



# 商贸英语尺牍

English Business Letters

任菊秀 著

山东大学出版社

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## 前 言

随着我国经济实力的增强,我国与世界上很多国家的贸易合作正在迅速发展,这就需要一大批既懂得外贸知识又通晓外贸英语的人才。《商贸英语尺牍》根据形势发展需要而写,旨在拓宽从事对外商贸与技术交流人员的通信理论和国际贸易知识,从而提高对外贸易英语书信的写作水平。在信息化高度发达的今天,本书中的书信并不局限于纸质书信,也可以是电子邮件、传真或 MSN。

本书以汉英对照的形式写作而成。本书以语言学的语篇理论为支撑,从通信理论基本原则的角度对商贸英语书信有效性写作进行了探讨。本书共分十二章,前两章是对理论的探讨,第三章介绍商贸英语信函的格式,后九章结合国际贸易业务流程(包括询价与报盘、订单、商谈付款方式、装运条款、洽谈保险、投诉与索赔等)对各个主要环节的写作进行了阐述,并提供写作样例。本书既注重通信理论知识,又注重商贸英语知识的实践指导,可作为外贸专业人士的参考用书。

如有疏漏,恳请专家、读者不吝指正。

作 者

2015 年 6 月 12 日

# 目 录

## 第一章 通信理论方面的基本原则

### Basic Principles of Communications Theory ..... (1)

#### 第一节 有效商贸通信的重要性

#### The Importance of Effective Communications of Business ..... (1)

#### 第二节 基本原则

#### Basic Principles ..... (2)

#### 第三节 有效商业信文的要素

#### Elements of Good Business Letters ..... (9)

## 第二章 商贸英语信函的语言特征

### Language Features of English Business Letters ..... (12)

#### 第一节 行文特征

#### Features of Writing ..... (13)

#### 第二节 词汇特征

#### Features of Vocabulary ..... (14)

#### 第三节 语法特征

#### Features of Grammar ..... (17)

#### 第四节 语篇特征

#### Features of Discourse ..... (20)

## 第三章 商贸英语信函的格式与结构

### The Format and Structure of English Business Letters ..... (30)

#### 第一节 书写格式

#### The Format ..... (30)



第二节 商务英语信函的结构	
The Structure of English Business Letters .....	(32)
第三节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(46)
第四节 信 封	
The Envelope .....	(50)
第五节 商务英语书信的行间距	
The Spacing of English Business Letters .....	(51)
<b>第四章 建立业务关系</b>	
<b>Establishing Business Relations .....</b>	<b>(52)</b>
第一节 获取信息的主要途径	
The Main Channels of Obtaining Information .....	(52)
第二节 如何写好建立关系函	
How to Write Letters of Establishing Relations .....	(54)
第三节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(55)
第四节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(57)
<b>第五章 信誉咨询</b>	
<b>Status Enquiries .....</b>	<b>(61)</b>
第一节 信誉咨询的主要途径	
Main Channels of Status Enquiries .....	(61)
第二节 如何写好咨询信函	
How to Write Letters of Status Enquiries .....	(62)
第三节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(63)
第四节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(64)
<b>第六章 询价与回复</b>	
<b>Enquiry and Reply .....</b>	<b>(69)</b>
第一节 询 盘	
Enquiry .....	(70)
第二节 回 复	
Reply .....	(73)



第三节 专业术语解释	
Notes on Technical Terms .....	(75)
第四节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(77)
第五节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(78)
<b>第七章 报盘与接受</b>	
<b>Offer and Acceptance .....</b>	<b>(81)</b>
第一节 报盘与还盘	
Offer and Counter-offer .....	(81)
第二节 接受报盘	
Acceptance .....	(84)
第三节 如何撰写报盘与拒绝报盘	
How to Write an Offer and Decline an Offer .....	(86)
第四节 专业术语解释	
Notes on Technical Terms .....	(90)
第五节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(91)
第六节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(94)
第七节 附 件	
Attachment .....	(98)
<b>第八章 订 单</b>	
<b>Ordering .....</b>	<b>(100)</b>
第一节 买卖双方的义务	
The Obligations of Both Parties .....	(100)
第二节 订单的主要内容	
Main Content of Orders .....	(102)
第三节 如何写好订单信函	
How to Write Order Letters .....	(103)
第四节 专业术语解	
Notes on Technical Terms .....	(105)
第五节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(108)



第六节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(110)
第七节 附 件	
Attachment .....	(116)
<b>第九章 付款条件</b>	
<b>Payment Terms .....</b>	<b>(120)</b>
第一节 电 汇	
Telegraphic Transfer (T/T) .....	(120)
第二节 托 收	
Collection .....	(122)
第三节 信用证	
Letter of Credit (L/C) .....	(123)
第四节 如何写好支付信函	
How to Write Letters of Payment .....	(131)
第五节 专业术语解释	
Notes on Technical Terms .....	(134)
第六节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(136)
第七节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(139)
第八节 附 件	
Attachments .....	(145)
<b>第十章 包装与装运</b>	
<b>Packing and Shipment .....</b>	<b>(151)</b>
第一节 包 装	
Packing .....	(151)
第二节 装 运	
Shipment .....	(154)
第三节 如何写好包装和装运信函	
How to Write Packing and Shipment Letters .....	(158)
第四节 专业术语解释	
Notes on Technical Terms .....	(159)
第五节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(160)



第六节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(161)
第七节 附 件	
Attachments .....	(166)
第十一章 保 险	
Insurance .....	(174)
第一节 投保的目的	
The Purpose of Insurance .....	(174)
第二节 保险合同	
Insurance Contract .....	(174)
第三节 投保时间	
When to Insure .....	(175)
第四节 何人投保	
Who to Insure .....	(175)
第五节 海运主要险别	
Main Insurance Coverage .....	(176)
第六节 保险索赔	
Insurance Claim .....	(177)
第七节 投保信的主要内容	
The Main Content of Insurance Letter .....	(177)
第八节 常用语句	
Commonly Used Expressions .....	(178)
第九节 信 例	
Specimen .....	(178)
第十节 附 件	
Attachments .....	(181)
第十二章 投诉与索赔	
Complaint and Claim .....	(182)
第一节 提出投诉或索赔的原因	
Reasons for Making Complaints or Claims .....	(182)
第二节 投诉和索赔时应遵循的原则	
The Principles for Complaints and Claims .....	(183)
第三节 如何撰写与回复索赔信函	
How to Write and Reply a Claim Letter .....	(184)



#### 第四节 常用语句

Commonly Used Expressions ..... (186)

#### 第五节 信 例

Specimen ..... (187)

参考文献 ..... (191)

# 第一章 通信理论方面的基本原则

## Basic Principles of Communications Theory

### 第一节 有效商贸通信的重要性

#### The Importance of Effective Communications of Business

在国际商贸业务中,人们需要把要表达的信息用书信或电邮的形式准确及时地互相沟通与交流。由于书信是有效通信的媒介,写好商贸书信就显得非常重要。一般认为,写好商贸书信,只要知道书信的格式、结构及内容就足够了。但事实并不尽然。从社会学的角度看,通信是人与人之间的交往,要想得到预期的效果,你不但要懂得这封信要写些什么,更要想到读信的人是否能真正领悟你信中的意思,而他/她又会怎样回应你。这就需要我们掌握通信理论方面的一些基本原则。

People need to communicate accurately and timely with each other by sending or receiving messages in the form of letters or emails in the international business and trade. Because letters are the medium in effective communications, it is particularly important to write good business letters. It is generally believed that it is enough to know the format, structure and how to express the contents of business letters in English. But it is not always the case. From the perspective of sociology, business letters is the communication between people. To have effective communications, you should not only know what to write in the letter, but also think of whether your reader will really



understand the meaning in your letter, and how he/she will respond to you. So it is necessary to grasp some basic principles from communications theory.

## 第二节 基本原则

### Basic Principles

#### 一、通信的主体：“发信人”和“收信人”

#### The Subject in Communications: The “Sender” & the “Receiver”

不管通信技术如何先进发达,商贸业务的完成都离不开人与人之间的信息传递和交流。在通信过程中,“人”是通信的主体。在考虑信息之前,我们首先要想到的应该是交流信息的人。在通信理论中通信的两个人被称为“发信人”和“收信人”。发信人是指给对方写信的人;收信人是指收到对方信件的人。如果你是发信人,那么你就是积极的一方。你发出信息的目的是让收信的一方了解你的意图,从而产生“认识反应”,同时又可能去做你想让他/她去做的的事情,产生“行动反应”,有时还可能让收信人高兴或愤怒,激发“情感反应”。

Business, in most cases, is done by passing information with letters from person to person. In the process of message passing, “man” is the subject in communications. Before considering information, we should think of the people involved in communications first. The two persons involved are called the “sender” and the “receiver” in communications theory. The sender is the one who addresses the letter; the receiver is the person to whom the sender addresses the letter. If you are the sender, then you are on an active side, you send a message for the purpose of letting the receiver know your intention, resulting in a “cognitive response”, and possibly, at the same time, go and do what you intended him/her to do, generating an “active response”. Sometimes you may get the receiver to some feelings (happy or angry), stimulating “emotive response”.



### 1. 保持真诚、积极主动的通信原则

#### Sincerity and activity principle of communications

从发信人和收信人的视角,保持真诚、积极主动的通信原则是很重要的。如果你是发信人,在发信之前首先你要撰写信件,这时你就是“撰信人”。要写出高水平的、有效的商业书信,你作为撰信人必须要注意的是:自身是否持有真诚、积极主动的正确态度。商业书信的水平高低不完全在于你的文笔有多好,最重要的是你自身的态度有多么真诚。即使是你的英语水平不高,语法表达有错,只要你的态度是真诚和积极的,同样可以收到收信人正面和积极的回应。不要忘记,你当时写下的内容就代表了贵公司当时的想法。要表达自己态度的最佳方式就是积极主动,不要消极被动,切忌不能发号施令。在语气上用肯定的语气,尽量避免用否定的语气。如果你能够换位思考,你就会真正理解这一点。你会倾向于响应一些态度积极还是消极、语调主动还是被动的信息?一定要冷静客观,所以切莫因为你一时的情绪,影响了你公司的业务发展。

From the perspective of the sender and the receiver, sincerity and activity is the principle of communications. If you are the sender, before you send the letter, you have to write it. At this time, you are the "letter-writer". To write a high-level and effective business letter, as the letter-writer you must note that whether you have the right attitude; sincerity and activity. It is not that how good your writing style or how high your writing level is, but how sincere your own attitude is. Even if your English level is not high, your grammar expression is not good enough, you can also get the receiver's positive response as long as your attitude is positive and sincere. Just keep it in mind that you are to write down the concept of the idea representing your company at the very moment. Being positive is the best way to express your attitude. Don't be passive or give commands. Use a positive tone and try to avoid using negative tone. If you put yourself in the other's position, you will truly appreciate this point. Will you respond to messages with positive or negative attitude, in active or passive tone? Thus, be calm and objective, and don't affect the development of your company's business because of your temporary impulse.



## 2. 保持礼貌友善的通信原则 Courtesy principle of communications

“礼貌”原则在商贸信函中是非常重要的。常言道:“礼貌不费事,意义却很大。”一封礼貌的信函会很好地树立企业诚信的形象,会增加对发信人的尊重,对方认为你是个具有专业水准的合作者,会有利于合作协议的达成。通信不同于面对面的日常会话,收信人的年龄、性别、社会地位、国别、文化背景以及受教育程度等因素都是发信人在写信时不能疏忽的。比如说,与自己不同文化背景的人通信,就要了解对方的社会秩序、管理制度、文化习俗等,不要想当然地认为,你所要表达的对方都能理解。有时你使用起来很礼貌的语言,很可能在对方的文化背景下是很粗鲁的,甚至是很冒犯的语言。语用礼貌原则要求商务英语信函采用礼貌客气的措词。当你收到对方的询盘、报盘或订货时,不管你能否接受,都要以礼貌的语言表示诚挚的谢意。当你向对方传递令其满意信息时,措辞用语也要讲究客气。提供令对方不满意的信息或向对方表示不满时,更需要注意措辞用语的客气、委婉。礼貌原则基本体现在以下几个方面:(1)遵守国际商务来往惯例;(2)尊重对方风俗习惯;(3)避免使用命令的口气;(4)尽量用委婉的语气指出对方不尽如人意的地方;(5)复信要及时。

“Courtesy” or “politeness” principle in business letters is very important. As the saying goes: Courtesy costs little but means much. A polite letter will be very good for setting up the image of enterprise credibility, for increasing the receiver's respect for the sender, and for making the receiver to think the sender as a cooperator of professional level, which is helpful to have the cooperation agreement reached. In addition, before writing the letter, the sender should also consider the following factors: the receiver's personality, gender, social status, age, country, cultural background, the level of education and so on. For example, when you communicate with people under different cultural backgrounds, you have to know the other side's social order, management system, culture, customs, etc. Don't take it for granted that the receiver can understand you without difficulty. Sometimes the language you use is very polite, but probably under the background of other's culture it is very rude, even very offensive. The politeness principle of language use requires English business letter with polite wording. When you receive other's



enquiry, offer, or order, whether you can accept or not, you should extend your sincere thanks with polite language. When you deliver satisfactory information to the other party, you should also pay attention to the use of polite language. If you have to provide information to express your dissatisfaction, you need pay more attention to your wording, trying to be polite and tactful. Courtesy principle is basically reflected in the following aspects: (1) complying with international business practice; (2) respecting for the customs of the other party; (3) avoiding tone of command; (4) pointing out the other party's disappointing place with the tone of euphemism; (5) replying the letters timely.

### 3. 保持“体谅”的通信原则 Consideration principle of communications

“体谅”是指把对方的要求、观点、兴趣考虑在内,给对方一种我把“你的看法放在前头,我的观点放在后头”的感觉。设身处地为对方着想,常常会收到事半功倍的效果。保持体谅原则,实际上是在商务交往中为了促成交易所采用的一种策略。试比较下面的两个句子:

①很遗憾,你误解了我们的意思。

②很抱歉,我们没有把问题说清楚。

“Consideration” refers to taking the requests, views and interests of the receiver into account. Make the other party feel that “I put your opinion prior to mine”. If you put yourself in the other's position, you will often get twice the result with half the effort. Consideration principle, in fact, is a kind of strategy used in business activities to achieve transactions. Try to compare the following two sentences:

①I am afraid that you misunderstood us.

②We are sorry that we didn't make ourselves clear.

很显然,在句①中,发信人把责任推给了对方;而在句②中,发信人保持体谅原则,主动承担责任,从而消除了消极因素。不言而喻,句②的效果会比句①好很多。

Obviously, in the first sentence, the sender shifts responsibility to the reader. In the second sentence, the sender keeps the principle of



consideration, and is prepared to take responsibilities. Thus, the negative factors are eliminated. It goes without saying that the second sentence is more effective than the first one.

## 二、通信的客体：“书信传递的信息”

### The Object in Communications: “Message of the Letter”

信息是指消息中有意义的内容。信息是看不见的,需要信息载体来让人识别,信息与载体具有不可分性,信息的内容必须通过语言、文字、数据、符号才能表现出来。商贸书信传递的信息内容不能脱离信息载体而存在,信息只有借助于物质载体,经过书信形式的传递才能被收信人感知。也就是说,在书信中你把要表达的概念或主题用书面的语言文字(信文)表述出来,使收信人能够感知它、理解它。

Information refers to the meaningful content in the message, which is invisible. Thus it needs information carrier to enable people to recognize it. Information and carrier are inseparable. To show the content of the information, it must be expressed by language, text, data and symbols. Message content in business letters cannot exist without information carrier. And only with the aid of material carrier in the form of letters can information be perceived by the receiver. That is to say, in the letter you express your concept or subject with the written words, which get the receiver to perceive and understand.

#### 1. 商贸通信的语言范畴 Language used in business letters

书信是以书面语言形式表现的。国际商贸通信的语言特征属于特定环境下的商贸业务语言范畴。商贸信函可分为:询价函—复询价函、报价函—复报价函、通知函、订货函、索赔函、担保函、确认函等。其行文、语篇以及语法特征方面都与普通范畴的语言有所不同。在商贸通信中有部分的技术词汇是属于商贸水准的语言范畴,普通人是看不懂的。比如说,在询价函—复询价函、报价函—复报价函中都会提到“离岸价”“到岸价”,这些专业词汇只有专业人士或“内行人”才会懂得。但在商业通信中也有一部分的语言属于普通人能够阅读





和理解的普通语言范畴。

A letter is conveyed in written language. The language in international business and trade communications mostly belongs to the category of special language. Business letters can be divided into: inquiry letter-reply inquiry letter, offering letter-reply quotation letter, notification letter, ordering letter, claim or guarantee letter and confirmation letter. The characteristics of letter writing are different from ordinary category of language in writing style, discourse and grammar. Some technical terms in business communications, which belong to the category of business and trade, can not be understood by ordinary people. For example, in the inquiry of price, the special terms "FOB" and "CIF" are mentioned, which only the professionals or "experts" know. But there is also a part of language in business communications belonging to basic language category, which can be read and understood by the ordinary people.

## 2. 商贸信文的功用 The function of business letters

连续体理论认为,文件从产生的那一刻开始,就同时具有了多重价值。书信也是文件的一种,不管是以纸质还是以电子版形式保存,都具有了多重价值和作用。即知照作用、规约作用和凭证作用。

Continuum theory holds that from the moment it comes into being, document or file has multiple values at the same time. Letter as a kind of file, whether in print or electronic form, has multiple values, namely, the function of notification, stipulation and documentation.

### (1) 知照作用 The function of notification

商业信函与合同的第一功用就是把相关事情通知或提醒对方。

The first function of business letters is to notify or remind the other party the related things.

### (2) 规约作用 The function of stipulation

商业信函中包含协议、合同、条约等的部分都有规约作用,这就意味着这些文件对签署双方都有约束力,违背文件条款将承受政治、经济 and 道义上的责任。(廖瑛、莫再树,2007:19)