



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
11/848,968	08/31/2007	Henson C. Ong	G-140	4714
919	7590	02/25/2013	EXAMINER	
PITNEY BOWES INC. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & PROCUREMENT LAW DEPT. 37 EXECUTIVE DRIVE MSC 01-152 DANBURY, CT 06810			GOKHALE, PRASAD V	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3653	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			02/25/2013	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

iptl@pb.com

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Ex parte HENSON C. ONG

Appeal 2011-000204
Application 11/848,968
Technology Center 3600

Before LINDA E. HORNER, JOHN C. KERINS, and
BART A. GERSTENBLITH, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

HORNER, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION ON APPEAL

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Henson C. Ong (Appellant) seeks our review under 35 U.S.C. § 134 of the Examiner's decision rejecting claims 1-6. Claims 7-21 have been withdrawn from consideration. We have jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. § 6(b).

We AFFIRM.

THE INVENTION

Appellant's invention relates to "an apparatus for providing equal access to dual face surfaces of a sheet/mailpiece for printing/scanning on each side thereof." Spec., para. [0001]. Claim 1, reproduced below, is the sole independent claim and is representative of the subject matter on appeal.

1. A sheet handling apparatus for conveying sheet material along a feed path, comprising,

first and second conveyor modules, each module having conveyor surfaces for driving the sheet material along the feed path, the conveyor surfaces being arranged such that an end portion of one conveyor surface opposes the other conveyor surface along a face-to-face interface,

a means for developing a pressure differential across the conveyor surfaces of the first and second conveyor modules to hold the sheet material on the conveyor surfaces and transfer the sheet material across the modules during transport; and

a processor operative to independently control the pressure differential means such that sheet material is held against the conveyor surfaces by a negative pressure differential developed across the conveyor surface during transport, and transferred from one conveyor surface to the other by controlling the pressure differential of both modules when the sheet material is interposed between the face-to-face interface.

THE EVIDENCE

The Examiner relies upon the following evidence:

Gumm	US 4,087,177	May 2, 1978
Smith	US 5,074,547	Dec. 24, 1991
Becker	US 6,581,517 B1	Jun. 24, 2003
Mayerberg	US 7,014,187 B2	Mar. 21, 2006

THE REJECTIONS

Appellant seeks review of the following rejections:

1. Claims 1, 3, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Becker;
2. Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Becker and Smith;
3. Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Becker and Mayerberg; and
4. Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Becker and Gumm.

CLAIM GROUPING

Appellant argues the claims subject to the first ground of rejection (claims 1, 3, and 5) as a group. Br. 10-12. We select claim 1 as representative, and claims 3 and 5 stand or fall with claim 1. *See* 37 C.F.R. § 41.37(c)(1)(vii) (2011). Appellant relies solely on the arguments presented for reversing the rejection of claim 1 as the basis for reversing the remaining grounds of rejection of dependent claims 2, 4, and 6 based on Becker in view of one of Smith, Mayerberg, and Gumm. Br. 12-13. As such, the outcome of this appeal turns on our analysis of the first ground of rejection as applied to claim 1.

ANALYSIS

With regard to claim 1, the Examiner found that Becker discloses a first conveyor module (printing cylinder 1) having a suction/blast air source and a second conveyor module (reversing drum 14) having a suction gripper,

Appeal 2011-000204
Application 11/848,968

and teaches that suction “may be applied to drum 14 and blast air may be applied to drum 1 (surface 18) such as to aid the gripper in detaching the sheet from drum 1 (surface 18).” Ans. 7-8 (citing Becker, col. 6, ll. 12-14 and col. 8, l. 64 – col. 9, l. 10). The Examiner also determined:

it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant’s invention to include a means for developing a pressure differential [to transfer the sheet material across the modules during transport] as there is already suction disclosed on [reversing drum] 14, for the purpose of holding a sheet.

Ans. 4.

Appellant argues that Becker “does not disclose that a pressure differential, or source of suction/blast air, is used by, or for, the second conveyor (14) to release or transfer a sheet (16) from the print-machine cylinder (1) to the second conveyor (14).” Br. 11. In particular, Appellant contends that “[t]he only reference to the use of suction/blast air to produce a pressure differential is in connection with the print-machine cylinder (1)” and “the only device disclosed to transfer a sheet (16) from the print machine cylinder (1) to the reversing or turning drum (14) is a non-illustrated gripper device” *Id.*

We disagree with Appellant’s assertion that Becker does not disclose using suction air to produce a pressure differential in connection with the reversing drum 14. Indeed, Becker discloses that the reversing drum 14 has “an otherwise unidentified suction gripper and an accepting or take-over gripper.” Becker, col. 6, ll. 11-14. We understand the suction gripper on Becker’s reversing drum 14 to be used to grip the sheet via application of a

Appeal 2011-000204
Application 11/848,968

negative pressure differential (i.e., suction). We find the Examiner's determination (Ans. 7-8) that Becker discloses a suction gripper on the reversing drum that develops a pressure differential to hold the sheet material on the conveyor surface and transfer the sheet material across the modules during transport to be reasonable in light of the description in col. 8, line 64 – col. 9, line 10 of Becker. Because Appellant's arguments fail to acknowledge that Becker's reversing drum 14 includes a suction gripper, Appellant's arguments fail to persuasively rebut this finding by the Examiner.

Appellant also argues that Becker “does not teach a pair of oppose[d] conveyor modules which include a pressure differential means across the conveyor surfaces of the first and second conveyor modules to (i) hold the sheet material on the conveyor surfaces during transport and (ii) transfer the sheet material across the modules” and argues that because Becker teaches use of a mechanical gripper for removing sheets from the cylinder, it “teaches away” from the use of pneumatic conveyance modules and method of control to transfer sheet material from one module to another. Br. 11-12. These arguments are premised on the same unfounded position that the only reference to the use of suction/blast air to produce a pressure differential is in connection with cylinder 1 and that Becker discloses only a mechanical gripper device for use with drum 14. For the reasons provided *supra*, we disagree with Appellant's reading of Becker. As such, Appellant fails to persuasively rebut the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims

Appeal 2011-000204
Application 11/848,968

3 and 5 fall with claim. Appellant likewise fails to persuasively rebut the rejections of claims 2, 4, and 6 for the same reasons.

DECISION

We **AFFIRM** the decision of the Examiner to reject claims 1-6.

No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this appeal may be extended under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a). *See* 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(1)(iv).

AFFIRMED

hh