

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A transfer unit transferring a wafer from or to a cassette, said transfer unit comprising:

- a holding portion holding said wafer under suction and a driving portion moving said holding portion, said holding portion including:
 - a body;
 - a plurality of suction openings formed on an upper surface of said body so as to be spaced from each other;
 - a vacuum transmitting passage connected to a vacuum source for transmitting a vacuum from said vacuum source to said suction openings;
 - a plurality of suction pads provided in at least some of said suction openings, each suction pad being formed of an elastic material, wherein each suction pad includes a through hole therein that is configured and arranged for transmitting the vacuum from the vacuum transmitting passage to the wafer; and
 - a plurality of seal members provided in at least some of said suction openings, wherein each seal member is configured and arranged for preventing the vacuum from being transmitted, via the associated suction opening, between the vacuum transmitting passage and the wafer;
- wherein said suction openings are spaced from each other in a radial direction of said wafer, and
- said suction pads are selectively provided at any desired ones of said suction openings and said seal members are provided in the remainder of said suction openings.

2. The transfer unit according to claim 1, wherein:

said body comprises a base portion and another portion attached to said base portion; and said suction openings comprise:

- a first group of suction openings formed at a first radial distance from a center of said another portion of said body; and
- a second group of suction openings formed at a second radial distance from the center of said another portion of said body, wherein said second radial distance is different from said first radial distance, and

each of said suction openings in said first group includes one of said seal members therein,
and

each of said suction openings in said second group includes either one of said seal members therein or one of said suction pads therein.

3. The transfer unit according to claim 2, wherein half of said suction openings in said second group include one of said seal members therein and the other half of said suction openings in said second group include one of said suction pads therein.

4. The transfer unit according to claim 1, wherein said body comprises a base portion and a plurality of branch portions radially extending from a front end of the base portion.

5. The transfer unit according to claim 4, said suction openings comprise:
a first group of suction openings formed at a first radial distance from a center of an intersection of said branch portions; and
a second group of suction openings formed at a second radial distance from the center of the intersection of said branch portions, wherein said second radial distance is different from said first radial distance, and
wherein each of said suction openings in said first group includes one of said seal members therein, and
wherein each of said suction openings in said second group includes either one of said seal members therein or one of said suction pads therein.

6. The transfer unit according to claim 5, wherein half of said suction openings in said second group include one of said seal members therein and the other half of said suction openings in said second group include one of said suction pads therein.

7. The transfer unit according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of said suction openings are configured and arranged such that said suction pads and said seal members can be provided within said suction openings in a first arrangement for wafers of a first diameter and that said suction pads and said seal members can be provided within said suction openings in a second arrangement for wafers of a second diameter, wherein said first arrangement is different from said second arrangement and said first diameter is different from said second diameter.