



普通高等院校“十二五”规划重点教材
国际贸易系列



外贸英语函电

English Correspondence on Foreign Trade



李朝民 / 主编



立信会计出版社

LIXIN ACCOUNTING PUBLISHING HOUSE



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总 序

改革开放以来,尤其是加入 WTO 之后,中国的对外贸易得到了快速发展,为国民经济的健康发展作出了巨大贡献。在这种背景下,培养高素质的外贸从业人员,保持国际贸易持续快速增长,就显得十分重要。高素质的外贸从业人员,需要掌握系统的相关理论、知识和技能,这套国际贸易系列教材就是为这一目的而编写的。

本套教材共 13 本,分别是《国际营销学》、《中国对外贸易概论》、《国际贸易》、《国际贸易实务》、《国际贸易法》、《国际金融》、《外贸英语函电》、《国际商务英语》、《国际服务贸易》、《国际贸易结算》、《国际货物运输与保险》、《国际贸易单证实务》、《国际商务谈判》,其中前 8 本可作为商务部外销员的考试用书。这 8 本教材以商务部最新外销员考试大纲为指导,在涵盖大纲全部内容的基础上,适当进行了扩充,使其既可满足外贸从业人员参加外销员考试复习之用,亦可供高等院校国际贸易及相关专业的学生学习使用。

本套教材的最大特点,在于注重理论性、知识性和趣味性的同时,也注重实用性和可操作性。比如,《国际贸易实务》介绍了如何选择进出口商品和寻找贸易商的各种有效途径,还有如何办理出口外汇核销和出口退税手续的相关内容等;《外贸英语函电》的案例几乎全部来源于外贸公司的真实案例;《国际贸易单证实务》的各种单证全部来源于外贸公司和外贸运输公司的真实单证,以便学生学以致用,提高实际业务操作技能,毕业后能快速适应外贸工作。全套教材都适当增加了“知识拓展”和“案例分析”,便于学生理解、掌握相关理论和知识。

本套教材的另一特点,是内容的前沿性和新颖性。最新相关理论、惯例、政策、规章制度以及所涉及的相关最新知识、信息等均被纳入教材中,紧跟时代步伐。

本套教材的编者,有长期从事国际贸易相关专业的教学和科研工作的专家、学者,还有长期从事国际贸易实务、管理及相关工作的专业人士,既确保了理论知识的深度、广度和系统性,又确保了应用知识的真实性和实用性。

本套教材的广泛使用,将有助于改变长期以来教材与国际贸易实践脱节的现状,有利于培养理论知识系统,全面、扎实,操作技能强的综合性外贸专门人才。

李朝民

前 言

外贸英语函电是外贸活动相互联系、沟通的手段,是对外贸易不可缺少的组成部分。如果没有往来的贸易电函,国际贸易活动就不可能顺利进行。因此,外贸英语函电在对外贸易中的作用就是为交易双方的沟通交流搭起桥梁,准确而具体地传递双方的各类相关信息。

本书以2010年商务部外销员考试大纲为指导,采用英文编写,从一个完整的贸易流程来具体阐述英语函电的写法,介绍国际贸易过程中所涉及的主要问题和相关知识,以帮助贸易从业人员全面了解达成交易的具体做法。全书共分为十四章,每章大体上有六个部分: Introduction, Cases, Words, Useful Expressions, Exercises 及 Supplement。Introduction 是每一章内容的介绍;Cases 选取外贸实务中一些真实函电,例子新颖实用,写作风格各异;Words 是对在课文中出现的单词意思进行简单解释;Useful Expressions 是对一些课文中出现的相关知识点进行解释以及扩展;Exercises 是与课文内容相关的练习题,包括一些外销员考试真题,有益于巩固所学知识并提高外销员考试的应试能力;Supplement 是与课文相关的泛读材料,用于扩充知识面。书后,以附录的方式增加了外贸英语函电常用的系统知识,供外贸业务员在外贸实践活动中查找使用;同时,参照外销员外贸英语考试的题型,结合近几年外销员考试真题组成一套完整试卷,便于进行学习效果检测。

本书克服了多数教材重语言形式轻语言能力的弊端,突出函电写作交际能力的培养,通过介绍贯穿国际贸易实务各个环节的真实函电样本,提高实用性。本书可供高等院校国际贸易、国际商务、国际营销等涉外专业的学生使用,也可作为外贸从业人员参加外销员考试的培训教材和自学使用。

在本书编写过程中,我们参考并借鉴了国内外出版的有关书籍和相关网站资料,在此一并致谢。

本书主编李朝民,副主编余泳、王珍珍、张宇星,其他参编人员华远鹏、王晓东。由于编者水平有限,书中难免出现错误和不足,敬请同行专家和广大读者不吝赐教,批评指正,以便再版时修订完善。

编 者

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Unit 1 Fundamentals of Writing an English Business Letter

Introduction

As China opens wider to the outside world, its foreign trade has expanded greatly in recent years. Meanwhile, competition is becoming keener and keener. To attract more customers, well-written business letters often play an important role besides good quality and reasonable price during the process of business transactions. So it is vitally important for the students who want to be engaged in international trade in future to learn how to keep in touch with firms or merchants abroad by correspondence and how to draft effective business letters. Business communication refers to all the messages that are sent and received for business purposes. In international business communication among people from different countries, messages can be transmitted by written and electronic correspondence (such as letter, memo, fax, E-mail) or through oral media (such as telephone, voice mail, teleconferencing). Business letter-writing is also experiencing a rebirth.

In the first part, we give the general media that might be used in international trade, some of which are gradually abandoned with the social development, so we only give a simple introduction such as telex, telegram, etc.. However, the commonly used media styles (E-mail, fax) are dwelled on in unit 14.

In this unit, the following key points should be mastered:

- (1) Know the source of information about business letters.
- (2) Grasp the writing skills about business letters.
- (3) Memorize some useful sentences on business letters.

1. Communication Media

Effective communication, which is more and more emphasized in today's business competition, includes the medium that best adapts to the reader's need and expectations while reaching the message sender's purpose with the lowest possible costs. A comparison of the most widely used media will give you a better idea in choosing the most efficient medium.

There are several kinds of communication media as follows:



(1) Letter.

Letters here refer to those delivered by post office, which are regarded as the most formal way of communication. They are also much more protective of the communicator's privacy; therefore, they are the best option for messages that are formal, private and confidential, but they do not need much feedback and are not very urgent. It's often used for sending letters of invitation, thanks, congratulations as well as documents that must be original, such as contracts. But letters take longer time and cost more money especially when they are heavy.

(2) Memo.

Memo is the short form of memorandum, which is commonly used for interoffice communication such as company announcements, routine operating procedures and other informal documents. The communicators are usually company insiders and business partners known to each other, so the style can be less formal than letters.

Memos can be delivered by hand, by post office, or by E-mail.

(3) Fax.

A fax is transmitted over a fax machine — a telecopy machine that creates a fax (a “hand copy” of a message) sent over phone lines. It can overcome the barrier time zones and can be easily kept in a file. The unique characteristic of a fax is that it can transmit the original message. It is, therefore, a convenient way to send messages that are handwritten or contain diagrams, tables, graphics or pictures. The drawback is that it lacks the privacy as a letter, and the quality can hardly be assured — the words may not be as clear as the original message and the pictures may be blurred.

In addition, you may send a letter, a memo or any paper document (such as an invoice; a draft contract) over fax machines.

(4) E-mail.

Electronic mail(or E-mail) is a method of transmitting messages through a computer network.

The recent, rapid expansion of the Internet has brought a large number of people together under one network. They send letters, reports, graphics, and so on which have been prepared on computers or word processors via the Internet in their daily business and life because the cost of the Internet is relatively low and the message can be sent to many people at the same time and received instantly at the other terminal.

People can type a message of any length at any time and send it to a computer “mailbox”, or a “file” in a computer. The message is held there for the receiver, who can pick up on a terminal anywhere in the world by keyboarding in his/her mailbox number and the password.

(5) Telex.

The word “telex” is the abbreviation of the words “teletypewriter exchange” or “teleprinter exchange”. With the development of telecommunication, different means of



transmitting messages are taking the place of telex in certain respects of international trade. Nevertheless, telex is still used in some circumstances because of its efficiency, accuracy and convenience. The telex machine works automatically. It is available twenty-four hours a day. What is typed on one machine is typed at the same time on the machine at the other end.

The factors that determine the charge of a telex are the distance the message has to travel and the time used in transmission. In order to send more information within relatively limited time, simplified words are widely used in telex messages. For example, PLS stands for PLEASE, TKS stands for THANKS, U stands for YOU and so on.

(6) Telegram.

Telegram is one of the most common methods of communication for urgent business in the past because it is much quicker than the letter. Aside from quick transmission, it can better draw the attention of the addressee to the urgent nature of the matter concerned and can be sent quickly and efficiently to most parts of the world. There are three kinds of telegrams: ordinary telegrams, urgent telegrams and letter telegrams. As a matter of fact, most countries in the world do not accept telegram until 1980. When drafting telegrams, we have to bear in mind three Cs, i. e. clearness, conciseness, and courtesy.

Telegram is charged by words. Every telegram, including name, address and main text, is at least seven words, if less than seven words, it will still charge by seven words.

(7) Telephone.

Telephone is a convenient and fast oral medium. But it is often restricted to office hours, and it can be expensive for long-distance calls. Communicating over the phone, your attitude, emotion, confidence, and professionalism are conveyed by your voice, tone and way of speaking.

(8) Voice Mail.

Voice mail has become very common especially in developed countries because of their comparatively scarce and costly labor resources. As a matter of fact, some companies use voice mail for short memos and interoffice communication to save labor and paper work. Therefore you have to be prepared to leave a voice mail when you intend to make a phone call, as the receiver may not be available and may be replaced by a device to record your voice message.

(9) Teleconference.

Teleconference allows several people at different places to communicate on line at the same time. They can talk with one another on a given topic. For instance, they can discuss the feasibility of a new proposal, and make decisions through consultation. In this way, they save the high cost(both in money expense and time) of traveling, and they work more efficiently.

(10) Videoconference.

Videoconference uses multimedia operation which combines audio, video services with



relevant graphic messages. It is more advanced than teleconference. People who participate in a videoconference can not only hear each other's voice, but also see each other's facial expressions, written messages and graphics, which helps them to understand each other better. But the facilities are more expensive.

(11) Mobile Phone.

Mobile phone(or cell phone) is another convenient medium for business communication. It is used not only for making phone calls but also for sending text messages that are informal and short.

(12) Online Dialogue Program.

The advance of information technology (IT) provides business people with more channels for online dialogue. Just take Microsoft Network(MSN) as an example, it allows people to initiate real-time multimedia interaction for either B-to-B or B-to-C communication. It can even integrate voice, data and video in transmitting messages and exchanging information around the cyberspace through the Internet.

2. The Structure of a Business Letter

An ordinary business letter consists of the following seven basic parts:

(1) Letterhead.

The letterhead of a business letter often indicates the writer's company name and address, telephone number, fax number, E-mail, Internet address and the scope of business carried on by the company.

Many firms or companies have the letterhead printed on the writing paper so that the recipient will know immediately where the letter is from and take it as a reference when giving a reply.

(2) Reference and Date.

A typewritten date is necessarily included in the heading. The date is usually placed two lines below the last line of the letterhead. It is usual to show the date in the order day/month/year(British style) or month/day/year(American style).

British style: 25th March, 2011 or 25 March, 2011.

American style: March 25th, 2011 or March 25, 2011.

Avoid giving a month in figures(e. g. 25/3/2011):

(3) Inside Name and Address.

The inside name and address are the name and address of the firm or the company to which the letter is sent. It should be the same as the name and address on the envelope, and begins from the left margin of the writing paper and two-line-spacing below the date.

If the recipient of the letter is the head of a department, address the letter to him by his official title.

Generally, the inside name and address in an English business letter should include the following:





- ① the name of the firm or company addressed to;
- ② number and street;
- ③ name of the city, state or country and its postal code;
- ④ name of the country.

Here is an example:

President,
Shanghai Foreign Trade & Economics Training Center
89, Fuzhou Road, Huangpu District, Shanghai, 200000, P. R. C.

(4) Salutation.

It is a greeting to the recipient which appears two-line-spacing below the inside name and address. Be sure that it agrees with the recipient in the inside name and address or in the attention line. The one customarily used in a business letter now is "Dear Sirs" followed by a comma, while the Americans use "Gentlemen" with a colon after it. Do not use "Sirs" alone; "Gentlemen" can not be used in the singular. If the firm or the company is owned or managed by a woman, we often greet the recipient as "Dear Madam".

(5) Letter Body.

This forms the body of the letter and is the part that really matters. As the main purpose of a business letter is to transmit the information, besides the content which is of great importance for the whole letter, a writer should take it into consideration that how to make his ideas understood and accepted in the most proper way by the recipient. A good business letter writer should know how to attract the recipient, arouse their interest, stimulate their desire and induce them to take actions. To realize this, we should try our best to write our letters completely, correctly, concisely, clearly, courteously, grammatically and to the point. Avoid those old conventions and business jargons.

(6) Complimentary Close.

The complimentary close is a polite way to end a letter. The expression for the complimentary close should match the salutation. Only the initial letter in the first word of any complimentary close is capitalized. For example:

In the formal way:

Dear Sirs, Yours faithfully,
Dear Gentlemen, Truly yours,

In the informal way:

Dear Ms. Mary, Yours sincerely,
Dear Mr. Smith, Sincerely yours,

At present, the most popular complimentary close is as follows:

With best regards, With regards, Best regards, Regards, especially when the communication is by telex, fax, E-mail etc..

(7) Signature.

The name of the firm that the writer represents should be written in capitals below the



complimentary close, followed by the signature of the manager. To sign only with a rubber stamp without the signature shows discourtesy.

Some letters may contain the following optional parts:

(8) Attention Line.

Generally, it is used if the writer of a letter addressed to a firm or a company wishes to direct it to a specific person. It comes two-line-spacing above the salutation, underlined. For example:

For the attention of Mr. Smith, or Attention: Mr. Smith

(9) Subject Line.

A subject line helps identify the subject of the letter. It is regarded as a part of the body within a business letter. Usually it is in the upper case or initial capitals/ underline and placed between the salutation and the body of a letter to call attention to what content the letter is about.

(10) Enclosure.

If something is enclosed with the letter, type the word "Enclosure" or an abbreviation of it(Encl.) at the left bottom with a figure indicating the number of enclosures, if there is more than one.

(11) Carbon Copy.

If the copy of the letter is to be sent to a third party, type "cc" or "CC" two-line-spacing below the signature or immediately below the enclosure at the left-hand margin, followed by the name of the recipient of the copy.

But in some countries, people are using the brand name Xerox for cc as the latter one is now almost replaced by the photocopy in business circle.

(12) Postscript.

A postscript(P. S.) is an afterthought which we should try to avoid using, as in formal letters this is usually a sign of poor planning. If something is forgotten, it is better for the writer to rewrite the whole letter. But as a special device, it has two legitimate functions:

- ① Some executives, to add a personal touch to their typewritten letter, occasionally add a postscript in pen and ink;
- ② Writers of sales letters often withhold one last convincing argument for emphatic inclusion in a postscript.

3. The Layout of a Business Letter

There are four main widely used formats for business letter writing at present: Block Style, Block Style with Indented Parts, Block Style with Modified Paragraphs, and Simplified Style.

(1) Block Style.

The block style is the most popular style of business letters. In this format all lines