of the enclosure **150** of the envelope through the withdrawal opening can be done by an operator without a rupturing of the tab **10** into two parts because the tab **10** will unfold as an abutting edge of the enclosure **150** presses against the tab during the withdrawal.

From the foregoing it will be clear that I have provided an easily openable mailing envelope which can be held open by the suction cups of a content insertion machine so that insertion can be accomplished without damage to the envelope or contents.

I claim:

1. An easily openable envelope for an enclosure, said envelope including generally rectangular panels overlying each other and interconnected along two adjacent edges of said panels to close two adjacent sides of said envelope to provide a pocket provided between said panels, one of the other two remaining edges of said envelope having between said panels a closeable insert opening through which an enclosure can be placed in said pocket, the other one of the remaining edges of said envelope having between its panels a withdrawal opening from which said enclosure can be subsequently withdrawn, a tab extending from a side edge portion of one panel across said withdrawal opening for holding contents in said envelope, said tab having a fold extending across the closing a portion of the withdrawal opening and positioning a portion of said tab in face-to-face contact with the inside of the other panel, said fold and the side edges of both panels being substantially in alignment, said tab being sufficiently flexible and the contacting faces of said tab and of said other panel being at least substantially unattached so that the withdrawal of said enclosure of said envelope through said withdrawal opening can be done by an operator without a rupturing of said tab into two part because said tab will unfold as an abutting edge of said enclosure presses against said tab during said withdrawal, a closure flap integral with one of said panels at the closeable insert opening for folding over the enclosure to engage the other of said panels, the remainder of said withdrawal opening being open so an operator can grasp said contents therethrough, said other panel having a suction element receiving means disposed opposite and exposing a lapping portion of said tab, said suction element receiving means being of substantial size for permitting an annular suction element of a content insertion machine to engage said tab on the same side of said envelope as said other panel for pulling said tab away from said one panel by suction so as to permit said contents to be placed in said envelope through said insert opening without excessive damage to said tab and envelope, said tab extending across less than the majority of the length of the adjacent side edge of said envelope.

2. The envelope of claim **1** further comprising aligned access openings disposed in the side edges of the panels adjacent the tab fold for gripping the enclosure and pulling the said abutting edge of the enclosure into contact with the fold of the tab to fully open the withdrawal opening for removal of the enclosure from the pocket.

3. The envelope as provided in claim **2** wherein said tab is disposed adjacent to said closure flap.

4. The envelope as provided in claim **1** wherein said tab is disposed adjacent to said closure flap.

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