

商 务 网 络 培 训 系 列 教 材

国际贸易函电及实务



李卓文 编著

COMMUNICATION &
PRACTICES
IN
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS



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商务网络培训系列教材

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Communication & Practices in International Business

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前 言

能够有机会担任商务部商务培训网商务英语函电的教学工作我感到很荣幸。本书是在该课程讲义的基础上整理加工而成，因而内容更准确、完善和系统，而且有所扩充。

本书特点

1. 专门为自学商务英语函电的人士编写，为明确的读者群体服务。
2. 满足读者知识层次不同的需要是本书的写作宗旨，本书做到了将商务英语函电与进出口业务和其他相关知识结合起来，用英语讲授。
3. 本书提供的信件和传真件是以进出口业务为主线，尽量反映交易的整个过程，涉及基本交易环节的主要问题。
4. 内容和对课程的设计新颖，有独到之处，这主要反映在本书的概述，信件和传真件的编写，注释的内容，语言总结的分类上。本书还讲了签署信件的三种方法，催开证的具体步骤等，明确、系统地解释了各类信件的写作特点和步骤，填补了以往函电教材的空白。
5. 去除古老死板的商业行话 (business jargon)，使用口语化易懂的语言，以适合现代商务工作的需要，体现了顾客至上的现代商务理念。
6. 查找简便，可作为商务函电的工具书和外贸业务的参考书。
本书词汇表按字母排序，并注明了出处，它包含了本教材的书信和传真件中出现的全部词汇和术语。考虑到读者英语水平的不同，概述和注释中的术语和词汇采取脚注的形式，以方便读者查阅。
7. 书后附有课文和重点句型的翻译及练习参考答案，供读者参考。

单元结构

本书有 11 个单元。除第一单元外，每个单元分成：概述、书信、语言总

结和练习4部分。

1. 概述

简明扼要地阐述本单元的业务要点与有关的知识,解释相关的术语。以往的函电教材主要是为学习外贸英语书信而编写的,而本教材体现的是如何用英语书信解决外贸业务问题。因此,读者除了学习商务函电提高英语水平外,还可以扩大知识面,掌握相关知识的衔接,更好地理解 and 运用这些知识。

2. 书信

这部分包括信件本身、讲解和注释。

■ 本书的取材宗旨:突出了交易从询价到成交的全部过程,围绕具体交易的主要环节展开讨论。各单元的衔接反映了某一笔交易的延续性,使读者较全面地了解交易的进展情况和如何解决出现的问题。

■ 讲解的内容:函电课程应该掌握的重点句型和词汇,有详细的中英文讲解和大量的例句。对反复出现的词注明其出处。

■ 注释:概括了某一类信函的特点,业务要求和相关知识,写作要点和步骤,应该注意的问题等。这种写作方法有利于自学,使学生知其然,并知其所以然,起到画龙点睛的作用。

3. 语言总结

对有用的表达法进行了分类,便于读者查找,并能举一反三。

4. 练习

根据本单元的业务要求与应强化的重点句型设置练习。

在此,感谢商务部商务培训网给了我一个与大家探讨商务信函写作的机会,尤其要感谢刘德标同志长期以来对我的支持,感谢张喜明老师和我的两位老同学宋红和贾国强在业务上的帮助,感谢中国商务出版社使本书能够与广大在线学习的人士和读者见面。衷心地希望本书和在线讲解对大家的工作和学习有帮助。感谢大家对这门课的热情参与。

编著者 李卓文

2006年12月

国际贸易函电及实务

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Unit One

Principles and Layout of the Business Letter

商务信函的原则与格式

I. Introduction

Business letters are the basic means of business communication. The more modern forms such as the fax and the e-mail are the result of modern technology. The differences lie mainly in the means of communication rather than the message itself. Once you know how to write letters, you will have no difficulty in sending the message by other methods. Therefore, what you send is far more important than how you send them.

II. Principles

We should follow certain principles when writing business letters.

1. Clearness

Express one idea in a sentence, cover one topic in a paragraph and deal with one matter in a letter.

2. Conciseness

Make your message brief and to the point. Do not use long words and sentences. Use daily expressions to replace jargon. A good business letter should be natural, human and easy to read.

Instead of saying: *We should be obliged if you could contact Mr Smith at*

an early date.

You say: *Please contact Mr Smith soon.*

Instead of saying: *With reference to your Order No. 319, the goods were dispatched on the 13 of this month.*

You say: *We sent your Order No. 319 on 13 April.*

3. Correctness

Make sure that both the language and facts are correct. Pay special attention to numbers and avoid typing mistakes. Correctly use punctuation, as it may affect the meaning of the sentence.

Our shop, in Canada, was destroyed by fire. (The writer has only one shop.)

Our shop in Canada was destroyed by fire. (The writer has more than one shop.)

4. Courtesy

- ◆ This is more than politeness. A good business letter should be positive, friendly and sincere.

Compare:

Thank you for your order for 1,000 tons of Black Tea. (better)

I am in receipt of your order for 1,000 tons of Black Tea.

- ◆ Use “you approach” when you have good news.

We shall be able to offer you free customer service for your newly purchased refrigerator for 3 years.

If you adopt “you approach” you may say: *You will be pleased to hear that you will soon be able to have a free customer service for your newly purchased refrigerator for 3 years.*

- ◆ Do not use “you approach” if you have bad news. In this situation, you should handle it tactfully.

Compare:

Your letter is not clear at all. I cannot understand it. (rude)

If I understand your letter correctly ... (tactful)

III. How to learn this course

First, you need to have a good command of English, which is essential in any communication. Then, pay attention to the special terms and expressions in the course. Understand what they mean and how they are used. As this is a practical course, the best way to learn it is to read more and write more. You will find that doing exercises will help you remember and understand what you have learned, and that reciting letters is very useful when you write business letters yourself.

IV. Layout of the business letter

The business letter may be composed of the following parts:

1. Letter Head

Companies usually use stationery with a printed letter head, which includes the company's name, address, postcode/zip code, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address etc.

The printed letter head is usually centred.

The address in the letter head is the sender's address not the recipient's.

2. Date

The date should be placed two lines below the letter head. For the full-blocked layout style①, put it on the left. For the blocked② or semi-blocked③, put it on the right.

① 全齐头式

② 齐头式

③ 半齐头式

The month should be written in full, not in figures or be abbreviated to avoid confusion. Use cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) for the date.

Here are the recommended forms. Stick to one form once you have chosen it. There is no comma between the month and the year in British English.

April 3, 2000 (British)

April 3, 2000 (American)

3. 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.

Courtesy titles such as *Mrs.*, *Mr* and *Miss* are used in business correspondence. Use *Ms* if you do not know whether a lady is married or not. Write to the appropriate departmental head and address that person by the official title if you write to a company. A letter concerning purchasing should be addressed to the Sales Manager.

The Sales Manager

(the recipient's address)

Dear Sir

When the recipient holds a special title such as Professor or Doctor, address him/her by the title.

Prof. Smith

Dr James White/James White, MD

Make sure to include the name of the country to avoid ambiguity when you write letters to foreign countries, as the city of the same name may appear in different countries; e. g., London in England, London in Canada.

4. Salutation

The salutation is two lines below the inside name and address without any

indentation.

The salutation is a polite greeting with which the letter begins. Use formal salutation *Dear Sirs* if you write to a company and do not know whom to address to; use informal salutation *Dear Mr/Mrs /Miss* followed by the family name if you know the name of the person. The word, *Gentlemen*, is also used in America but never in a singular form. If you do not know whether a man or a woman will read your letter, use *Dear Madam or Sir* or *Dear Sir or Madam*.

Formal:

Dear Sir

Dear Madam

Dear Sirs / Mesdames

Gentlemen

Informal:

Dear Mr Green

Dear Mrs Green

Dear Miss Green

Dear Ms Green

5. Subject Heading or Caption

The subject heading is 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. It is used to call reader's attention; therefore, you may underline it or make it in boldface letters.

A. Underline the subject.

Re: Your L/C No. 123

or

Subject: Your L/C No. 123

B. Make the subject in boldface letters.

Re: Your L/C No. 123

or

Subject: Your L/C No. 123

C. Omit *Re* and *Subject*.

Your L/C No. 123

6. Body of the Letter

This is the most important part of the letter, which may be written in

A. the first person singular: *I have received your application and shall be bringing it before the Board for consideration this week*

B. the first person plural: *We have received your application and shall be considering it at a board meeting this week*

C. the impersonal passive: *Your application has been received and will be considered by the Board this week.*

Generally speaking, only the person of weight and authority is in a position to use the first person singular; for instance, the managing director or the president, as he is expressing himself and also representing those opinions of the company. A junior member of a company is advised to associate himself with the whole company by using the plural. The personal element in these two styles is usually their principal advantage, but this can be a disadvantage if the writer is very junior or if the matter is very formal, when the impersonal style is to be preferred.

There is no reason why the styles should not be combined, e. g. , using the first person singular when the writer's personal opinions are expressed but shifting to one of the other two styles where a matter concerning the whole company is involved.

Make a plan before writing. The following questions may be useful:

- ◆ What is the purpose of the letter?
- ◆ What is the expectation?
- ◆ What language should you use to achieve your purpose?
- ◆ How many times have you talked about the matter?
- ◆ Do you have all the information you need?

- ◆ What is the company policy concerning the matter you are dealing with?

Do not handle more than one matter if you have several to talk about, especially if such matters are not dealt with in the same department of the company. You should write different letters to the departments concerned so that the matters can be dealt with efficiently.

When you finish, check the letter. Make sure that you have dealt with the matter in the right way and have used the proper language. Check the spellings and figures. Do not rely entirely on the computer.

Do not write only the signature on the second page. You should try to remove some parts 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 for the signature. (You can also use this method when the letter is very short.) Write *to be continued* on the bottom right hand side of the first page. The second page should be written on blank paper with the same kind of texture and colour as the first page. Unless you send a fax, you should write the name of the recipient, the page number and the date like this:

The Universal Trading Co.
Page 2
February 10, 2006

or

Mr James Smith
Page 2
March 2, 2006

Leave enough space for both the left and the right margins.

7. Complimentary Close

The complimentary close is merely a polite way of ending a letter. The expression must suit the occasion and match the salutation.

Dear Sir(s) Yours faithfully

Gentlemen Yours truly

Dear Mr Jones Yours sincerely

The complimentary close is one line below the main body of the letter in the middle for the blocked and the semi-blocked, or on the left-hand side for the full-blocked.

8. 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 three lines for the handwritten signature.

Letters predominantly written in the first person singular are signed by the writer. Letters in the first person plural or impersonal passive are usually signed with the name of the company. Below the name of the company 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. Use *p. p.* (*per pro*)^①, or *for* in this case.

A. The letter is signed by the person who has the authority to represent the company.

Yours sincerely

(Signature)

B. Davis

Managing Director

The Overseas Co. Ltd.

B. The letter is signed by the person who has been given the authority to sign.

Yours faithfully

for / p. p. The Overseas Co. Ltd.

(Signature)

① *p. p.* (*per pro*) 是 *per procuracionem* 的缩写, 意思是由代表, 经代理人。

W. Black
Marketing director

C. The letter is signed by the person in his official capacity to indicate the exact degree of authority.

Yours sincerely
The Overseas Co. Ltd.
(Signature)

Philip Wang
Assistant Sales Manager

9. Miscellaneous Matters

➤ Carbon Copy

Sometimes the same letter needs to be sent to other persons or organizations. In this case, write *cc* followed by the names of the persons or organizations the copies are to be sent to. “*cc*” is placed below the signature at the left margin. It is the abbreviation^① for carbon copy.

Yours faithfully
for The Overseas Co. Ltd.
(Signature)

W. Black
Marketing director

cc Mr J. Cooper

➤ Enclosure

The enclosure is placed below the carbon copy. It can be abbreviated as

① 缩写词