



# **LETTER WRITING**

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# LETTERS - VERY IMPORTANT

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- \* External communication –reflection of your skills and your company
- \* Makes company legally bound

# This chapter

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- \* Letter components
- \* Types of letter – criteria to write them
- \* Process

# Letter components

## Essential components

- **Margin** - decide top margin as per letter head - leave 1" margin on all sides
- **Writer's address** – if not using letter head – full details - Plot no., Street address, city, pin code, state name – if international then **country** – if through company then **co. Name**.
- **Date** – two lines below writer's address
  - Decide the alignment – Indian way – right - OR US way left
  - Choose a date format – e.g. 31 October 2011 (UK) or October 31, 2011 (US) - if international audience – spell the date

# Letter components

- **TO or inside address**
- *name and address of person* - in India – name, title of person, company name, address – others if title then no name and vice versa
- **Salutation**
  - **Dear Sir/Madam** – when unsure – it is avoided as name should be sought
  - **Dear Vinod** - only when receiver of letter comfortable

- **Dear Mrs. Mehta**
- **Dear Mrs. Vashali Gokhale** – can be avoided
- **Dear Sirs**
- **Dear all** – multiple receivers – used in emails/notices
- **Hi Ashok, (very informal)**
- **Ashok (very informal)**
- **To-Whom-so-ever-it-may-concern/ To Whom It May Concern** – can be used as a last resort - multiple receivers

### ***Punctuation after salutation***

Comma after salutation – UK or informal / personal correspondence

Colon – US business format

Or Open punctuation – no colon or comma

**Subject line – After salutation – UK – Before Salutation – USA – I follow USA – my logic?**

- \* **Subject line** – although treated as optional – it should be mandatory – should be most effective – is gist of the letter.

Subject line should include

**Focus** – what (action)

**Topic** – what about what/who/whom

- **Don't** - One word subject line – e.g. – **Comptrollers**
- **Do** - **Salary hike for Comptrollers**
- Subject should have - **focus + topic**
  - **e.g. Salary increase for staff** – Focus – **salary increase**, Topic – **Comptrollers**.
  - **Comparative quarterly sales**
    - Focus -?
    - Topic - ?

# Examples

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- \* Termination of comptrollers
- \* Hiring procedures of comptrollers
- \* Reconsideration of grant
- \* Training seminar for staff
- \* Submission of research report by Dept of....

- \* However - avoid bad news in subject line
- \* E.g.
  - \* *Cut in travel and expenditure allowance*
  - \* Correction – *Changes in travel and expenditure allowance*
  - \* **Why?**

- **Letter body** – 2 spaces below salutation – introductory para – discussion para – concluding para. – Single space in paras- double space between paras
- **Complementary close** – Thanking you –
- *Yours truly, sincerely* – old fashioned – but still used
- *cordially, warm regards, Best, best regards,*  
*Thanks and regards, Cheers!*
- **Signed name**
- **Type name**
- **Page number** – if more than one page

# Optional Letter Components

- **Reference line** – if specific order/quotation no., date, letter no.
- **Attention line** – skip if recipient name in inside address
- **Enclosure notation** – E.g. *Enclosure: Copy of status report*, or *Encl: Location?*
- **Copy notation:** Copy to someone else **CC** (**formally carbon copy, courtesy copy, complementary copy**) **PC**, – sequence ??

- **Mailing Notation:** by courier, by reg. post, by hand -top most (center) - **why?**
- **Addressee notation:** PERSONAL, CONFIDENTIAL, PLEASE FORWARD, THROUGH PROPER CHANNEL
- **Writer's/typist's initials:** If the typist is different - initials in the end - **why?**

# Common Formats - Block Layout

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Writer's address (IF LETTERHEAD - CENTER)

Date (spelt)

Mailing notation (optional)

Addressee notation (optional)

To (Reader's name & address)

Attention line (optional)

Sub line

Ref line (optional)

Salutation

Letter body

Close

Signature

Enclosures (Optional)

CC/PS (Optional)

Typists initials (Optional)

# Modified Block Layout

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Writer's address

Date

Ref

To

Reader's name & address

Sub

Salutation

Letter body

Close

Signature

Enclosures/CC

# Modified/Simplified Block Layout

Writer's address (LETTERHEAD)

Date

Ref

To

Reader's name & address

Sub

Salutation

Letter body

Close

Signature

Enclosures/CC

# C's of Letter Writing

- Clarity – simple language
- Conciseness
- Correctness – Accuracy/Precision – No '*Some*' '*Any*'
- Courtesy and Cordiality– bad news, but nicely
- Conviction – should show that the writer means it – '*we might*', '*may be*', '*possibly*' not acceptable
- Completeness – all information

# 'You' Attitude

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- 'You will be glad to know'
- 'Thank you for your request'
- 'We regret that you did not get the information'
- 'It was a pleasure to have your company'

# Letter Formats

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- *Cover letter*
- *Enquiry letter*
- *Complaint*
- *Sales*
- *Order*
- *Follow-up*

# Cover/Transmittal Letters

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- ***When*** is a cover letter required?
- When pages of information being enclosed - questionnaires, proposal, reports, drawings, invoices, resume etc.
- **Two objectives**
  - Let's the reader know what they are getting
  - Focus attention on key points of enclosures.

# Format - introduction

## Introduction

- Why are you writing
- What are you writing for or sending with cover letter
- *e.g. This is in response to.....I am enclosing my resume for consideration for the post of ...*
- *e.g. In response to your request, I am enclosing the duly filled questionnaires from our engineers*
- *e.g. Thank you for your request for information about our specialized outpatient care equipment. Our healthcare products like stair lifts, bath lifts, and vertical wheelchair lifts can help your patients. In order to serve you better, we've enclosed a brochure including the following information:*

# Format - discussion

- Discussion
- Body of letter – **what** all is enclosed/contains – can give itemized list
  - *E.g. To help you prepare next week's report, we have enclosed the following necessary forms.*
  - *E.g. After reviewing my resume you would find that I have made numerous contributions in the field of*
- You can list the key points of interest with page numbers
  - *E.g. of special interest to you within the questionnaires are their answers to questions regarding the following:*
    - *Easement dimension.....page 2*
    - *Sewer construction dimension.....page 5*
    - *Residential ratios.....page 10*

# Format - conclusion

## Conclusion – what, when, why

**What** will happen next

**If, something in return - When**

**If, something in return - Why** is it important

*E.g. Please fill out these forms before our Wednesday arrival. Doing so will facilitate the audit, thereby allowing you and your colleagues to return to your regular work activities rapidly.*

*E.g. I am enthusiastic about exploring opportunities with your company and look forward to meeting you. I will contact you in next three days to answer any questions you have.*

# Cover letter for research proposal

- *Dear Sir*
- *I am glad to submit a research proposal 'entitled'..... in response to you call for proposal.....It has been duly filled in the format prescribed under your research proposal scheme.*
- *This 18 month study would focus on.....(objectives).....brief about methodology.....*
- *I look forward to your positive response.*
- ***AVOID 'Please acknowledge the receipt of the same'***
- *Please let me know when you receive the proposal.*
- *I look forward to receiving a positive response from you*

# Letter of Inquiry

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- **To send an enquiry** – equipment cost/ performance records, Departmental progress, courses conducted by universities etc.
- **Be precise and specific** – don't use - *any*, *some*.

# Example

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- *Dear Mr. Smith,*
- *Please send us information about the following filter pools:*
- *East lime pool*
- *West Sulphate pool*
- *East Aggregate Pool*
- *Thanking you*
- *(Jim Robinson)*

# Answer

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- *Dear Mr. Robinson:*
- *I would be happy to provide you with any information you would like. However, you need to tell me what information you require about the pools.*
- *I look forward to your response.*

# Effective LoI

## Introduction

- **Why** write - in reference to what
- **What** are you writing about – product, process, service, equipment, etc – *inquiry about what*

## Discussion

- Details of **what** you want – be specific – details of the inquiry – quantify, itemize if more points

## Conclusion

- **When** you want a response – **if** a date – give one
- **Why** is that date/month important

# Example

- Dear Ms. Liss:
- *Thank you for your sales letter regarding the Model CP95 tractor with fuel-saving devices. My company plans to purchase 30 new tractors by the end of the year. Your tractor may be what we need.*
- *Before we decide, however, we would like more information. Please send us a brochure of your CP95, along with answers to these questions:*

- 1.
- 2.

- Please send this information by 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Then my shop supervisor and I can study the material and arrange a test drive. I plan to present a proposal for purchase to our Board of Directors on 1<sup>st</sup> September. I look forward to your response*

Why and  
WHAT???

What  
do  
you  
need

what  
next  
and  
why

# Complaint letter

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- Diplomacy – politely state the problem
- Intro – use supporting info. – serial number, dates of previous complaint, invoice number, date of purchase, etc.
- Discussion – the problem in detail – itemize it
- Conclusion – what needs to be done – when – end positively.

- *On August 15, 2011 you shipped to my company 35 XYZ chips (copies of invoice no. XYZ123 are enclosed). Several of our customers have since complained that the chips have malfunctioned*
- *The following occurred after we delivered the chips to three of our customers:*
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- *These chips need to repaired. You should also send in your technicians to meet our clients for troubleshooting current problems and avoid future problems.*
- *You can reach me on 0712-25555555 from 8am-3 pm - Monday through Friday. After working with your company for eight years, I have been impressed with the way you stand behind your product. I know you will help us with these defective chips.*

# Adjustment/follow-up letter

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- Letter of response to complaints
- Three kinds of adjustment letter
- 100% yes
- 100% no
- Partial adjustment

# 100 percent 'yes'

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- Good news letter
- Introduction – come to the point – no need to delay or create buffer
- E.g. *Thank you for calling our attention to your problem. We will be happy to replace the fans*
- Discussion – what happened - why it occurred – how it will not happen again
- Conclusion – restate the good relations

# 100 percent 'no'

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- Customer is wrong
- Yet customer relations need to be maintained
- Follow pattern of bad news letter
  - Introduction – buffer
  - Discussion – explain with facts figures
  - Conclusion – end on positive note – provide alternative

# Partial adjustment

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- Partially agree and disagree
- Introduction – state the good news first
- Discussion – state what exactly happened – then state the bad news
- Conclusion – Reader partially unhappy with you – try and win back here
- E.g. *If any fans malfunction please call us immediately. We stand by our product, as you know from having been one of our satisfied customer for over a decade. I'll be happy to help in any way I can.*

# Sales letter

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- A new product – a new service
- If good funding – then advertisements in radio, TV or door-to-door sales
- However, limited finance – sales letter
- One draft – mass copies – mass mailing

# How to write

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- Arouse reader interest
- An anecdote:  
*Its late night, the service center is closed, and you have just had a blowout on Highway 35. Don't worry. Our new Tire-Right will solve your problems!*

- A question – to make the reader read for an answer
- ***How can I afford to retire? Will my insurance cover all my medical bills? You have asked yourself these questions. Our estate planning has the answers***
- A quotation – credibility of authority
- ***“Omit needless words” technical writers say. If you can’t, let us help you. Write-now, our new office communication service, can help you write your in-house newsletter – clearly and concisely***

- Data – researched information to ensure credibility
- *You are not alone. Infact, if you are at least 25 years old, you are in the majority. Today 51 percent of the students are older then 25. So why not enroll now? Our college offers the non-traditional students many benefits*

- Discussion para - develop your assertion (confident statements, based on facts)
- ***85% of the home makers contend that.....***
- ***Seven out of ten buyers said that they would...***
- ***Ten thousand retired metalworkers cannot be wrong!***

- List or testimony of satisfied customers.  
Some provide phone numbers of satisfied  
customers
- Document your credentials –
  - *In business since 1992*
  - *Each of our mechanics is ASE certified*
  - *We sold over 2 billion widgets*
  - *Over 3000 managers have benefited from  
our training services.*

- Make the readers act – conclusion section
- Give directions to business location
- Self-addressed and stamped envelope (earlier)
- A discount if respond in certain time
- Customer care number, email ID
- Use a appealing style
- Positive words
- Spacing, underlining, boldfacing
- Concise, clear
- Use urgency through words – now, today