

Business Letters

Introduction

- A letter, whether long or short has to be planned before it is written.
- When writing a business letter, the writer produces one-sided conversation with the reader in the sense that he/she has to anticipate the reader's questions and provide answers to those questions.

A carelessly written letter may fail to secure an order or loan.

Business letters assist you in sustaining your business relationships with other business and customers.

Purposes

- to inform
- to congratulate
- to enquire
- to order
- to request
- to collect dues
- to complain
- to make an adjustment
- to sell a product, service or scheme

BUSINESS LETTERS

- ❖ It is essential to write a business letter to maintain contacts with the external world including other businessmen, customers and government departments.
- ❖ It serves as a record for future reference.
- ❖ It is used to build goodwill.

What is a Business Letter?

- A **business letter** is a letter written in formal language, usually used when writing from one business organization to another, or for correspondence between organizations and their customers, clients and other external parties.
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Business Letters

- Principles
 - 'You' attitude
 - Clear & concise
 - Correct & complete
 - Emphasize positive side
 - Courteous & considerate

ACHIEVING THE “YOU ATTITUDE”: FOUR GUIDELINES

- Never forget that your reader is a real person.
- Avoid writing cold, impersonal letters.
- Keep the reader in the forefront of your letter.
- Be courteous and tactful.
- Be neither boastful nor meek.

Tips For Business Letters

- Think of them as mainly persuasive documents.
- Write a reader-orientated document not a writer-oriented document.
- Be respectful

PROOF READING YOUR LETTER

- Proofread everything that has your name on it.
 - **Take time to proofread your letter for:**
 - Errors of facts
 - Miscalculations
 - Accuracy of prices, dates, and serial numbers.
-

PROOF READING YOUR LETTER

- **Full-Block Format-** All text flush left, spaces between paragraphs.
 - Notations of enclosures.
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Features of an Effective Business Letters

- Brevity
 - Clarity
 - Accuracy
 - Politeness
 - Consideration of the addressee
 - Use of jargons
-

Brevity

- Present the subject matter in brief.
- Too many words often mar the beauty of business correspondence and lead to confusion.

Clarity

- Avoid vagueness or ambiguity.
 - Business letter should be direct.
 - In order to sound natural, the writer should use plain conversational English.
 - Howsoever serious matter is presented in a letter, the writer should use a relaxed, clear tone.
-

Clarity

- Too familiar style should also be avoided.
 - Bombastic language can spoil even well written letter.
 - Avoid ambiguous, difficult and obsolete words.
-

Accuracy

- Genuine information strengthens the business relations between two business firms or two individuals.
- Hence facts mentioned must be true and genuine.

Politeness

- Politeness is a keyword in a business letter. Therefore it should be courteously written.
 - It should include the expressions such as **thanks, I regret, please, my pleasure.**
 - Letter of request or complaint should avoid unpleasant and rude expressions.
-

Consideration of the addressee

- Keep in view the type of the addressee or the receiver.
 - Take into consideration the nature, the post and also the mental level of the receiver so that the reader can read it with ease.
-

Use of jargons

- The writer should use only those technical terms which the reader of the letter is sure to understand.

You Attitude

- Focus on the recipient's needs, purposes or interests instead of your own.
- Recipient oriented style is called you attitude.
- Use more of you and yours instead of I, me, mine, us, our. Ours.

You Attitude

For Example: We are glad we can now send our tape recorders.

You would be glad to know that your tape recorders are ready for sale.

You attitude is a matter of genuine empathy.

You Attitude

You attitude may not help at times.

For example:- If someone makes mistake, minimize ill feeling by referring to the mistake impersonally rather than pointing out directly.

For ex: **We have a problem** instead of '**you caused a problem.**'

You Attitude

You attitude

- You should never use this type of paper for photocopiers.
- You have not connected the wires properly.

Impersonal attitude

- This type of paper does not work well in photocopiers.
- The wires have not been connected properly.



Correctness and Completeness

- Correctness refers to concreteness or precision.
- Completeness refers to thoroughness or giving all the required details.
- To be correct and complete you need to understand the purpose of the letter and think clearly.

To achieve correctness and completeness

- Use evaluative and factual words/ phrases rather than abstract and general expressions.
- Use unambiguous words.
- Proof read your message for accuracy of spelling and grammar before sending.

To achieve correctness and completeness

- Check whether you have answered all the queries and provided all the details.
- Ex:- We need a large office.
- We need at least 10,000 square feet.

Positive Approach

- Avoid words with negative connotations.
 - Frame your message with words which will not hurt or offend your readers.
 - Replace unpleasant words with mild terms or expressions.
 - Emphasise the positive side of your message.
 - Stress what is or what will be rather than what is not and what will not be.
-

Positive Approach

- Tell what you have done or what you can do instead of what you have not done or what you cannot do.

Positive Approach

Negative

- We never change damaged goods.

Positive

- You may exchange the purchased goods provided they are in good condition.

Courtesy and Consideration

- Being polite means, earning respect and sustaining your relationship with your readers.
- A rude and short letter should not be retaliated with an equivalently and vehemently rude reply.
- While writing a business letter we should be in a cool, favorable and reasonable frame of mind.

Courtesy and Consideration

Original

- Your indifferent attitude has caused a great loss.

Revised

- Had you been a bit more careful, we could have avoided this 20% loss.

Certain phrases which express courtesy and consideration

- Many thanks for your letter dated...
- Kindly respond to our request for...
- Please refer to our order dated...
- You will be pleased to know that...
- We appreciate your prompt response to our...
- We are sorry that we may not be able to grant you...

Avoid artificial and angry expressions

- Please permit to say that...
 - We beg to state that...
 - Never has there been, nor there will be, a customer as good as you.
 - I simply cannot understand your negligence.
 - We have no intention of allowing this state of affairs to continue.
-

Coherence

- The topic sentence should be placed in the beginning of a paragraph so that it can give the gist of the whole paragraph immediately.

Format of Business Letters

- Block Format
 - Simplified Style
 - Modified Block Format
 - Semi-Block Format
-

1. Block Layout

- All elements except the letterhead heading are aligned to the left hand margin.
- The end punctuation marks are omitted in each element except the salutation, complimentary close and message.

Blocked Style

- In the block format all the elements such as date, address, salutation, paragraphs and the close all start from the left hand margin.

The word or each paragraph need not be indented.

Different parts and paragraphs of the body of the letter are typed in double spacing.

While within each part and paragraph single spacing is preferred.

23 North Main Street
Maharaja Colony
Post Box no. 253447
Mumbai-4004800

February 23, 2010

Dr Richa Mehta
Customer Relations
Bharat Telephone Company
154 Balaji Street
Mumbai-4004800

Dear Ms. Fernandes,

I-----
-----.

Yours sincerely,

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

2. The Simplified Style

This format resembles block format, it is characterized by the following features:

Omits salutation

Often includes subject line in capital letters

Omits complimentary close

23 North Main Street
Maharaja Colony
Post Box no. 253447
Mumbai-4004800

February 23, 2010

Dr Richa Mehta
Customer Relations
Bharat Telephone Company
154 Balaji Street
Mumbai-4004800

BALANCE PAYMENT ALREADY MADE

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

3. The Modified Block format

Modified block format is different from block format in the positioning of certain elements.

Heading, complimentary close and signature block are aligned vertically with the right margin.

23 North Main Street
Maharaja Colony
Post Box no. 253447
Mumbai-4004800

February 23, 2010

Dr Richa Mehta
Customer Relations
Bharat Telephone Company
154 Balaji Street
Mumbai-4004800

Dear Ms. Fernandes

I-----

Yours sincerely

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

4. The Semi-block format

- This resembles modified block style except that the start of each paragraph is indented.
- Each paragraph of the message starts a few spaces away from the margin.
- This form makes the letter somewhat clumsy and has gone out of style.

23 North Main Street
Maharaja Colony
Post Box no. 253447
Mumbai-4004800

February 23, 2010

Dr Richa Mehta
Customer Relations
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Dear Ms. Fernandes

I-----
-----.

Yours sincerely

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

The Use of Letterhead Stationery

- When a writer is representing a company or organization, he/she should use the organization's letterhead stationery for correspondences with people outside the organization.
- If a letter requires more than one page, the additional pages are called continuation pages are typed on plain paper, not letterhead.



College, school, department or office name

Programs of study (optional)

Building/room number • street address (optional)

Box 0000 • Cookeville, TN 38505-0001

(931) 372-0000 • Fax (931) 372-0000 • www.ttsch.edu/area

Structure of a Business Letter or ramifications of a Business letter

- Heading
 - Date
 - Inside address
 - Salutation
 - Subject line
 - Body or substance of the letter
 - Subscription or complimentary closing
 - Signature block
-

Heading

- It is also known as letter head, it includes organization's name, full address and telephone numbers.
- If the letter head is not used, the heading includes sender's address.

Date

- Date should include the month, date and year.
- Date can be written in 3 forms:-March 6, 2014 (American style)
- 6th March,2014 (English style)
- 6 March,2014 (oxford university style)
- Date is placed on the left hand side.

Inside Address

- Inside address includes the addressee's/receiver's name, the company's name, street ,state and zip code.
- The same address appears on the envelope.
- If you are writing internationally, the addressee's country should follow in capital letters.

The General Manager
Corporate Communications Inc.
3456 Grant
Chicago IL 60758
USA

Salutation

- Salutation should be placed two space below the inside address.
- In the simplified letter format, salutation (Dear Sir, Dear Ma'am) is replaced by the subject line.

Subject Line

- Certain business firms prefer to write subject between inside address and the salutation.
- In the simplified block format only subject is written which indicates the topic or purpose of the letter.
- It also indicates where to file the letter for future reference.

Subject Line

- It usually appears below the salutation.
- Sometimes it is placed above the salutation and below the attention line.

Subject Line

- Dear Mr. Kumar

Subject: Information regarding last week's inspection.

Attention: Personal Manager

Subject: Information regarding last week's inspection

Dear Mr. Kumar,

Body or Substance of the Letter

- The message that a letter conveys must be divided into short paragraphs.
- Unnecessary repetition should be avoided.
- It should begin two lines below the salutation/subject line.
- Letter should contain short sentences and straight forward style.

Subscription or Complimentary Closing

- It marks the end of the letter.
 - It contains certain courteous words.
 - Use of these courteous words depends upon the tone or nature of the letter whether it is a formal or informal letter.
 - Yours sincerely, Yours truly, Yours faithfully.
-

Signature Block

- The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature block, which includes your signature, name and title.
- Every letter must end with a signature to give authenticity to the information.
- An unsigned letter is of no consequence.

Signature Block

- Place the signature block 4 lines below the complimentary close.
 - If your name leaves the reader in doubt , include the courtesy title indicating gender with or within parentheses in the signature block.
-

Signature Block

- Sincerely

(Ms.) Santosh Singh

Senior Executive

Signature Block

If you are writing on a plain paper place the company's name in capital letters, double space below the complimentary close.

Include the sender's name and title four lines below the company's name.

Signature Block

Sincerely,

WENTWORTH INDUSTRIES

Mr. Atul Chauhan
President

Additional Elements

- Addressee notation
 - Attention line
 - Subject line
 - Enclosures
 - Copy notation
 - Mailing notation
 - Post script
-

Addressee Notation

- Notation generally appears a double space above the inside address ,in all capital letters.
 - Personal, Confidential, or Please Forward are examples of such notations.
-

Addressee Notation

Confidential

Mr. Samuel David
Penn State University, North Halls
104 Warnock Commons
State College, PA 16802

Attention line

- It is used to draw the attention of a particular person or a particular department to ensure a quick and prompt action on your letter.
- You may place the attention line on the first line and use the company name as the second line of the inside address.

Attention line

Attention Scheduling Coordinator
Peachtree Lecture Bureau
2930 S. Bennett Parkway
Albany, GA 31768-1324

Enclosures

- It indicates other relevant matter in support of the message of a letter.
- All additional papers, documents, tables, charts etc. enclosed to the letter are listed.
- This appears at the bottom of the letters .
- It may be written as “enclosures” or “encl”.

Enclosures

- Enclosures: Resume
Photograph
Draft
 - Enclosures: Report (10 pages)
List of Participants
-

Copy notation

- It indicates the same message, copies sent to various persons.
- It is mentioned against “ C.C” stands for courtesy copy.
- Recipients are listed in the order of rank if they hold different ranks or in alphabetical order if they hold equal ranks.

Copy notation

- CC: Chairman
Chief Executive Chairperson
Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice Chancellor
Director IIMS
Director IIEM

Mailing Notation

- It is placed at the top of the letter above the inside address on the left hand side.
- By registered post, by courier, by speed post etc generally appears in capital letters to catch the attention.
- The same notation also appears on the envelope.

Post Script

- Messages or matters included in a letter at the end which is after thought.
- Additional information typed or written after the letter is fully completed is called post script.
- It is written in the case of unplanned and unprepared with hurry and carelessness.

Post Script

- Avoid post scripts as they convey an impression of poor planning.
- You can use them in sales letters as punch line.

RESIDENT WELFARE ASSOCIATION NEHRU COLONY,
JAWAHAR NAGAR, GOA

Date Oct 12, 2013
Mailing Notation Speed Post
Addressee Notation Personal
Inside Address Water Works Department
Murthy Complex
Ashish Nagar
Goa
Attention line Attention: Mr. Rohan Kumar,
Incharge, Water Supply
Salutation Dear Mr. Rohan Kumar,
Subject line No water supply on 14 Oct, 2013
Body Matter

Regards

Complimentary Close
Signature Block
Enclosure line
Copy line
Post Script

Yours sincerely
Mayank, President
enclosure (1)
Copy: Chairman, Water Board
PS: please instruct your office

**to give prior intimation in
case of not supplying water
on a particular day.**

Types of business letters and their objectives

Types	Objectives
• Credit	• To enquire or request for loan
• Collection	• To collect past due accounts
• Order	• To place an order for products or services
• Inquiry	• To enquire the status of something; pricelist or catalogues.
• Claim	• To lodge a complaint and ask for remedy
• Adjustment	• To inform how the complaint would be taken care of.



Types of business letters and their objectives

Types	Objectives
• Sales	• To sell a product or service
• Fund raising	• To request the readers to donate money or time.
• Job Application	• To apply for employment
• Dunning Letter	• Letters requesting payment

Among these types order ,enquiry, claim and adjustment letters are mostly informative.

They either ask for information or provide information for further action.

Credit, collection, sales, fund raising and job application types of letters are persuasive as they attempt to persuade or motivate readers.

Letters of Claim or Complaint

- You make a claim (a formal complaint) or request an adjustment (a claim settlement) when you are dissatisfied with a company's product or service.
- The purpose of writing complaint or claim letter is not to express your anger but its sole motive is to find out the possible ways to solve the problem so that business relations with that firm can be maintained.

Letters of Claim or Complaint

Claim or complaint should be organized into three parts:-

Opening:- Mentions the purpose of the letter of course, it is the complaint.

Main Body:- Main body contains the factual explanation which will prove that the complaint is genuine.

Letters of Claim or Complaint

Closing :- It includes the writer's request to take necessary action in order to make some adjustment .

Letters of Claim or Complaint

You may write complaint letter for any of the reasons as:-

- Billing errors,
- goods not matching the sample,
- damaged goods,
- difference in agreed prices ,

Letters of Claim or Complaint

wrong goods,
late delivery,
wrong quantity,
non-delivery,
poor service,
unsatisfactory quality

Guidelines while writing complaint letters

1. Provide a reference point, namely consignment no./ invoice no., date and items ordered in the beginning.
2. Explain the problem and give specific details.
3. Briefly explain the inconvenience you are facing because of the problem.

Guidelines while writing complaint letters

4. Appeal to the supplier's reputation and sense of responsibility and fairness.
 5. State clearly what action you want the supplier to take or what adjustment you expect the supplier to offer.
-

Adjustment letters

- Written in reply to claim letters.
- While writing adjustment letters you must have the objective to:
 - satisfy your customer.
 - To safeguard the reputation of your organization.

Adjustment letters

- For long term business relations pay proper attention to the complaint made by the customer.
- Adjustment letter can be called the **letter of regret**.
- The writer not only expresses his apology but also gives the reasons which have caused the present inconvenience.

Adjustment letters

Adjustment letter helps in restoring the confidence of the customer in an organization.

The language and style should not be rude.

The tone of the letter should be such that the customer will be convinced of the writer's genuineness.

Various reasons for the fault that has dissatisfied your customer

- Transport delay
- Poor packaging
- Lack of expertise
- Inadequate stock
- Nationwide shortage

Guidelines while writing adjustment letters

1. Thank the customer for bringing the mistake to your notice.
2. Whether you agree or disagree, tell him how you will remedy the problem.
3. Apologize for the problem occurred but remember not to use overly dramatic tone.
4. Explain how the mistake has occurred.

Guidelines while writing adjustment letters

5. Admit your firm's fault carefully.
Be tactful when explaining the claimant's role if any in creating the problem.
6. Remind the customer how you are honoring the claim.
7. Encourage the reader to look favorably on your company or the product in question in the future.

Sales letter

- For promoting the sale of their goods, the manufacturers adopt many ways such as advertisement, personal contacts or door to door canvassing and sales letters.
- Sales letter enables the manufacturers to reach the buyers at low cost.

Good Sales Letter Serves the Following Purposes

- Like an advertisement, it aims at converting the reader into a customer.
- In order to convert a reader into a buyer, it first grips his attention and rouses his desire to purchase that product.

Good Sales Letter Serves the Following Purposes

- It promotes the sale of the product.
- Sales letter eventually results in expanding the customer network as it wins a permanent customer.

Parts of sales letter

- ***Introduction*** :-The first sentence is a key sentence therefore it should be able to grip the reader's attention.
 - Begin it with a special offer.
 - Highlight the special features of the product in brief.
 - Give some suggestions to persuade the buyer.
-

Parts of sales letter

- **Main Body**:- Special features of the product in detail in order to convince the reader.
- No exaggeration in describing the qualities of the product.
- The statement of guarantee which ensures the durability of the product should be given.

Parts of sales letter

- ***Conclusion***:- The last part of the letter persuades the buyer and motivates him to take quick action.
- Limited time, Special bargain offer and address of some local office (so that order can be made conveniently).

Letters of Enquiry

- Request information from another company.
 - A businessman may write letter of enquiry asking information about the quality, price and availability of the goods to be purchased.
 - It should be written in courteous language.
 - It should be concise, clear and complete.
-

Letters of Enquiry

- Enquiries may be of two types:-
- **Solicited Enquiry**:- It is an enquiry made in response to the advertisement of the seller.
- **Unsolicited Enquiry**:- Enquiry made by the buyer at his own initiative.
- He enquires about the goods he wants to purchase.

Answers to letters of enquiry/ replies

- Letters of enquiry and the answers to them are broadly speaking business promotion letters.
- Solicited and unsolicited letters should be answered courteously and cautiously.
- The firm that writes the answers to letters of enquiry pleads the case of its goods, describing the quality, price and other aspects of it.

Answers to letters of enquiry/ replies

- Replies to regular customer besides being clear and correct should express gratitude for the continued interest in the seller, his product and services.



Letters of Quotation

- Letters of quotation are ultimately **letters of enquiries**, seeking information regarding the price estimate and other terms and conditions of business.
- It is supposed to be competitive in nature i.e., lower and more attractive than what the seller thinks his competitors in the market would quote.

Sample of Quotation Letter

Subject: Business letter for quotation.

Dear Mildred,

I am writing this letter in order to inform you that I am planning to upgrade my computer system. I request you to send me a detailed quotation regarding the requirements for up gradation of my computer system.

Here is the list of items I would like to upgrade:

Graphic card of 2GB

RAM 2GB

HDD capacity of 500GB

I have a kind request to you to please do guide me in selecting the latest upgrades and branded company. The price range and the quality should be according to my satisfaction. Kindly send me the quotation of the following items and get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Yours Faithfully,

Letters of Order

- ✓ Orders are the requests for dispatch and delivery of the goods.
- ✓ Letters of order should include particulars with regard to the quantity, size and other specifications.

Dunning Letters

Letters which are written with an object of realizing balance of payment or outstanding payments are called dunning letters or letters requesting payment.

Dunning Letters

In short, if any person or trader does not make the payment of the price at the appointed time, then the letters which are written to him demanding payment are called dunning letters.

Dunning Letters

Dunning letters should be written peacefully and congruously (harmoniously).

Dunning letters should always be written in firm but polite language.

For recovery of payments the first letter will have to be just a mild reminder.

The second one can be more definite.

Dunning Letters

The third perhaps more firm.

Only in the fourth letter we suggest taking legal action.

Follow the essentials of effective communication to make business letters more effective.
