

Business Communication

Importance of Business Letter

Letter is as an indispensable tool of communication in business. Business letters are used to sell the products, make an inquiry about customers or prices of goods, seek information and advice, maintain good public relation, increase goodwill and perform a variety of other business functions. With the continuous growth of commerce and industry, usefulness and importance of business letter are also increasing gradually.

Exchanging business information

- Letters are the most economical and convenient means of exchanging information. With the help of letters, executives can easily exchange information with customers, suppliers, investors, government offices; regulatory authorities etc.

Establishing business relationship

- Business letter plays an important role in establishing and maintaining relationship with various parties. Business letters reduce the distance between a business and its customers, suppliers, creditors and other public groups.

Creation of markets

- **Circular letter** a form of business letter, helps to create new markets for goods and services. This letter contains information about utility, features and usefulness of the products and induces the customer to buy the products.

Substitute to personal visit

- Introduction of letters in business world relieves the business executives' form visiting their clients, suppliers, creditors and other public groups by traveling a long distance. For this reason, commercial letters are called alternative technique to a personal visit.

Saving cost and time

- Business letters relieve busy executives from visiting personally their clients and other concerned parties. Therefore, valuable time and costs can be saved.

Maintaining secrecy

- Maintaining secrecy: Business letters also help to maintain secrecy of information. No one other than the sender and receiver can know the message contained in the letter.

Increasing goodwill

- Business letters, like inquiry letter, circular letter, order acknowledgment letter, adjustment grant letter, etc help to increase goodwill of a business with the customers.

Formal agreement

- Business letter acts as formal agreement between buyer and seller. For example, an order letter contains name of items, price, and quantity, time of delivery and mode of payment. All these are regarded as the conditions of an agreement between buyer and seller.

Settlement of transaction

- **Commercial letters** have paramount importance in setting business transaction. For example, by writing a claim letter, buyer can raise his claims to the seller by writing collection letters; seller can collect dues from the customers.

Use as reference

- Information exchanged through letters can be preserved permanently and used as reference when need arise. Therefore, making business decisions becomes easier.

Legal acceptance

- Business letter is an acceptable document in the eye of law. It can be stored and produced as documentary proof.

Assistance in local and international trade

- Both local and foreign trade essentially requires the help of various business letters. Through letters, businessperson make inquiry about products and prices place orders for goods collect the dues make and settle claims etc.

Business Writing Goals

Purposeful

- You will be writing to solve problems and convey information. You will also have a definite strategy to fulfill in each message.

Economical

- You will try to present ideas clearly but concisely. Length is not rewarded.

Audience oriented

- You will concentrate on looking at a problem from the perspective of the audience instead of seeing it from your own.

Introduction to Writing Process

Pre-writing

- Prewriting is the first stage of the writing process, it consists of a combination of outlining, diagramming, storyboarding, and clustering (for a technique similar to clustering, see mind mapping).
- It includes thinking, taking notes, talking to others, brainstorming, outlining, and gathering information (e.g., interviewing people, researching in the library, assessing data).

Drafting

- Occurs when you put your ideas into sentences and paragraphs. Writers can concentrate upon explaining and supporting your ideas fully, and also begin to connect your ideas.
- Gathering information or related and necessary information about a certain topic in the letter.

Revising

- a process of making changes throughout the writing of a draft, changes that work to make the draft congruent with a writer's changing intentions.
- think more deeply about your readers' needs and expectations.
- the key to effective documents.

Editing

- involves looking at each sentence carefully, and making sure that it's well designed and serves its purpose.
- also involves Proofreading - checking for grammatical and punctuation errors, spelling mistakes, also stage of evaluating the document.
- the final stage of writing.

Writing Techniques

- Sounding conversational but professional
- Be positive rather than being negative
- Express courtesy
- Employ bias-free language
- Prefer plain language and familiar words
- Use precise and vigorous words

Writing Business Letters

Business Letters

- is a formal written communication between, to or from businesses and WAS usually sent through the Post Office or sometimes by courier. (Now, Emails are used.)
- A business letter is a professional, formal letter that is sent by one company to another. These letters can be used for professional correspondence between business clients, employees, stakeholders as well as individuals.

Type of Business Letters

Cover Letters

- First up, a cover letter is a one-page document that candidates submit along with their resumes. It takes the employer on a guided journey of their greatest career & life achievements.
- No matter if you're a student or an experienced professional, a cover letter is an important document to show your skills, experience, and why you're fit for the position you are applying for.

Business Invites

- These letters are a formal way to reach out to a company or an individual and invite them to attend an event hosted by your company.
- As business events tend to be formal, an invitation letter is most likely to be formal as well. But, if you are organizing a casual event, it should be reflected in your invite and tone.

Application Letter

- A document that is prepared along with a resume or curriculum vitae when applying for a job.
- Express the job seeker's intent to apply for a specific position in a business firm and eventually become part of its workforce

Letter of Recommendation

- Describe the relationship of the sender with the job applicant - a previous employer or academic adviser.
- Includes information about the recommended job seeker's knowledge and capabilities about a position or role

Letter of Resignation

- Written to inform the recipient, usually the immediate supervisor or manager, about leaving a job
- Serves as a notice for an employee's last day of service in the company
- Provides details on the circumstances that lead to a decision of giving up the job

Inquiry Letter

- Written to solicit valuable answers to questions about a product or service
- It is always a good point to leave your contact information for easy and quick response to your query

Parts of a Business Letter

Letter Head / Return Address

- Mandatory Elements:
 - Organization's name; Address (including zip code and area code);
 - Telephone number; Email address;
 - Website (if any)
- Optional Elements:
 - Organization's logo; the executive's name or title; A list of officials or other governing bodies

Date Line

- The month is never abbreviated; the day is never spelled out, and endings for numbers (27th) are not usually used.
 - The common forms are:
 - September 24, 2018 (American);
 - 24 September 2018 (British)

Inside Address

- The recipient's name (if stated) is followed by the company's name, the department or division, the street address, city postal code and country.
- If there is a line that is too long, encode half of it on the next line with two or three spaces indention.

Attention Line (Attn)

- When you write to a company in general but want to direct your letter to a particular person or office.

Salutation

- Should be written below the address and with a space of one or two lines before the body of the letter.
- It is followed by a comma (,) for personal letters or a colon (:) for more formal letters (optional).

Subject Line

- Provides further reference, saves introducing the subjection the first paragraph, immediately draws attention to the topic of the letter, allows the writer to refer it throughout the letter, quickly identifies the purpose of the letter and should not be more than one line.

Body of Letter

- Must be clear, informative, and accurate as possible. The length of the Letter depends on: The Subject and the Style and Language Used

Complimentary Close

- Formal Sign-off
 - Yours respectfully,
 - Respectfully yours,
 - Yours sincerely,
 - Sincerely yours,
- Less Formal
 - Regards,
 - Best Regards,
 - Best Wishes,
 - Your loving friend,

Signature Block

- The signature block consists of your typed name, your handwritten signature (sometimes, e-signature) and your position in the organization.
- The handwritten signature should be between the complimentary close and the typed name and title.

ABC's of Good Letter Writing

A is for Accuracy

- Your receiver does not, in all probability, know you nor is the person likely to be familiar with the circumstances which caused you to write.
- If you're complaining about a defective product, what are the pertinent facts that you need to include?
 - Purchase date, model number, store name and address, receipt, brief description of problem, number of attempts

B is for Brevity

- Spare your letter down to essentials, eliminate every sentence that will not help the letter's recipient to understand you.
- What are the things that you have to put or write in your business Letter?
 - Tell why you're writing, Give the important facts. Describe what you'd like the recipient to do.

C is for Clarity

- Keep your paragraphs short, try to keep a maximum of ten lines per paragraph and typewritten.
- Keep your sentences short, the reader may not have the power of concentration. Try to break sentences for easier understanding.
- This is in regard to the upcoming company Christmas Party.
 - This is about the upcoming company Christmas Party.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is the representation of another person's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions as one's own original work. Although precise definitions vary depending on the institution, in many countries and cultures plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity and journal ethics, as well as social norms around learning, teaching, research, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

Different Level or Types of Plagiarism

Level 1: Original Thinking

- Someone submits assignments that are their own work, composed of original ideas built on attributed sources.

Level 2: Student Collusion

- Students work with other students on an assignment meant for individual assessment.

Level 3: Inadvertent Plagiarism

- You forgot to properly cite or quote a source. This also includes unintentional paraphrasing.

Level 4: Word-For-Word Plagiarism

- This involves copying and pasting content without proper attribution.

Level 5: Paraphrase Plagiarism

- Rephrasing a source's ideas without proper attribution.

Level 6: Self-Plagiarism

- Reusing your own previously published or submitted work without proper attribution

Level 7: Computer Code Plagiarism

- Copying or adopting source code without permission from and attribution to the original creator.

Level 8: Mosaic Plagiarism

- Weaving phrases and text from several sources into your own work. This includes adjusting sentences without quotation marks or attribution.

Level 9: Source-Based Plagiarism

- Providing inaccurate or incomplete information about sources such that they cannot be found.

Level 10: Software-Based Text Modification

- Taking content written by another and running it through a software tool (text spinner, translation engine, etc.) to evade plagiarism detection.

Level 11: Manual Text Modification

- Manipulating text with the intention of misleading plagiarism detection software.

Level 12: Contract Cheating

- Engaging a third party (for free or for pay, or in-kind) to complete an assignment and representing the output as your own work.

Level 13: Data Plagiarism

- Falsifying or fabricating data or improperly appropriating someone else's work thereby putting a researcher, institution, or publisher's reputation in jeopardy.

Professionalism at Work

Professionalism

- Professionalism is a skill or behavior that goes beyond what an ordinary person would have or behaving in a more formal or business-like manner.

Business Etiquette

- Business etiquette refers to the requirements and expectations of social and business behavior, practices and conduct that are prescribed by social convention, and a code of ethical behavior among professionals.

Ethics

- also called moral philosophy
- the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad and morally right and wrong.

Professional Communication

Importance:

- It can ensure you pick the right communication method for your audience with good professional communication skills, you can ensure you pick the appropriate communication channel for the specific audience. For example, in some cases, it may be appropriate to send a quick email, however, by reading the situation you may realize that for certain messages, it's more appropriate to arrange a call or even meet face-to-face.
- It is seen as a desirable skill by employers Being able to communicate effectively is an extremely desirable skill. This can be beneficial in your existing role, when being considered for a promotion or when job hunting.

- It can help avoid misunderstandings with poor communication, it's easy for messages to get misunderstood. By mastering professional communication, the potential for misunderstandings occurring can be minimized.
- It will help you work effectively in a group When you work in a team, you need to be able to regularly communicate with others. You need to listen to other people's ideas, whilst being able to clearly and effectively communicate your own. Good communication can also help to build a positive working relationship, so your team works more effectively and productively together.
- It can inspire others We're not all born presenters, but public speaking is still an important skill to master. With poor communication skills, your audience may become bored and disengaged. However, if you have good communication skills, you have the opportunity to engage and inspire those around you.

Communicating Face-to-Face on the Job

Use your voice as a communication tool

- Studies suggest a strong correlation between voice and perceived authority and trust.
- Respondents typically favor lower-pitched voices in men and higher but not shrill female voices.

How to use your voice effectively?

- **Pronunciation** - Proper pronunciation involves saying words correctly and clearly with the accepted sounds and accented syllables

- **Voice Quality** - the characteristic auditory coloring of an individual's voice. It also identifies a personality and your mood.

- **Pitch** - refers to sound vibration frequency; the highness or lowness of a sound. Voices are most engaging when they rise and fall in conversational tones. Effective speakers use a relaxed, controlled, well-pitched voice to attract listeners to their message. Flat, monotone voices are considered boring and ineffectual.

- **Volume and Rate of Voice** **Volume** - is the loudness or the intensity of sound **Rate**
- Refers to the pace of your speech. If you speak too slowly, listeners can become bored and their attention can wander. If you speak too quickly, listeners may not be able to understand you.

- **Emphasis** - tells the listener what's important in the sentence and brings clarity of meaning.

Use of the Passive Voice

Ex: Reports are expected by the end of the week.

The use of What

Ex: What we need is a good manager.
What other people say is not important.

- Making Workplace Conversation Matter. Face-to-face conversation helps people work together harmoniously and feel that they are part of the larger organization.

- Use Correct Names and Titles
- Choose Appropriate Topics
- Avoid Negative Remarks
- Listen to Learn
- Give Sincere and Specific Praise
- Act Professionally in Social Situations

Receiving Workplace Criticism Gracefully

- Listen without interrupting. Even though you might want to protest, hear the speaker out.
- Determine the speaker's intent. Unskilled communicators may throw "verbal bricks" with unintended negative-sounding expressions. If you think the intent is positive, focus on what is being said rather than reacting to poorly chosen words.
- Acknowledge what you are hearing. Respond with a pause, a nod, or a neutral statement such as I understand you have a concern. This buys you time. Don't disagree, counterattack, or blame, which may escalate the situation and harden the speaker's position.
- Paraphrase what was said. In your own words, restate objectively what you are hearing.
- Ask for more information if necessary. Clarify what is being said. Stay focused on the main idea rather than interjecting side issues
- Agree—if the comments are accurate. If an apology is in order, give it. Explain what you plan to do differently. If the criticism is on target, the sooner you agree, the more likely you will be to receive respect from the other person.
- Look for a middle position. Search for a middle position or a compromise. Be genial even if you don't like the person or the situation.
- Disagree respectfully and constructively—if you feel the comments are unfair. After hearing the criticism, you might say, "May I tell you my perspective?"
- Learn from criticism. Most work-related criticism is given with the best of intentions. You should welcome the opportunity to correct your mistakes and to learn from them. Responding positively to workplace criticism can help you improve your job performance.

Receiving Phone Call Professionally

Digital Communication

- Before receiving a phone call, prepare for a phone interview.
 - Research the Company
 - Prepare in Advance
 - Show the Employer's You're a Match
 - Have Your Job Materials Nearby

Receiving Phone Calls Professionally (For a Job Interview)

- Follow the interviewer's lead. Some interviewers may wish to engage in a few minutes of small talk. Others may want to get right into the interview. Let the interviewer steer the start to the conversation, but be prepared to talk about the weather or make other small talk.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer and don't start speaking until the interviewer finishes the question. If you have something you want to say, jot it down on your notepad and mention it when it's your turn to talk. It can also be helpful to jot down the question (or at least some keywords).
- Don't worry if you need a few seconds to think of a response, but don't leave too much dead air. If you need the interviewer to repeat the question, ask.
- Ending the call. The responsibility for ending a call lies with the caller.

Good luck, CS 1-2!