

Unit 3

Business Writing



A Guide to Business Writing

1. THE RIGHT THING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

1.1 Introduction

Business letters and e-mails are often the main means of establishing business relations with the outside world. Therefore, it is vital that such correspondence convey a good impression. High standards in an organisation's correspondence suggest high standards in business, and a well-presented business document often leads to important business contacts.



1.2 Essential Layout of Business Letters

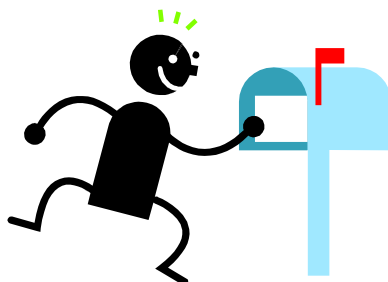
The following are the **nine essential parts** of a **typical hard copy business letter**. An example is shown overleaf.

- Writer's company/home address or letterhead
- Telephone/reference (optional)
- Date (double space after writer's address)
- Reader's address
- Salutation (double space after reader's address - include Dear Sir/Mr for men or Madam/Ms for women)
- Subject (short and relevant heading)
- Body of the letter
- Complimentary close (e.g. 'Yours sincerely')
- Writer's signature, name and job title (include 4 spaces after complimentary close and include signature between complimentary close and name)

Use a **professional-looking letterhead** and **good quality paper** when writing hard copy business letters.

Example:

	<p>The Work Place Pte Ltd 33 Nanyang Street Singapore 123456</p>	-Which company you are from and your address
	<p>Tel: (65) 123-4567 Telefax: (65) 123-4568</p>	
-File numbers	<p>Our ref: SJ/py Your ref:</p>	
	<p>10 March 2013</p>	-Date the letter was written
-Who the letter is for -The company the reader is from and the address	<p>The Managing Director South Sea Cruises 12 South Avenue Singapore 654321</p>	
	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p>	-Greet the reader
-Announce the content of the letter	<p>Inquiry Regarding Training Facilities</p>	
	<p>I am interested in obtaining details of the training facilities available on your cruise ships.</p>	
-Details of the content	<p>The Work Place regularly holds full-day and half-day training courses for the food and beverage industry. Courses are limited to groups of twenty and are workshop-based. We require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A room equipped with seminar-style furniture and able to seat twenty comfortably.- An overhead projector and screen- A laptop or MacBook- Morning and afternoon tea facilities <p>We would be grateful for details of your facilities and an indication of the cost of both full and half-day courses. Please include the price of providing lunch for your full-day course.</p> <p>As we are finalizing the details of our courses for October to December, I would appreciate receiving this information by 21 July. I look forward to hearing from you.</p>	
	<p>Yours sincerely</p>	-Complimentary close
-Who is writing the letter -In what capacity you are writing the letter	<p><i>Ziggy Z.</i> Ziggy Zhang Operations Manager</p>	



1.3 Essential Layout of Business Emails

The email has become one of the most used and most important means of communication. Email, whether within or between companies, is part of an organisation's record. It can also be used as a legal document to substantiate events.

The following are the **seven essential parts** of a **typical business email** with an example below.

- Recipient's name and address
- Date
- Recipient's email address
- Recipient's name/salutation
- Company address (depending on the situation)
- Writer's signature
- Writer's job title

Example:

LAU ENG JIN lauengjin@islandc.com.sg 10/03/13 3.18 pm	To: inquiries@westin.com.sg cc : bcc : Subject : How to write a business e-mail
<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>While e-mailed business correspondence still uses the fully blocked layout, there are some differences between the hard- and soft-copy versions.</p> <p>For e-mail, the following are not part of the standard fully blocked layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company address – If the writer wants the recipient to send brochures or other materials, then the company's address will be included in the body of the correspondence. <p>For example: I would appreciate it if you could send the brochures and prices to me at the following address. Island Corporation 62 Orchard Road #23-189 Far East Center Singapore 342260</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company letterhead – when an e-mail is sent from an organisation, it is seen as an equivalent to having written the letter on the company's letterhead. E-mail sent from a company e-mail system is legally seen to be as good as an official letter.• Date – most e-mail systems show the date automatically.• Recipient's name and address – this is equivalent to the recipient's e-mail address.• The writer's signature – there is no need to sign an e-mail.• The writer's job title – this should be written after the writer's name when signing off. <p>Yours sincerely Lau Eng Jin Senior Engineer</p>	

Additional Guidelines

Layout

- The recommended font size is **Times New Roman, 12 points**.
- Send carbon copies (cc) only to those who need to be informed but from whom no action is expected. A blind carbon copy (bcc) is a copy of an email message sent to a recipient whose email address does not appear in the message.

Use the subject line to clearly and concisely define what the content is about. If you've moved on to a new topic, enter a new subject line.

- It is polite to start with a salutation. Use 'Dear...' with people you don't know particularly well, because it corresponds to respect.
- Use a **fully-blocked layout** as it gives business letters a neat, professional appearance. The main feature of the fully-blocked layout is that all lines commence at the left margin (left justification).
- Most people combine the fully-blocked layout with the use of open punctuation. This means no punctuation marks (commas, full-stops) are used outside the body of business letters. All pages of the letter must be fully blocked.
- Close your letter with a professional closing, such as 'Yours sincerely' or 'Best regards'.

Content

- Provide a summary when you forward a conversation thread. You can save your recipient time and confusion.
- Be **clear, precise** and **organised**. Make the topic and any key information clear in the first few sentences. If there are many points, separate them into clearly numbered paragraphs.
- Setting a deadline for a response is essential.

Language

- Use **concise, professional, factual, easy to understand** language; Short sentences and paragraphs are better than long ones.
- Ensure business correspondence is **grammatically correct** and **error-free** in punctuation and spelling. Do not use shortened verb forms (e.g. 'don't').

Miscellaneous

- Avoid using capital letters or exclamation marks for emphasis
- Avoid sending large attachment
- Avoid using jargon
- Avoid composing emails when you are angry
- Avoid constantly requesting delivery and read receipts
- Avoid sending confidential material via email
- Avoid using 'urgent' and 'important' unduly
- Always keep a copy of hard copy or email business correspondence for future reference.

1.4 Types of Business Letters

The following are some types of business letters and the purpose for writing them:

- Making an Inquiry
- Replying to an Enquiry
- Making a Complaint
- Replying to a Complaint
- Sales Letters



1.5 The Content

The composition of most business documents follows a **simple four-point plan**.

INTRODUCTION (Background/Basics)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Why are you writing? To give a reason for writing, you can use:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I am writing to you to confirm our order.➤ I am writing to inquire about/apologize for/confirm/comment on/apply for▪ Refer to a previous letter, contact or document To state a reference reason for your letter, you can use:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ With reference to our telephone conversation...➤ I enjoyed our conversation earlier today. I am writing to follow-up with a few questions about your products.
DETAILS (Facts and figures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ask for information▪ Give instructions▪ Provide all relevant details (separate into paragraphs for separate themes) <p>When enclosing documents, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I am enclosing...➤ Please find enclosed...➤ Enclosed you will find...
RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Action for recipient to take▪ Action you will take <p>To make a request, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Could you possibly....➤ I would be grateful if you could include a brochure...➤ Could we meet next week to discuss the proposal in person? I am available any time between 9 and 2 Monday through Thursday. <p>When agreeing to a request, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I would be delighted to give you a tour of our facility this coming month. <p>When giving bad news, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Unfortunately....➤ I am afraid that I will be unable to attend the conference next week.
CLOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A simple, relevant closing sentence <p>When closing, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Thank you for your prompt help...➤ Thank you for your help. Please contact us again if we can help in any way/there are any problems/you have any questions. <p>If there is to be further contact, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I look forward to hearing from you soon/ meeting you next Tuesday/seeing you next Thursday.

In the final salutation, you can use:

- Yours faithfully (if you don't know the name of the person you're writing to)
- Yours sincerely (if you know the name of the person you're writing to)
- Best wishes/Best regards, (if the person is a close business contact or friend)

2. WRITING A LETTER OF INQUIRY



To request more information about a product or service, you write a letter of inquiry. This type of business letter tends to include specific information such as product type, as well as asking for further details in the form of brochures, catalogues, telephone contact, etc. Making inquiries can also help you keep up on your competition!

2.1 The Structure

Presenting your points in a logical, organised way makes your letter reader-friendly and helps you carry your point across. Use the 4-point plan below as a guide.

Paragraph 1: Introduction

- **Say where and how you heard of the company**
- **State the purpose of the inquiry**
- **Mention the product, service or information you are interested in**
- **Introduce your company and mention the scope of its business**

To introduce yourself or your company, you can use:

- As you may already know, we are ...
- We have a number of retail outlets in this country.
- We have a well-established reputation for providing ...

Paragraph 2: Details

- **Request catalogues and price lists**
- **Give details of your request**
- **Give reasons for the request if writing in your individual capacity**

To give reason(s) for your request, you can use:

- The reason for my request is ...
- This information is necessary for..
- We think there will be considerable demand for ... here and would therefore welcome your samples/brochure.

Paragraph 3: Response

- **Ask for a quotation**
- **Ask about the terms of trade, discount, delivery, etc.**
- **State what you need from them**
- **State when you need their response by**

To request information, you can use these phrases:

- Please send us your catalogue and price list for ...
- We would appreciate full particulars of your ...
- Please quote us your most competitive prices for the goods listed below: ...

To hint at future business, you can use:

- If your goods are up to standard, they should sell readily in this market.
- If your goods meet our requirements, ...
- If you can guarantee regular supplies, ...

To ask for discounts, delivery, etc., you can use:

- Please let us know what discount you will allow on bulk orders.
- We trust that you will be willing to allow us a substantial discount if we place a large order with you.
- Please let us know what your terms of trade are.

Paragraph 4: Close

- **Conclude cordially**

Now look at these letters of inquiry – an e-mail and a hard copy-version. Note their similarities and differences.

<p>To : customerservice@fullertonhotel.com cc : bcc : Subject : Inquiry regarding seminar facilities</p>	<p>March 14, 2013 4:45 PM</p>
<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>Smart Moves is a training and consultancy company specialising in the IT industry. We regularly hold half- and full-day seminars for large corporations like IBM, Microsoft and Sun Microsystems, and we usually draw about 50 to 80 people for each seminar.</p> <p>We are interested in holding our next series of seminars for the third quarter of 2013 at The Fullerton, and we would like some information about your facilities. We require the following for our seminars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Seminar-style room setup and furniture2. Overhead projector and screen3. Whiteboard and flip-chart4. Tea for half-day seminars <p>Our seminars are normally held on Wednesday in the morning, and we would appreciate your advice on the availability of seminar rooms from July to September. We would also like to know the types of refreshment menus available. In addition, please provide a total cost for the room, including food.</p> <p>As we are finalising our seminar plans, we would welcome your information by 14 April. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Mike Wong</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Mike Wong Senior Consultant Smart Moves Inc. Tel: 6223-1248 E-mail: mike_wong@smartmoves.com.sg Visit us at www.smartmoves.com.sg *****</p>	

Smart Moves Inc.
2 Orchard Road
#08-08 Wisma Atria
Singapore 564932

14 March 2013

Manager of Banquet Services
The Fullerton
1 Fullerton Square
Singapore 049178

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry Regarding Seminar Facilities

Smart Moves is a training and consultancy company specialising in the IT industry. We regularly hold half- and full-day seminars for large corporations like IBM, Microsoft and Sun Microsystems, and we usually draw about 50 to 80 people for each seminar.

We are interested in holding our next series of seminars for the third quarter of 2013 at The Fullerton, and we would like some information about your facilities. We require the following for our seminars:

1. Seminar-style room setup and furniture
2. Overhead projector and screen
3. Whiteboard and flip-chart
4. Tea for half-day seminars

Our seminars are normally held on Wednesday in the morning, and we would appreciate your advice on the availability of seminar rooms from July to September. We would also like to know the types of refreshment menus available. In addition, please provide a total cost for the room, including food.

As we are finalising our seminar plans, we would welcome your information by 14 April. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Mike Wong
Senior Consultant

3. REPLYING A LETTER OR INQUIRY

Replying to inquiries is one of the most important business letters that you will write. Customers who make inquiries are interested in specific information and are excellent business prospects. Learn how to thank the customers, provide as much information as possible, as well as make a call to action for a positive outcome.

3.1 The Structure

When you receive an inquiry letter or e-mail, you should reply as effectively as possible answering all the inquiries. Bear in mind that the person who has written to you may have also written to other companies for the same purpose. Therefore, your reply must:

- stand out from the rest
- be carefully planned and phrased
- be clear and precise

Use the following 4-point plan below to organise your content:

Paragraph 1: Introduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge the inquiry <p>To acknowledge the inquiry, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Thank you for your letter of ... in which you ...➤ We are pleased to receive your inquiry of ... in which you ...➤ In your letter dated/of ... you inquired about ...
Paragraph 2: Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer all the questions, adding details where necessary• Refer to the catalogues and price lists, indicating clearly the merits of the merchandise• Refer to the price lists and emphasise the competitiveness of your prices• State clearly the terms of trade and discounts available <p>To refer to enclosures/information supporting the necessary information, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We are pleased/glad to {submit the following quotation ...➤ We have pleasure in {enclosing our estimate for ... /enclosing our catalogue...
Paragraph 3: Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State procedures and arrangements• Refer to the scope of your company's business and its sales achievements elsewhere• Indicate clearly the significance of this to your present customer/client <p>To provide assurance or confidence, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We feel that we have the necessary experience to ...➤ Our products have always commanded ready sales ...➤ The quality and prices of our products compare very favourably with those of other suppliers.

Paragraph 4: Close

- **Conclude cordially**

To close cordially, you can use:

- We look forward to a long and happy business relationship with you.
- We look forward to receiving your instructions.

Using the example of Mike Wong's e-mail inquiry to The Fullerton earlier, let us see how Customer Service has replied.

CINDY YAP
cindy.yap@fullertonhotel.com
March 18, 2013
9:30 AM

To : mike_wong@smartmoves.com.sg
cc :
bcc :
Subject : Re: Inquiry regarding seminar facilities

Dear Mr Wong

Thank you for your inquiry. I am pleased to attach below our seminar room and menu pricing for your reference.

Based on your requirements, I would recommend that your seminars be held in the Faulkner Room, which can comfortably seat up to 100 people. The room also has all the equipment that you need, and is currently available on Wednesday mornings from July to September.

As for refreshments, our F&B department has specially created a wide range of halal, "lite-bite" menus that cater to seminar attendees. These are also included in the attachment.

I hope that you will find the information sufficient. If you would like to book the room or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at this e-mail address. You may also call me at 6534-0729 (DID) or at 9882-0468. Once again, I appreciate your interest in The Fullerton, and I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Yap
Manager, Customer Services



Price.doc



4. WRITING A LETTER OF COMPLAINT

Unfortunately, from time to time it is necessary to make a complaint against an unsatisfactory service or product. It is important to remember that the recipient of your complaint letter or e-mail must be aware that the complaint is about the product or service and not about him/her personally. Whichever way you choose to write, you must be sure that you achieve your main aim of seeing some claim made and corrective action taken.

4.1 The Structure

- When writing a complaint letter/e-mail, you should show no vindictiveness.
- The language you use should always be restrained and factual throughout.
- It is best to come across as cool, calm and business-like.

Use the following 4-point plan to organise your content:

Paragraph 1: Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State clearly the purpose of your letter• Refer briefly to what you want to complain about <p>To start the letter you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I am writing to complain about ...➤ I would like to draw your attention to ...➤ The purpose of this letter is to express my dissatisfaction with... <p>Where necessary, use conciliatory remarks (remarks that try to overcome hostility and gain goodwill) such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I realise that you were probably not able to ...➤ I can understand that you must have been ...➤ I am certain that you were unaware of ...
Paragraph 2: Details (more if necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say in detail what your complaints are and be entirely factual – never openly criticise the company / organisation• Devote one paragraph to each major complaint
Paragraph 3: Response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point out the inconvenience / the extra cost you had to bear with• Ask the company / organisation what action they intend to take to remedy the situation• If a particular solution seems obvious to you, you may suggest it but do not demand compensation
Paragraph 4: Close <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclude cordially <p>To close, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ I would be glad if you could ...➤ Please arrange to ...➤ Perhaps you could ...

Read the two letters of complaint below and evaluate them. Which letter has the characteristics listed in the table that follows?

Serene_wee767@yahoo.com.sg 12 February 2013 5:00 PM	To: marketing@deltacomputers.com cc: bcc: Subject : Your lousy product
Dear Sir/Madam	
<p>It is sickening that I have to contact you about my computer. The next time it will be my lawyer contacting you, I can assure you of that! Since I bought it, I have had trouble with just about everything in it. To crown it all, now the printer keeps cutting out when I need it most. I have made sure that the "online" button is depressed, but that does nothing. The printer is essential to me since I really bought the system for word processing. So far, I seem to be using it mostly to waste my time writing to you complaining about your shabby products and service. Your salesman assured me that this particular printer was highly reliable and because of that I was prepared to pay extra money. I might as well have thrown the money away! I think I was deceived by your sales talk and expect you to have the decency at least to make this a priority. I am NOT prepared to go to your shop. I expect your service people to come to my house. If not, I shall be taking legal action.</p>	
Serene Wee	



Muhammad Faizal bin Riduan
618 Bedok Reservoir Road #09-1174
Singapore 618023

12 February 2013

Sales Manager
Computer Mart
56 Rochor Road
#03-490 Sim Lim Square
Singapore 342687

Dear Sir/Madam

Defective disk drive

Your company is universally known for its high-quality products. That is why I purchased my personal computer from your firm. Unfortunately, the disk drive is defective.

Four weeks after the purchase I noticed a grinding sound in the B disk drive. I took the unit to one of your authorised dealers, and after having it checked out, was told nothing was wrong with it. I had a similar incident five weeks later and was again assured that the drive was working properly. Yesterday, 100 days after I purchased the computer, I again had a problem with the disk drive. The maintenance person at your local computer dealership informs me that the B disk drive is defective and must be replaced. Since I did not purchase a maintenance agreement, the basic warranty expired after 90 days and I have been informed that it will cost \$245 to replace the disk drive.

Obviously, the drive was initially defective. I am sure this seldom happens, thanks to the high quality of your products.

I would like you to have the local dealer from whom I purchased this machine replace this disk drive at no charge. I am enclosing a copy of my purchase receipt so you can contact the store.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. I look forward to doing business with you again in the near future.

Yours sincerely



Muhammad Faizal

Description / Evaluation	Serene's	Faizal's
Has included compliments to the company but has not overdone it		*
More likely to get a sympathetic hearing		*
Negative and vindictive	*	
Pleasant tone		*
Recipient may be inclined to resist the charges and may even reject them	*	
Recipient may resent the tone and be defensive	*	
The action the reader wants the company to take is clearly stated but it is not done so demandingly		*
The allegations are supported but in a way that the company is invited to contact the store to confirm the situation		*
The emotional content is played down		*

Faizal's letter is the better of the two.



5. REPYING A COMPLAINT

Even the best business may make a mistake from time to time and you may be asked to adjust a claim. This type of business letter is to make sure that you address the specific concerns of unsatisfied customers, as well as retain them as future customers. Even if the complaints are not justified, the replies to such complaints must also be polite. The challenge is to turn the situation around so that you win over a previously aggrieved individual by the quality of your response.

5.1 The Structure

- Every time you receive a complaint, you should treat it seriously and at once look into the whole matter to find out if it is justified.
- If it is, you should find out how the mistakes came to be made and what action can be taken to put the matter right.
- Remember, the golden rule is to regain your customer's goodwill and trust.
- When we respond to complaints, we should be courteous, apologise and make amends when necessary.

Use the following 4-point plan to organise your content:

Paragraph 1: Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge the previous letter and summarise briefly what was said• Apologise sincerely for the inconvenience it had caused the writer <p>To acknowledge the complaint, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Thank you for your letter dated ...➤ We have received your letter regarding ...➤ We refer to your letter concerning ... <p>To apologise for the matter, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We are sorry to learn that ...➤ We are sorry for the ...➤ We regret the ...
Paragraph 2: Details <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain in detail how each mistake had been made• Explain what action you intend to take to put the matter right – devoting one paragraph to each complaint you have to reply to <p>To detail the action taken or intended, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ We have investigated your complaint and found ...➤ We have looked into your complaint ...➤ We have refunded you for ...
Paragraph 3: Response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assure your client that the same mistake will not happen again• Say clearly what compensation you are able to offer for the inconvenience caused
Paragraph 4: Close <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclude cordially

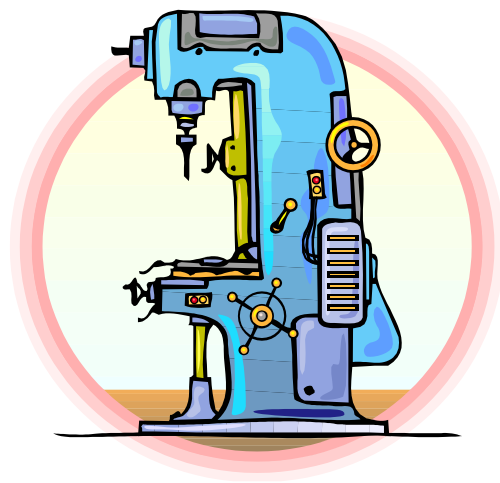
Now look at these email replies to complaints. What are the strong and weak points of each reply?

Bright Image Camera Supplies service@brightimagecam.com.sg 14 January 2013 3:08 PM	To : nathan_sivanason@singnet.com.sg cc : bcc : Subject : Re: Complaint about SharpShoot P300
<p>Dear Mr Sivanason</p> <p>We refer to your e-mail on 9 January 2013 concerning your SharpShoot P300 and flash unit. We wish to advise you that we cannot allow your claim for replacement.</p> <p>Upon examination, it was clear from the marks on the casing that the flash unit had been opened and dismantled. We regret that this invalidates the terms of our guarantee.</p> <p>Had the damage been a result of ordinary use, we would gladly have made an appropriate adjustment. The camera and flash unit are being returned to you in another package.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Simon de Cruz Sales Manager</p>	

Precise Engineering Co. Pte Ltd service@precise-engineering.com.sg 14 January 2013 3:08 PM	To : beng han_SO@singnet.com.sg cc : bcc : Subject :
<p>Dear Mr Soo</p> <p>Thank you for writing to me on 9 January 2013 about the problem with your vertical drill machine.</p> <p>From what you say in your letter about sparks coming from the ventilation holes when load is applied on the motor, it appears to me that there is a short circuit in the motor windings. Another possibility could be that the insulation has worn off.</p> <p>At the moment, all our men are occupied with other projects. Nevertheless, I will have sent a service engineer to your factory by the time you receive this reply.</p> <p>We look forward to continuing to do business with you and thank you for your support of our company.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Joseph Marimuthu Technical Sales Manager</p>	

This is how the two emails compare:

	Simon's e-mail	Joseph's e-mail
Strong points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has subject line• Paragraph 1 acknowledges the e-mail and complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paragraph 1 acknowledges the letter and complaint• Paragraph 3: intended action spelt out
Weak points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paragraph 1: negative phrasing could have been changed to positive; should not have said 'no' upfront• No cordial close	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No subject line• Paragraph 2: inappropriate tone• Paragraph 3 makes reader feel unimportant• Paragraph 4 offers no apology for the inconvenience suffered and no guarantee that the problem will not occur again



6. WRITING A SALES LETTER

Sales letters are used to introduce and promote new products or services to new customers and past clients. It is important to outline an important problem that needs to be solved and provide the solution in sales letters. Sales letters also often include an offer to encourage customers to try the product.

6.1 The Structure

- Under the Subject line, use a strong headline that states the most important benefit you are offering.
- Use a friendly conversational style.
- Explain the benefits your potential customer will receive. Put yourself in your customer's shoes and ask yourself, "If I was receiving this letter, why would I want to buy the product or service being sold? What's in it for me?"
- Ask your prospect to take action such as to call you for more information, to visit your website, to complete and order form and mail you a check, etc.
- Include testimonials from customers.
- Use a P.S. in your letter and restate your most power benefit and sales offer in it. Most people will read a P.S. first before reading the sales letter, so it is important to make your P.S. have a very strong sales message and a call to action.
- Make sure to include all of your contact information – telephone number, fax number, email address and website address.

Use the following 4-point plan to organise your content:

Paragraph 1: Introduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight a problem that the potential customer or past client is facing• Propose a solution <p>To identify a problem, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Are you having trouble ... <p>To propose a solution, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ This is why it is important to have ...
Paragraph 2: Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce the product or service that will solve the problem• Move to your sales pitch as it is a form of advertising. <p>When introducing the product or service, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ At X, we have the skills and experience to ...➤ We think there will be considerable demand for ... here and would therefore welcome your samples/brochure.
Paragraph 3: Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage customers to try the product• Include an offer or promotion or service <p>To encourage customers, you can use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ May we stop by and offer you a FREE estimate of how much it would cost to ...

When including a service, you can use:

- If so, give us a call at X and set up and appointment with one of your friendly operators.

Paragraph 4: Close

- **Conclude cordially**



Read the two sales emails below and evaluate them. Which letter has the characteristics listed in the table that follows?

Document Makers Pte Ltd
ThomasL@documentmakers.com.sg
10 March 2013
3:08 PM

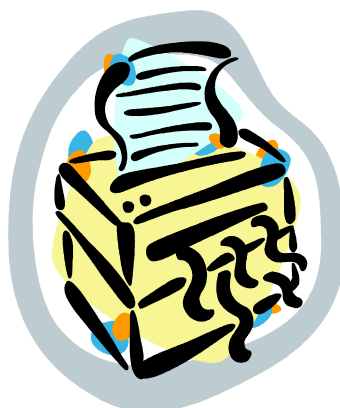
To : steven_LEE@singnet.com.sg
cc :
bcc :
Subject : Great Looking Documents

Dear Mr Lee

Are you having trouble getting your important documents formatted correctly? If you are, you are like most business owners who have trouble finding the time to economically produce good-looking documents. This is why it is important to have a specialist take care of your most important documents.

At Documents Makers, we have the skills and experience to come in and help you make the best possible impression. May we stop by and offer you a FREE estimate of how much it would cost to get your documents looking great? If so, give us a call at and set up and appointment with one of your friendly operators.

Yours sincerely
Thomas Lim
Sales Manager
Document Makers Pte Ltd
[Tel:62244668](tel:62244668)



XYZ Office Interiors

susanL@XYZ Office Interiors.com.sg

10 March 2013

3:08 PM

To : gary_Lim@singnet.com.sg

cc :

bcc :

Subject : How to save 75% - 80% on office systems furniture

Dear Gary

XYZ Office Interiors wants to help your business save up to 80% on office systems furniture. We specialize in refurbished and pre-owned name-brand workstations including HTL, Haworth, and Herman Miller. Why pay full price for new workstations when you can get beautiful professional-quality pre-owned and refurbished systems furniture at up to 80% off?

As a full service dealer we have products and services to help you design, furnish and install workstations, reception areas and conference rooms. We are networked with wholesalers and distributors throughout Singapore to offer you an extensive range of products to meet all of your needs and at a price that is guaranteed to fit your budget. And, we will personally deliver and install your office furniture for you so your project is done correctly, on-time and on-budget.

For a free quote, please call us today at 69988776 or visit us online at www.XYZOfficeInteriors.com. Our website has many pictures of the office furniture we have in stock. Our website also shows our current specials. If you want an amazing deal, check out our website.

We also buy used workstations and office furniture. If you have office furniture you want to sell, we would love the opportunity to bid on it. We work with brokers and dealers throughout the Singapore and Malaysia who will offer you top dollar for your used office furniture. For more information, please call us at 69988776.

Testimony:

"Thank you XYZ Office Interiors, Inc. for all your hard work. We started working with you in the year 2000 and it's been a great relationship ever since. The quality of work you do is great. The job is always done on time and the cost is unbeatable! We are very thankful for our last purchases with you. Thank you once again!"

ABC Superior Office
Singapore

Warmest Wishes

Susan Liew

XYZ Office Interiors

69988776 ext 123

Fax: 69988775

www.XYZOfficeInteriors.com

P.S. Through the month of December we are having a storewide liquidation sale on ALL office furniture so we can make room for our 2014 inventory. This is your opportunity to literally steal furniture from us. Call or email me today for a copy of our most up-to-date inventory and price list.

Description / Evaluation	Thomas'	Susan's
Includes a very strong headline		*
Likely to get reader's attention	*	*
More conversational	*	
Pleasant tone	*	*
Action to be taken is clearly stated	*	*
Includes testimonials		*
Includes all of contact information – telephone number, fax number, email address and website address.		*
Includes complimentary close	*	
Includes PS		*

Susan's letter may be more effective in getting a response.



"You use the former when wooing your beloved and the latter during negotiations with your divorce lawyers."

7. MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

7.1 Make it Reader-centred

Write from your reader's point of view. It makes it so much easier for you to get your point across to the reader.

Example:

Reader-centred statements	Writer-centred statements
I am sure you will enjoy increased efficiency from using our power tools.	ACE power tools are efficient.
We would appreciate receiving your report by next week as a late submission may delay the review of your report.	I hope the completed report will reach us by next week as your late submission can cause a lot of unnecessary inconvenience to us.

7.2 Keep Language Lively and Simple

When you are writing a letter, express yourself the way you would if you were facing your reader. Conversational writing is livelier and more interesting to read.

Will you say to your boss:

'My analytical evaluation of the incentive play that has been instituted revealed myriad discrepancies and inconsistencies, with the inevitable result that serious inequities prevail among personnel'?

Of course you would not!

Here is probably what you will say:

'I've studied our present incentive plan carefully, and I think some changes are in order. What bothers me most is about it is that the plan is very fair to some, but not at all fair to others.'

7.3 Make It Concise

- Being **concise** means being brief but clear and complete, that is, saying everything that the reader needs to know in as few words as possible.
- Unnecessary words, phrases and sentences should be avoided to keep the letter easy to read and comprehend.

Consider the following statement:

With reference to your request for an extension on your note under date of March 20, we have considered the matter carefully and are pleased to tell you that we will be willing to allow you an additional ninety days to make payment on your note.

[46 words]

Now consider the revised version:

We are pleased to allow you an additional ninety days to pay your note dated March 20.

[17 words]

7.4 Use Appropriate Tone

- **Tone** is how your message sounds to the reader.
- Controlling your tone involves selecting words and phrases that will help you project an appropriate image of yourself and your organisation.

To write with appropriate tone, we must remember the following positive traits that human nature responds well to:

- Be reader-centered
- Emphasize the positive - what you can do, not what you cannot do
- Use words that show friendliness and concern
- Avoid negative words and phrases
- End on a positive note, offering help where possible

Example:

Ugh! What bad, irritating news!	Yes, that doesn't sound half so bad ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smoking is not permitted anywhere on this campus.• We regret to inform you that we must deny your request for credit.• We apologise for the inconvenience caused during our remodeling.• We cannot deliver your desk until next Friday.• The problem with this department is a failure to control costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a smoke-free campus. Enjoy the fresh air!• For the time being, we can serve you only on a cash basis.• The renovations underway will enable us to serve you better.• We can deliver your desk on Friday.• The performance of this department can be improved by tightening cost controls.

7.5 Use the Active Voice

- The active voice communicates directly and lets the reader know who is doing the action.
- On the other hand, the use of passive voice may make sentences longer and de-emphasise the subject [Person doing the action].

Example:

Active Voice

Jerry sang the song.

(The subject/person doing the action is emphasised.)

Passive Voice

The song was sung by Jerry.

(The person doing the action is de-emphasised.)

Note the differences between the active and the passive voice in these statements.

OK, I know who's doing what.	Who's doing what? The organisation sounds faceless.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clerk stamps the incoming correspondence and files them accordingly. • We will deliver the items you ordered to your office on 21 May. • The subcommittee will support this proposal. • Please submit all suggestions to the committee members before 1 June. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incoming correspondence is stamped by the clerk and then filed. • The items that were ordered will be delivered to your office on 21 May. • It is expected that this proposal will be supported by the subcommittee. • All suggestions should be submitted to the committee members before 1 June.

- In some situations, however, the use of passive voice is more appropriate.
- For example, when you do not want to offend others by pointing out a problem or error of some kind, you might say, "The book was lost" as opposed to "You lost the book."

