

Business English

商务英语函电

Correspondence

主编 李宏波



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内 容 简 介

本书共 11 个单元,涵盖了国际商务贸易各环节(询购、报价、订购、确认、保险、包装、运输、付款、投诉及其处理、代理等)往来函电写作知识与技能,包括商贸各环节样函、常用贸易英语词汇、短语及表达方式,旨在全面培养学生正确熟练地撰写国际商务贸易各环节的往来英语函电,达到格式规范、英语表达清楚正确、措辞得当、符合进出口业务习惯,并能准确地翻译中英文商务贸易函电。

本书可作为商务专业及商务英语专业学生的商务英语函电综合教程,也可供有志从事国际商务贸易工作或商务英语教学、有意提高自己的商务英语写作技能的学习者自学、参考和使用。

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前 言

“商务英语函电”是我国商务英语教学开设最早的一门课程,是国际商务贸易业务实际工作中应用最广泛的专门用途英语的写作实践课,是国际经济与贸易等有关专业教学及外经贸企业培训的主干课程。

本教材充分体现国际商务贸易实务,是根据国际商务贸易通行惯例,按照询购、报价、订购、确认、保险、包装、运输、付款、投诉及其处理等商务贸易的环节程序,选用近年来国际商务贸易行业中最新资料而编写的。

因此,通过本教材的学习与使用,学生能较好地掌握国际商务贸易各环节往来函电写作知识,包括常用国际商务贸易英语词汇、短语及表达方式,同时巩固所学国际商务贸易专业知识与技能;能正确熟练地撰写国际商务贸易各环节的往来英语函电,达到格式规范、英语表达清楚正确、措辞得当、符合国际商务贸易做法,并能准确地翻译中英文商务贸易函电。

本教材每个单元为一个独立主题,主要包括单元主题简介、样函、术语表及精心编制的单元练习题。

由于编者水平有限,教材中难免出现不足之处,请各位专家、学者不吝赐教。

李宏波

上海工程技术大学

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Unit 1



Principles, Parts and Layout of Business Letters

A business letter is usually a letter from one company to another, or between such organizations and their customers, clients and other external parties. The overall style of letter depends on the relationship between the parties concerned. Business letters can have many types of contents, for example to request direct information or action from another party, to order supplies from a supplier, to point out a mistake by the letter's recipient, to reply directly to a request, to apologize for a wrong, or to convey goodwill. A business letter is sometimes useful because it produces a permanent written record, and may be taken more seriously by the recipient than other forms of communication.

Principles of business letter writing

1) The first principle is clearness.

In order to achieve clearness you should not convey more than one idea in a sentence. You should not introduce more than one topic in a paragraph. You should not deal with more than one matter in a letter. Meanwhile, you should not be ambiguous in expressing your ideas.

2) The second principle is conciseness.

Try to write briefly and to the point. Avoid using lengthy words and sentences. Use daily expressions to replace jargons. Express yourself in an orderly and logical way. A good business letter should be natural, human and easy to read.

3) The third principle is correctness.

You have to make sure that both the language and facts are correct. In terms of language, you should make sure that there are no mistakes in your grammar, spelling

and punctuation. Too many such mistakes may confuse the recipient in figuring out what is meant in your letter.

4) The last principle is courtesy.

Courtesy is more than politeness. A good business letter should be positive, friendly and sincere. Instead of saying: We are in receipt of your letter of August 15, inquiring for our products. You say: Thank you for your letter of August 15, inquiring for our products.

Principal parts of a business letter

- 1) Letterhead
- 2) Date
- 3) Inside company name and address
- 4) Salutation
- 5) Letter body
 - A Opening Sentences
 - B Message
 - C Closing
- 6) Complimentary close
- 7) Signature

1) The letterhead

Companies usually have paper with printed letterhead, which includes the company's name, address, zip code, telephone number, fax number, email address, company's website etc. The printed letterhead is usually centered. The address in the letterhead is the address of the sender not the recipient. The sender's address usually is included in letterhead. If you are not using letterhead, include the sender's address at the top of the letter one line above the date. Do not write the sender's name or title, as it is included in the letter's closing. Include only the street address, city, and zip code.

2) The date

The date line is used to indicate the date when the letter is written. However, if your letter is completed over a number of days, use the date when it is finished. When writing to companies within the United States, use the American date format. (The

United States-based convention for formatting a date places the month before the day. For example: June 11, 2001.) Write out the month, day and year two inches from the top of the page.

- A. The date should be placed two lines below the letterhead. For the full-blocked style, you put it on the left. For the blocked or semi-blocked you put it on the right.
- B. The date should be typed in full and not abbreviated.
April, not Apr. December, not Dec.
- C. Do not write the dates in figures for they may cause confusion.
- D. Stick to one form once you have chosen it. There is no comma between the month and the year in British English.

15 May 2014 (British English) May 15, 2014 (American English)

3) **The inside name and address**

This is the name and address of the recipient. It is typed at the left-hand margin two lines below the date.

The inside address is the recipient's address. It is always best to write to a specific individual at the firm to which you are writing. If you do not have the person's name, do some research by calling the company or speaking with employees from the company. Include a personal title such as Ms. , Mrs. , Mr. , or Dr. Follow a woman's preference in being addressed as Miss, Mrs. , or Ms. If you are unsure of a woman's preference in being addressed, use Ms. If there is a possibility that the person to whom you are writing is a Dr. or has some other title, use that title. Usually, people will not mind being addressed by a higher title than they actually possess. To write the address, use the U. S. Post Office Format. For international addresses, type the name of the country in all-capital letters on the last line. The inside address begins one line below the sender's address or one inch below the date. It should be left justified, no matter which format you are using.

Courtesy titles are used in business correspondence, such as Mr. , Mrs. and Miss. If you do not know whether a lady is married or not, use Ms. All these are followed by family names. If you do not know whether the recipient is a man or a woman, use Dear Madam or Sir. They are not followed by family names.

If you know the appropriate departmental head, you'd better address the letter to him or her, by his official title not by his or her name. Thus a letter concerning purchase should be addressed to The Sales Manager. When the recipient holds a special title, such as Doctor, Professor, address him/her by this title: Prof. Smith.

4) The salutation

A salutation is a greeting used in a letter or other written or non-written communication. Salutations can be formal or informal. The most common form of salutation in a letter is Dear followed by the recipient's given name or title. The salutation "Dear" in combination with a name or a title is by far the most commonly used salutation in both British and US English, in both formal and informal correspondence. It is commonly followed by either by an honorific and a surname, such as "Dear Mr. Smith," or by a given name, such as "Dear John," (A Dear John letter has a specific connotation.) However, it is not common in English to use *both* a title of address *and* a person's given name: "Dear Mr. John Smith" would not be correct form.

A comma follows the salutation and name, while a colon is used in place of a comma only in US business correspondence. This rule applies regardless of the level of formality of the correspondence. If the name of the intended recipient is unknown, acceptable salutations are:

Dear Sir or Madam or "Sir/Madam" (If the gender of the reader is unknown).

To Whom It May Concern (If the writer wishes to exclude the gender of the reader from the salutation and/or to convey that the reader should forward the copy to one more suited to receive or respond appropriately).

Dear Sir (If the reader is male).

Dear Madam (If the reader is female).

In older British usage and current US usage, abbreviations "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Dr." are typically followed by a period (full stop), as is "Ms." even though it is not really an abbreviation, but it is common in recent British usage to drop the period after all such titles. Professional titles such as "Professor" are frequently used both in business and in social correspondence. Dignitaries and holders of certain public office like "Mr. President," or "Dear Madam Secretary".

"Ms." is the marital-status neutral salutation for an adult woman and should always be applied in cases in which the marital status is irrelevant and/or unknown to the author. For example, if one is writing a business letter to a woman, "Ms." is expected. "Mrs." denotes an adult female who is married, but is applied only where the subject has self identified as such. "Miss" can apply to specifically unmarried women, however the term is being replaced more and more by "Ms".

"Miss" is the proper form of address for female children. "Master" is used in formal situations for addressing boys typically aged under 16, after which it is "Mr". "Master" in this case is of old English origin.

Messrs. or Messieurs is an historically used term to address many men rather than “Mr Pink, Mr White, et al.” Messrs is the abbreviation (pronounced “messers”) for messieurs and is used in English. Mesdames addresses many women. Pronounced “Meydammes”.

On occasion, one may use “Sir” and/or “Madam” by itself as the salutation, with nothing preceding. The severe and old-fashioned formality of such a salutation makes it appropriate for very formal correspondence (for example, addressing a head of state, or a letter to the editor), but in the same way the formality and stiffness of such a salutation would make its use in friendly social correspondence inappropriate. The salutation depends on your relationship with the recipient. You may use formal salutation if you write to a company and do not know who to address to. In this case you use Dear Sirs or Dear Sir, and in America people like to use Ladies /Gentlemen. If you know the person you are writing to, you may use such a salutation as Dear Mr. Green; if you do not know whether a man or a woman will read your letter, you may write Dear Madam or Sir/Dear Sir or Madam.

You cannot use Sir/Sirs alone. You have to use dear to go with Sir/Sirs but Ladies /Gentlemen is used alone and cannot be used in the singular. The salutation is two lines below the inside address without any indentation.

5) The body of the letter

You may use the first person in the singular or plural form. For block and modified block formats, single space and left justify each paragraph within the body of the letter. Leave a blank line between each paragraph. When writing a business letter, be careful to remember that conciseness is very important. In the first paragraph, consider a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point. The next paragraph should begin justifying the importance of the main point. In the next few paragraphs, continue justification with background information and supporting details. The closing paragraph should restate the purpose of the letter and, in some cases, request some type of action.

If you have several matters to talk about, especially if such matters are not dealt with in the same department of the company, do not talk about them in one letter.

If a second page is necessary, do not write only the signature on the second page. You should try to remove part of the letter from the first page to the second by leaving more room between the letter head and the date ; between the date and the inside address; and leave more room for the hand written signature. Write “to be continued” on the bottom right hand side of the first page.

The second page should be written on a blank paper with the same kind of texture and the color as the first page. Write the page number, name of the recipient and the date and, like this:

Page 2

The Global Trading Co. Ltd. August 15, 2014

or

Mr. John Smith

Page 2

August 15, 2014

6) The complimentary close

The complimentary close is merely a polite way of ending a letter. The expression used must suit the occasion and match the salutation. The close begins at the same vertical point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph. Capitalize the first word only (for example: Thank you) and leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature. If a colon follows the salutation, a comma should follow the closing; otherwise, there is no punctuation after the closing.

7) The signature

A letter should be signed by hand in ink. As many hand-written signatures are illegible, the name of the signer is usually typed below the signature and followed by his job title or position. Leave 3 lines for a handwritten signature.

Letters predominantly in the first person singular are signed by the name of the writer.

Letters in the first person plural or impersonal passive are usually signed with the name of the firm. Below the name of the firm is the writer's name. Only the person who can represent the company is able to sign on behalf of the company. If that person is not available, then the person who is given the authority to sign can sign for the company. In this case you use pp or per pro, or you may use "for".

Optional parts of a business letter

1) Attention line

Attention line can be used if you wish to address the letter to a particular member or department of the company, but you perhaps only know the surname of the member

and thus cannot write the name in the Inside Address, which needs a complete name, or you expect your letter to be promptly attended to by any other member of the company who takes care of the business of the addressee in case the latter is absent from the office.

Flush with left hand margin or placed in the center of the page, the Attention Line is usually placed between the Inside Address and the Salutation, with double spacing above and below it. The line may begin with the word **Attention** or the simplest form **Attn.** punctuated with a colon, or with the expression **For the attention of**, and followed by the addressee's name and business title if available. This part is generally underlined, and may be capitalized as preferred.

2) The subject line

The subject heading is often placed one line below the salutation. It can be put on the left or in the middle depending on whether the letter is full-blocked, blocked or semi-blocked. This is used to call reader's attention to the topic of the letter, therefore it is a good idea to underline it or make it in boldface letters.

You can write the subject in the following ways:

A) Underline your subject like this:

Re: Applying for a position

B) Make your subject in boldface letters

Re: Applying for a position

C) Omit the words Re and Subject:

Applying for a position

The Subject Line gives a brief indication of the content of the letter, which is placed two lines below the Salutation and above the Body of the Letter. The line may begin with or without the word Subject, or be typed in block letters as preferred.

3) Enclosure

If something is enclosed with the letter - such as a bill, check or other documents, you should write Enclosure or Enclosures immediately two lines below the last line of the Signature in the lower left hand corner. The word can be shortened as Enc or Encl and followed by a period or colon. If necessary, you can list the enclosed documents.

Nowadays many business letters are sent by fax, attached to the fax message usually some documents are sent. In this case, the Attachment should be used instead of

Enclosure.

4) Carbon copy

When you want the recipient to know that a copy of the letter is to be sent to a third party, it is usual to indicate this by typing cc or CC followed by two spaces and the name of the recipient of the copy. The usual position is at the foot of the letter two lines below the signature or immediately below the enclosure. For example:

CC Mr. John Smith, Sales Manager

5) Postscript

Try not to use postscript unless you want to add a personal touch to your letter. It is placed one line below the enclosure. In most cases, postscript is seen as a sign of poor planning.

6) Reference number

A company usually assigns a reference to correspondence, and this is intended for quotation in the reply. This ensures that the reply goes to the right man, or in a large organization may be the key to a complicated filing system. Companies have different ways to form their reference numbers. These numbers should be quoted in the letters of reply.

Layout style

Full-blocked, blocked and semi-blocked layout styles are commonly used and the Full-blocked layout is the most widely adopted style in modern business correspondence.

Sample Layout of the business letter

Shanghai Textiles Import & Export Corporation

620 Gubei Road, Shanghai 200336, China

Tel: 021-52067452 Fax: 021-52067451

Our Ref: 351/10587

22 February, 2014

Mr John Smith
Purchase Manager
Alfred & CO.
Sherman Oak, California 91403
U. S. A.

Dear Mr Smith

Subject: Your enquiry

Thank you for your letter of February 15, enquiring for our products.

We can supply a wide range of quality chemical products at competitive prices. Delivery can be made within 30 days after receipt of your order and payment is to be effected by sight L/C.

Enclosed are our latest catalogue and pricelist for your reference.

We are looking forward to receiving your order soon.

Sincerely yours

PP Shanghai Textiles Import & Export Corporation

Wang Hai

Wang Hai
Sales Manager

Encls: two invoices

CC: Blank Lee

(Full-blocked)

There is no indentation in the full-blocked layout style, where everything is ranged left. There is no punctuation in the address and after the salutation and the complimentary close. Use single space within the paragraph. Use double spaces between paragraphs. If you have quotations or a list of something, you should start a new paragraph, with 5-space indentations on the left. Mark this part out by leaving one line space between this paragraph and the rest of the letter. This style is widely used today because it is easy to type and therefore efficient.

5) Paragraph

1. The first paragraph of the letter is the opening paragraph. It should be short and to the point. It should state the purpose of the letter and the main point of the letter. It should be clear and concise. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner.

2. The second paragraph of the letter is the body paragraph. It should be short and to the point. It should state the purpose of the letter and the main point of the letter. It should be clear and concise. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner.

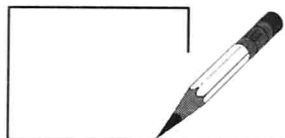
Layout style

Full-blocked layout style: The first paragraph of the letter is the opening paragraph. It should be short and to the point. It should state the purpose of the letter and the main point of the letter. It should be clear and concise. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner. It should be written in a friendly and polite tone. It should be written in a simple and straightforward style. It should be written in a clear and concise manner.

Sample layout of the business letter

Shanghai Textiles Import & Export Co., Ltd.
620 Gubei Road, Shanghai 200336, China
Tel: 021-520-7052 Fax: 021-520-7053
E-mail: shanghai@shanghai.com

Unit 2



Establishing Business Relations

Modern business largely depends on customer relations. The more customer relations you open, the more business opportunities you'll have. Therefore, to do business, it is essential to seek business opportunities and establish business relations with as many customers as possible in the world. To seek prospective business opportunities and business partners, we may follow the channels below:

- 1) attendance at the export commodities fairs;
- 2) chambers of commerce, commercial counselor's offices or other commercial institutions at home and abroad;
- 3) recommendation from business connections;
- 4) mutual visits by trade delegations or groups;
- 5) self-introduction by customers;
- 6) banks;
- 7) advertisements in newspapers and magazines;
- 8) the Internet.

When writing a letter, we usually tell how we get the name and address, what our business line is, the purpose of writing the letter, our wish to cooperate in future business and to get an early reply. If we intend to buy for import, we may also make request for samples, pricelist, catalogue, etc.

Letter 1

Snike Trading Co. Ltd.

115 Jiefang Road, Xiamen, Fujian

Tel: 0592-60005338 Fax: 0592-60005339

April 5, 2014

Eagle Co. Ltd.

Nelson House, Newell Street

Birmingham B3 3EL

United Kingdom

Dear Sir

We have learned from our Commercial Counselor's Office in London that you are interested in importing Chinese Cotton Piece Goods. As this item falls within the scope of our business activities, we shall be pleased to enter into direct business relations with you at an early date.

In order to give you a general idea of the products now available for export, we send you a copy of our latest catalogue and a pricelist. Quotations and sample books will be airmailed to you upon receipt of your specific enquiry.

We look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely

David Wong

Purchase Manager