Disassembly of a Single Use Camera

Single use cameras are mostly a thing of the past, however they are still produced and used today. The very basic and recyclable design of the camera makes them easy to use but also easy to reuse multiple times through recycling. The camera consists of basic systems and subsystems that make it work. These consist of the lens, shutter, film, film transport, viewfinder, flash, AA energy cell, outer and inner housings, and the packaging. Each of these systems and subsystems work together to perform a specific function for the camera.

The parts of the camera are organized in the most efficient and ideal way possible in order to keep the camera size minimized and still keep it functional. The assembly team paid close attention to keeping certain parts as far apart, or divided, as possible as to eliminate issues that could occur. For instance, they were sure to keep the energy cell and flash charge separated from the film so that the heat energy would not damage the sensitive film in any way. The camera is set up so that you wind the mechanism from the outside to turn the film to an unused part for the new image to be processed clearly. The button on the top to take picture works with the winding system because it only triggers the shutter mechanism to open when the camera has a new strip on film behind the shutter opening. When the shutter opens it allows the light in the point of view to travel inside the camera and projects its image onto the film strip. The flash has a charge button on the front that when held down connects the power source to the flash mechanism in order to charge the flash for the picture.

The materials used for the parts of the camera are generally recyclable so that they can be used over and over again with little wear. The packaging that the camera comes in is not really reusable other than the cardboard shell to protect it from minor damages that could occur in transport. The outer housing of the camera is made of polystyrene, the hard and durable plastic that can be either reused as is when brought back to the factory, or can be repurposed for other materials. The inner housing of the camera consists of a hard plastic base like that of the outer housing, but also has various gears, mechanisms, the lens, and a circuit board. These things can all be reused and recycled as long as they are not too severely damaged when they are brought back. The film inside the camera, however, is more of a one time use product that is used, developed, but never used again. The batteries that come back are often times tested for quality left, and then reused or donated to charities or countries in need. The assembly and disassembly procedures of the camera are fairly simple. The used
parts and materials are mostly snap-to-fit or easily separable in order to make the reuse of the materials easier for the company.

In the world of recycling Kodak itself has helped to reach the milestone of recycling 1.5 billion single use cameras. They started reclaiming the cameras for reusing and recycling with the photofinishing outlets. Almost every part of the Kodak single use cameras is either reusable or recyclable and with the 1.5 billion that have been reclaimed they have kept huge amounts of waste out of landfills. An interesting fact about this is that of the 1.5 billion that have been reclaimed nearly 1 billion of them are of the Kodak brand. Single use cameras are also have a higher rate of recycling than many other products including cell phones, TVs / computers, plastic bottles, office paper, and other major appliances. Internal parts that are in good condition are put into new Single Use Cameras, while the rest of the camera, such as the outer shell is reground and recycled into other usable parts (KODAK). Today most Single Use Cameras are actually made from recycled or reused parts that have gone through the process of being taken apart and refurbished, yet we can hardly tell.

Work Cited:

Energy Cell & Electronic Flash
Film Transport & Counter Mechanism
Viewfinder & Shutter Mechanism
Outer & Inner Housing and Internal Frame
Packaging