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MAILER FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM OR OTHER PRODUCTS

Filed May 22, 1967

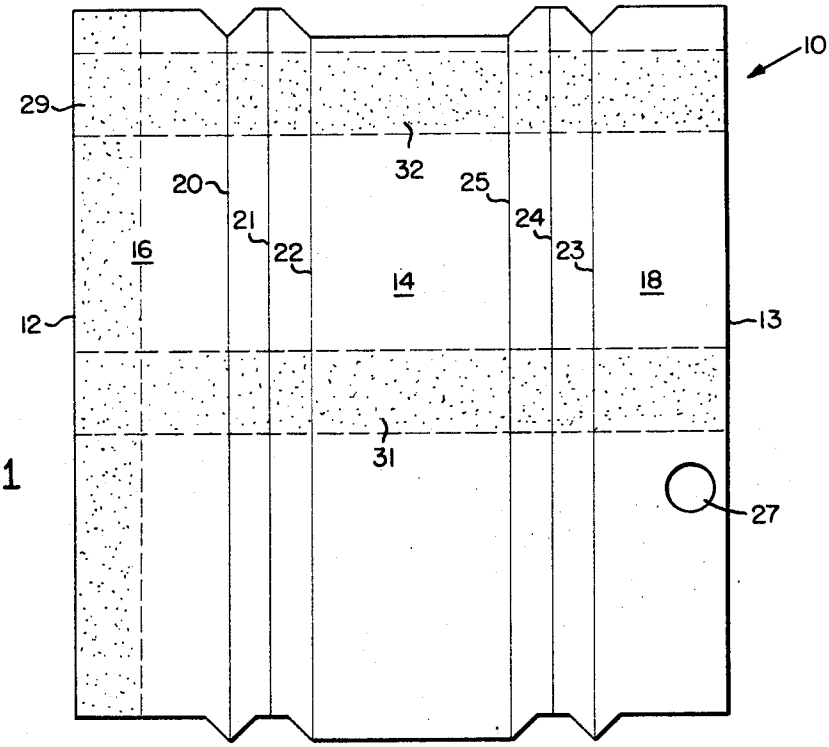


FIG. 1

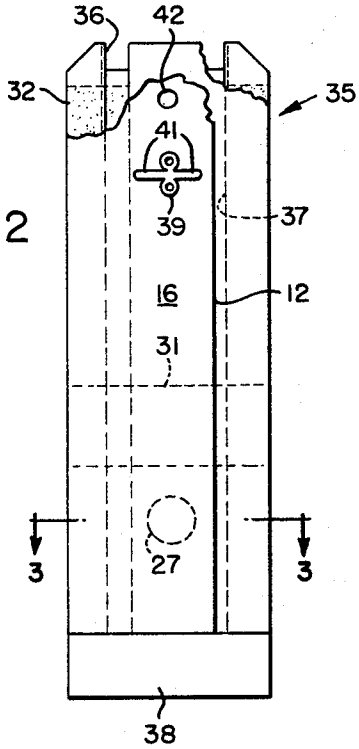


FIG. 2

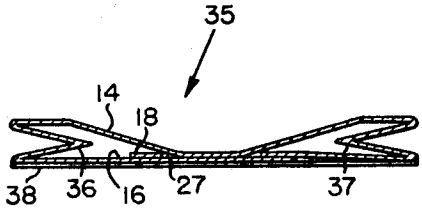


FIG. 3

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MAILER FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC FILM OR OTHER PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A mailer formed by folding two side flaps over a central panel. One flap has a hole in it. The second flap is folded over this and adhered to the central panel through said hole, sealing off the lower section, providing a surface for the processor's address. The bottom of the mailer is folded and adhered to this lower section. The processor cuts off this lower section, forming a return mailer from the upper section, closed at its bottom by a heat-sealable band around its inside above the hole. A clasp or other means closes the mailer at its top.

This invention relates to mailers, and more particularly to a novel envelope or bag for mailing photographic film or other products to a processor, and for return of the processed film, prints or other products to the customer, or original sender.

Various type mailers have heretofore been used for mailing products, such as photographic film and the like, to processors and for return of the processed products, for example developed film and/or prints, to the sender. One such style mailer comprises an envelope or bag made of cloth with an attached tag for the addresses.

Another mailer of this type has been made of paper completely coated inside with a layer of heat-sealable material such as polyethylene. When the mailer is manufactured, approximately one third thereof is heat-sealed together to form a generally rigid portion on the outside of which a blank space is provided for the address of the processor. When the mailer is used in conjunction with the processing of exposed film, the purchaser inserts his or her address on the outside of the mailer in the portion provided therefor, and seals the upper end of the mailer with a conventional means such as a clip or adhesive. The exposed film is then mailed or delivered to the processing station where the previously-sealed lower end of the mailer, which contains the address of the processing station, is cut away to permit removal of the contents without disturbing the upper end of the mailer. After the film has been developed, it and/or the prints are inserted into the now-shortened mailer, which is heat sealed to reseal it at its new bottom. The shortened, resealed mailer is then mailed or delivered back to the customer or original sender.

A cloth mailer is costly; and it has been an expensive proposition to coat the entire inside of a paper mailer with a heat-sealable material. Moreover, with the latter type mailer, it has been necessary to subject the mailer to two heat sealing operations, the first of which is necessary to seal together the confronting inside surfaces of the lower end of the mailer prior to its being sold, and the second of which takes place after the exposed film is developed and replaced in the shortened mailer.

It is an object of this invention to provide an improved mailer of the type described, which is made of paper, and which is substantially less expensive to manufacture than prior such mailers.

Another object of this invention is to provide an improved mailer of this type, which will obviate performing thereon two differnt heat-sealing operations.

Other objects of the invention will be apparent hereinafter from the specification and from recital of the appended claims, particularly when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing.

Summary of the invention

The novel mailer illustrated herein is made from an elongate, generally rectangular blank or tube of paper which has one or more parallel fold lines that divide the blank into three panels—i.e., a center panel bounded by two side panels. On its inside one of the side panels is coated near its free marginal edge with a narrow band of adhesive. The other side panel has a hole therethrough located in the lower portion of this panel. On its inside the blank is coated with a narrow band of heat-sealable material, which extends transversely across the blank just above the hole in said other side panel.

In use, the side panels are folded in overlapping relation over the center panel, with the adhesive coated margin of the first-named side panel positioned over and in registry with the hole in the second-named side panel to seal the side panels to one another, and to the central panel at a point located beneath the strip of heat-sealable material, and slightly above the lower end of the mailer. This forms a relatively rigid surface in the lower section of the mailer for writing thereon the address of the processor. The lower section of the mailer may be closed in any suitable manner as by folding the bottom thereof over and gluing it to its overlapping side and central panels.

When the exposed film or other product in the mailer arrives at the processing station, the lower section of the mailer is cut away just beneath the strip of heat-sealable material, which thereafter is heated to seal the lower end of the now-shortened mailer; and the developed film, prints, or other products are mailed in the shortened mailer back to the customer or original sender.

In the drawing:

FIG. 1 illustrates a paper blank, adapted to be folded to form a mailer in accordance with one embodiment of this invention;

FIG. 2 is a rear elevational view of a mailer made from this blank; and

FIG. 3 is an enlarged sectional view taken along the line 3—3 in FIG. 2 looking in the direction of the arrows.

Referring now to the drawing by numerals of reference, **10** denotes an elongate, generally rectangular paper blank having opposed, parallel side edges **12** and **13**, and divided into a central panel **14**, and two side panels **16** and **18**. The panels **14** and **16** are separated by three, relatively closely spaced, longitudinally extending fold lines **20**, **21** and **22**, parallel to the side edge **12** and forming an expansible bellows portion. Panel **14** is separated at its opposite side from the panel **18** by a plurality of similar fold lines **23**, **24** and **25**, which extend longitudinally of the blank parallel to the side edge **13** and form an expansible bellows portion at the opposite side of the central panel.

Spaced above its lower edge, the panel **18** has therethrough a circular hole **27**. The other side panel **16** is coated on its inside along its marginal edge with a strip **29** of adhesive. On its inside, also, the blank **10** is coated with a narrow transverse band **31** of heat-sealable material, which extends completely across the blank just above the hole **27**. A second transverse band **32** of heat-sealable material may also be coated on the inside of the blank adjacnt the upper end thereof.

The mailer **35** is formed by folding the side panel **18** about its fold lines **23**, **24** and **25** over the central panel **14**, and then folding panel **16** about its fold lines **20**, **21**

and 22 into overlapping relation with the already folded panel 18, so that a portion of the adhesive strip 29 on panel 16 overlies, and is disposed in registry with, the hole 27 in the panel 18. Panel 16 is then secured to the panel 18 by adhesive strip 29, with the portion of this adhesive strip, that registers with the hole 27, engaging the central panel 14 through the hole 27 so that the side panels are secured to the central panel as illustrated in FIG. 3. The bottom of the mailer 35 is sealed by folding the lower end 38 of blank 10 upwardly over its side panels beneath the hole 27, and by adhering this portion 38 in place.

A conventional metal clip or clasp 39 of the type having opposed, bendable arms 41, is then secured to overlapping portions of the panels 16 and 18, adjacent the upper ends thereof. The projections 41 on the clasp 39 are adapted to cooperate in conventional manner with a hole 42 formed through the registering portions of the three panels 14, 16 and 18 above the clasp 39 to close the upper end of the mailer, when the upper end thereof is folded over, as will be apparent to one skilled in the art.

Below the band 31, on the outside of the lower portion of the central panel, space is provided for the address of the processor to whom the exposed film or other product is to be mailed or delivered. Above the band 31 on the outside of panel 16, space is provided for the address of the customer or original sender to whom the developed film, prints, or other products are to be returned.

In use, an empty mailer 35, and a product such as film or the like, which must be processed after use, may be inserted by the manufacturer in the same carton; or the mailer may be sold or otherwise distributed independently of the product. When a product, such as roll of exposed film, is ready to be developed, or otherwise processed, it is placed in the top section of the mailer, which is then closed in a conventional manner by clasp 39. The film is thus lodged beneath the closed, upper end of the mailer 35, and the point where the panels 14 and 16 are secured to one another through the opening 27. The sender then places the address of the processor on the mailer, and his or her return address, and mails or otherwise delivers it to the processor.

When it arrives the processor cuts off the lower end of the mailer just above the hole 27, and adjacent the lower edge of the band 31, so that the film or other product may drop out of the mailer. This also removed, of course, the portion carrying the address of the processor. After the film or other product has been processed, it is inserted into the now-shortened mailer, the ends thereof are closed by heating the band 31, and, if desired, the band 32, or by refolding the mailer at its top and closing it there with clasp 39. The developed film or other product is now mailed or otherwise returned to the customer or original sender whose address is on the exterior of the panel 16 above the band 31.

From the foregoing it will be apparent that the novel mailer disclosed herein is not only extremely simple to manufacture, but it is also far more economical than prior paper mailers. Instead of coating the entire interior of the mailer with a heat-sealable material, mailer 35 utilizes only a single heat-sealable band 31 for sealing the lower end of the shortened mailer. Moreover, by employing conventional adhesive 29 for sealing the panels 16 and 18 to one another, and for sealing side flap 16 to panel 14 at hole 27, one of the two heat sealing steps heretofore necessary has been eliminated, but the relatively rigid writing surface at the lower end of the mailer is nevertheless retained.

With the improved construction of this invention, it will be understood that a band or bands of pressure sensitive adhesive may be used, if desired, instead of one or both heat-sealable bands. Moreover, although the mailer 35 has been described as being manufactured from a flat, foldable blank, it will be apparent that it may be made also from a tubular blank having on its inside surface the bands 31 and 32, and having diametrally opposite sides thereof secured together as at 27 beneath band 31.

While the invention has been described in connection with a specific embodiment thereof, then it will be understood that it is capable of further modification, and this application is intended to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which the invention pertains and as may be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth, and as fall within the scope of the invention or the limits of the appended claims.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim is:

1. A blank for use in manufacturing a two-way mailer, comprising:

an elongate sheet having a plurality of spaced, parallel, longitudinally extending fold lines which divide said sheet into a central panel and two side panels and form expansible bellows portions at opposite sides of said central panel, said side panels being foldable about two of said lines into overlapping relation, with one of said side panels disposed over the other side panel and both of said side panels overlying said central panel,

said sheet having on one face a first strip of adhesive, which extends along the free longitudinal marginal edge of said one side panel, and a second strip of adhesive which extends across said one face transversely of said side panels and said central panel,

said other side panel having a hole therethrough disposed above the lower end of said sheet but below said second strip and disposed in spaced relation to the free longitudinal side edge of said other side panel to lie beneath said one panel and to register with said first strip of adhesive, when said one panel is folded over said other panel, thereby to secure said one panel to said central panel and over said other panel through said hole.

2. A blank for use in manufacturing a two-way mailer, comprising:

an elongate sheet having a plurality of spaced, parallel, longitudinally extending fold lines which divide said sheet into a central panel and two side panels, that are foldable about said lines into overlapping relation, one over the other, over said central panel,

said sheet having on one face a first strip of adhesive, which extends along the free longitudinal marginal edge of one side panel, and a second strip of adhesive which extends across said one face transversely of said side panels,

the other side panel having a hole therethrough disposed above the lower end of said sheet but below said second strip to register with said first strip of adhesive, when said one panel is folded over said other panel, thereby to secure said one panel to said central panel and over said other panel,

said second strip being heat sealable, and

said sheet having a third strip of adhesive on said one face parallel to said second strip, and adjacent the upper end of said sheet.

3. A two-way mailer comprising:

an elongate central panel and two elongate side flaps folded over said central panel and over one another, and

means for closing the upper and the lower ends of said mailer,

the inner of said side flaps having a hole therethrough and the outer side flap having adhesive on its inside face disposed to seal said outer flap to said central panel through said hole, to form a lower severable section of said mailer, and

said mailer having a transverse band of sealable material on the insides of said flaps and panel, and posi-

tioned slightly above said hole, whereby the upper section of said mailer may be sealed at its bottom, after severance of the lower section of said mailer, to form a new, shortened mailer with a sealed bottom.

4. A two-way mailer comprising:

an elongate central panel and two elongate side flaps folded over said central panel and over one another, and

means for closing the upper and the lower ends of said mailer,

the inner of said side flaps having a hole therethrough and the outer side flap having adhesive on its inside face disposed to seal said outer flap to said central panel through said hole, to form a lower severable section of said mailer, and

said mailer having a transverse band of sealable material on the insides of said flaps and panel, and positioned slightly above said hole, whereby the upper section of said mailer may be sealed at its bottom, after severance of the lower section of said mailer, to form a new, shortened mailer with a sealed bottom, and

having a second transverse band of heat-sealable material on the inside of said flaps and panel above the first-named band, and below the upper end of the mailer.

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