

# BUSINESS ENGLISH

商务英语(本科)系列教材



## 商务英语写作

BUSINESS ENGLISH  
WRITING

安锦兰 李文洁 主编

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## 内 容 简 介

本书根据国际商贸和我国涉外经济发展的新形势,依照涉外商务活动工作流程和职业岗位技能要求,结合商务英语写作的基本原则和特点,系统介绍:商务信函、便条、传真、电子邮件、备忘录、会议记录、商务报告、商务提案等商务英语写作的必备知识,并通过强化训练,提高应用能力,达到学以致用目的。

本书既适用于国际贸易、工商管理、涉外文秘、对外汉语、金融保险等外经外贸专业的教学,也可作为商贸与外贸企业工作者的岗位培训教材,对于广大社会读者也是一本非常有益的商务英语自学读物。

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## 序 言

随着我国改革开放和社会主义市场经济的快速推进,中国经济已经连续 30 多年保持着持续高速增长的态势,并进入了一个最为活跃的经济增长时期。近年来,随着我国加入 WTO 后有关承诺条款的逐步兑现,众多外资工商企业纷纷抢滩登陆、进军中国市场,不仅使我国迅速融入全球经济一体化进程,而且也更加凸显中国市场的国际化特征。

外向型经济依靠外语工具支撑,国际贸易、商务活动的顺利开展需要大批英语人才作保证。商务英语涉及国际贸易、商务往来、通关报检、运输仓储、会展旅游等各领域,并在国际交往、商务活动、文化交流、促进经济发展、丰富社会生活、构建和谐社会、弘扬中华文化等方面发挥着越来越大的作用,因而成为我国经济发展的重要支撑,在我国外向型经济发展中占有举足轻重的位置。

当前,面对世界经济的迅猛发展和国际市场激烈竞争的压力,我国企业要生存就必须走出国门,中国经济要发展就必须参与国际竞争。为此急需大量既懂专业知识,又掌握外语工具的新型商务英语人才。加强商务英语的推广普及,加速商务英语专业知识技能型应用人才的培养,已成为我国经济转型发展亟待解决的问题。

需求促进专业建设,市场驱动人才培养,针对我国高校商务英语教材陈旧,知识老化而急需更新的问题,为了配合“北京市国际化大都市”的建设,适应国家经济发展、满足社会商务英语人才市场需求,扶助“中、小、微”企业发展,也为了解决学生就业问题,在北京联合大学、燕山大学、北京交通大学、山西大学、北方工业大学、郑州大学等全国 10 多所高校的支持下,我们组织多年从事商务英语教学和实践活动的国内知名专家教授及业界精英,共同精心编撰了此套教材,旨在提高我国商务英语专业大学生和从业者的专业技术素质,更好地服务于我国外向型经济。

本套教材作为普通高等院校商务英语专业的特色教材,融入了商务英语最新教学理念,强化“听、说、读、写、译”理论与实践的紧密

结合,注重岗位技能应用方法、应用能力的培养训练,并为中国教育部考试中心与英国剑桥大学考试委员会联合组织的剑桥商务英语证书(Business English Certificate)考试打好基础。

本套系列教材根据高等院校“商务英语”专业教学大纲和课程设置,包括:《商务英语阅读》、《商务英语写作》等5本教材。教材的出版对商务英语从业人员的教育培训,对帮助学生尽快熟悉商务英语操作规程与业务服务,毕业后能够顺利走上社会具有特殊意义。

本套教材既可作为普通高等院校“商务英语”专业教学的首选教材,也可以作为商务、贸易、工商企业在职员工的培训教材。

牟惟仲

2013年10月



# 前 言

随着我国经济的高速发展,特别是在经济全球化的背景之下,国家经济正在迅速与世界经济融为一体,中国市场国际化、经济国际化发展的趋势越来越明显。外语既是敲门砖,也是对外交流的主要工具。商务英语是开展国际化经济活动的基础,也是提升涉外企业核心竞争力的关键。商务英语在国际贸易、商务活动、商务谈判、商务会议、市场营销、会展旅游、文化交流合作中发挥着非常重要的作用,并在我国服务经济中占有极其重要的位置,因而越来越受到教育与企业界的高度重视。

商务英语写作是商务英语专业非常重要的课程,也是涉外企业从业者所必须掌握的基本知识技能。面对当前全球经济一体化进程的加快和国际商贸激烈的市场竞争,对从业者专业技术素质的要求越来越高。社会经济发展和国家产业变革,急需大量具有理论知识与实际操作技能的复合型商务英语人才。加强现代商务英语从业者应用技能培训,强化专业综合业务素质培养,既是加快我国与国际经济接轨的战略选择,也是本教材出版的目的和意义。

全书共 16 章,以商务英语写作能力培养为主线,根据国际商贸和我国涉外经济发展的新形势,紧密结合外向型商贸企业特点,围绕商贸业务环节和商务活动工作流程中出现的各种常见商务文本,按照商务英语写作的文体要求和写作规则,系统介绍:商务信函、便条、传真、电子邮件、备忘录、会议记录、商务报告、商务提案等商务英语写作的必备知识,并通过强化训练,提高应用能力,达到学以致用的目的。

本书作为高等教育商务英语专业的特色英语教材,严格按照国家教育部关于商务英语本科“培养具有扎实的英语基础,宽阔的国际化视野,合理的国际商务知识与技能,掌握经济、管理和法学等相关学科的基本知识与理论,具备较高人文素养和跨文化交际与沟通能力的复合型人才”的教育教学要求,根据商务英语教学改革与国际商贸业务的实际需要,反复论证、精心设计教材的体例和内容,以使其更贴近现代世界经济发展实际,更符合社会和外向型企业用人

需要,更好地为国家经济建设服务。

由于本书融入了商务英语写作最新的实践教学理念,力求严谨、注重与时俱进,具有结构合理、流程清晰、知识系统、内容翔实、案例丰富、贴近岗位实际、突出实用性、注重应用性等特点,并注意为参加中国教育部考试中心与英国剑桥大学考试委员会联合组织的剑桥商务英语资格证书(Business English Certificate, BEC)考试打好基础,因此本书既可以作为高校本科,专升本及自学考试商务英语、国际贸易、工商管理、经济管理、涉外文秘、对外汉语等外经贸专业教学的首选教材,也可以作为商贸企业商务英语写作从业者的岗位培训教材,对于广大社会读者也是一本非常有益的商务英语自学读物。

本教材由李大军进行总体方案策划并具体组织,安锦兰和李文洁主编并统稿,刘慧琴和邓奇为副主编,由具有丰富教学与实践经验的商务英语专家黄中军教授审订。作者编写分工:牟惟仲(序言),安芮(第1章、第16章),李文洁(第2章),怀宁宁(第3章、第5章),张晓燕(第4章、第7章、第15章),安锦兰(第6章),邓奇(第8章、第9章),唐娜(第10章、第11章),刘慧琴(第12章、第13章、第14章),华燕萍(文字修改和版式调整),李晓新(制作教学课件)。

在教材编著过程中,我们参阅借鉴了国内外有关商务英语写作等方面的最新书刊资料,并得到有关专家教授和商贸界从业人员的具体指导,在此一并致谢。为了配合本书使用,特提供配套电子课件,读者可以从清华大学出版社网站([www.tup.com.cn](http://www.tup.com.cn))免费下载。因作者水平有限,书中难免存在疏漏和不足,恳请同行和读者批评指正。

编者

2014年9月



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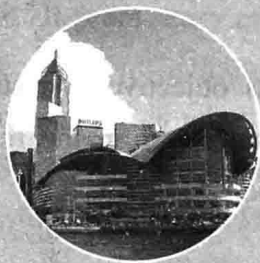
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# Chapter 1

## Language Style and Tone of Business Writing

### Learning Objectives

- to know what business writing is
- to know the function of business writing
- to know the language style and tone of business writing



### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1. What Is Business Writing?

Business writing is different from traditional compositions, which have earned high marks in college essays. Business writing requires you to convey information accurately in a plain language that is very clear and readily understood.

Put in simple words, business writing is writing for business purposes. Languages are products of the times and always bear the marks of a particular time. The rapid development of technology has brought changes to business writing. Fax and e-mail send messages quickly and narrow the distance between people in different locations. Thus we often hear business people talking about e-mails, memos, minutes, letters, reports, proposals, etc. Among these letters, memos, emails and reports are generally considered as the most fundamental types of business documents based on their frequency and characteristics in business practices.

Business English writing is an important way of communication in doing international business. The ability to write effectively is a valuable business asset. One reason is that a great deal of business is transacted in writing. With the wide use of fax and recent development of EDP (Electronic Data Processing), even more writing is involved in every part of business. More than at any previous time business people feel the need to put ideas and information into written form. Another reason is that effective business writers can use their skill to help increase their company's sales and profits by promoting good relations with customers, employees, and the general public. Still another reason is that proficiency in writing gives the man or woman in business a personal advantage over less capable writers and contributes substantially to his/her

self-confidence—a necessary quality for business success.

## **2. The Function of Business Writing**

Every business message is designed to achieve a specific business objective. Its success depends on what it says and to what extent it induces a favorable response from the reader. Thus, business writing has three functions: to persuade, to entertain and to inform.

### **1) To Persuade**

In writing to persuade a reader to accept an unfavorable decision, you can use the techniques of persuasion. Your readers are your customers. You should always provide good customer service. To provide good customer service, first of all, you should produce a top quality product. As a writer, you should understand what your readers expect from your writing. Then you can write according to their expectations to meet their needs and get the results you want.

Persuasion is the art of influencing others to accept your point of view. In all occupations and professions, rich rewards await those who can use well-informed and well-prepared presentations to persuade others to accept their ideas or buy their products, services or ideas. By persuasion, we mean reasoning with the reader—presenting facts with logic that support the case. Persuasive messages aim to influence readers who are inclined to resist. To succeed, therefore, you have to begin by convincing them. In this approach you should generally follow the indirect order plan. Open with words that set up the strategy needs and appeals, emotion, logic, and credibility, and gain attention. Then present the strategy (the persuasion), using persuasive language and you-viewpoint. End the letter by describing precisely what you would like to happen, restating how the audience will benefit by acting as you wish and making action easy to take. Common types of persuasive message are sales letters, claim letters and letters that request special favor or information.

### **2) To Entertain**

Building goodwill through letters is good business practice. Wise business leaders know that the success of their businesses is affected by what people think about their businesses. What they think about businesses is influenced by their human contact with the businesses, and letters are a major form of human contact. The goodwill effect in letters is desirable not only for business reasons.

In most business occasions, the readers expect a specific action to do from your correspondence. Some business messages must also influence the reader's attitudes and actions. If they are not clear what you want them to do after reading your correspondence, to some extent, your writing fails. So it's very important to determine your readers' response in business writing. Usually, you can help your readers to understand what you want them to do by stating your request very clearly near the end of your writing after your readers have finished reading all the information they need to know. To secure the desired response, it is necessary to have an adequate knowledge of the English language and an understanding of human nature. The writer



should have an acquaintance with the particular interest and, if possible, the emotions of the reader. It seems easy enough, for example, to ask payment of a bill, but it is quite difficult to secure payment without offending the reader and losing his or her future patronage. No communication is wholly successful unless it retains the reader's goodwill.

### **3) To Inform**

Modern business English is the writing of information in a way that gives a reader a good chance of understanding the document at the first reading. Reader oriented writing is the key to successful business writing. Messages to inform are used to convey the vast amount of information needed to complete the day-to-day operations of the business—explain instructions to employees, announce meetings and procedures, acknowledge orders, accept contracts for services, etc. The major purpose of most of these messages is to have the receiver understand a body of information and concentrate on the logical presentation of the content. What information and how much information that you should provide are determined by what your writing purpose is and what you would like your reader to do. You can answer yourself the 5WH questions (who, what, why, where, when and how) to ensure that you have provided all the necessary information.



## **1.2 Language Style and Tone of Business Writing**

In a good letter a conversation is held. It involves keeping certain attitudes in mind and using certain writing techniques to work them into your letters. The reader must be made to forget that he or she is reading a letter. Instead, the writer has traveled on a piece of paper to talk to him or her. People who write with a sense of personal contact have a better chance to make what they say interesting and convincing than those who feel they are writing letters. Whatever you talk about in the letters, the language you use should be the same as you use when you meet the person on the street, at home, or in the office. Such language is warm and natural. It leaves a favourable impression on the reader. It is also the language we use most and understand best.

The following questions can help you to meet your reader's needs from the very beginning:

- (1) Who is my reader? (To determine the format and tone of writing)
- (2) Why am I writing? (To determine your purpose for the writing)
- (3) What would I like my reader to do? (To determine your reader's response)
- (4) What does my reader need to know? (To determine which and how much information should be included)

A business message is considered successful when the receiver interprets the message as the sender intended it and it achieves the sender's purposes. In order to meet these objectives, American experts in business communication developed six principles: Courtesy, Conciseness, Clarity, Concreteness, Completeness and Correctness.

### **1. Courtesy**

Courtesy is an important language feature of business writing. Courteousness in business



writing means taking reader's feelings and point of view into consideration. By courtesy we mean treating people with respect and friendly human concern. To be courteous, the writer should avoid expressions that are likely to give offense. Effective writers visualize the reader before starting to write. They consider the reader's desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reactions to their request. A correspondence expressed courteously can help you set up an honest and enthusiastic image, which can encourage your readers to cooperate with you and serve you whole-heartedly.



### 1) Polite

Whenever you write business writing, you need to remember that all your readers (including your colleagues) are your "customers" who are consuming your special product—your writing. To provide excellent customer service, you need to be polite.

As you have probably noticed in some letters, using the reader's name in the letter text is another way to show that the reader is being given special treatment. It makes the reader feel that his/her identity as individual is recognized. That letters begin with customer's name makes him or her feel important. Use it once or twice in the letter, but not so often as to sound like a ward politician out for votes.

Rarely is anger justified in letters. It destroys goodwill. Most of comments made in anger do not provide needed information, but merely serve to let the writer blow off steam. Such comments take many forms—sarcasm, insults, and exclamations.

The effect of angry words is to make the reader angry. With both writer and reader being angry, the two are not likely to get together on whatever the letter is about. A tactful writer refers courteously to the subject matter to avoid jeopardizing goodwill.

Use the words like please, thank you:

- (1) Please send this file to Mr. Smith now.
- (2) Please send this file to Mr. Smith now. Thank you.
- (3) Please quote us your lowest price of your latest cars.
- (4) Please pass this to William, thank you.

Use the modal verbs like can, could, may, might, would (avoiding words like have to, must and should):

- (1) We might ask you to make a prompt shipment.
- (2) We wish you could quote us your best price for 100 sets.
- (3) Everyone could submit one idea by the end of this week.
- (4) You may ask the general manager for an excuse.
- (5) I would like to have all the information on the dairy project.

Use mitigation:

- (1) We cannot deliver the goods all at one time.

I'm afraid that we are unable to deliver the goods all at one time.





(2) It was unwise of you not to accept this favorable offer.

We would say that it was unwise of you not to accept this favorable offer.

(3) Our goods are the very best on the current market.

We might say that our goods are the very best on the current market.

(4) You have broken the agency agreement signed by both of us.

We think that you have broken the agency agreement signed by both of us.

(5) You must cut down your price by 10%.

We would suggest that you cut down your price by 10%.

(6) We have not yet had your reply.

It appears that we have not yet had your reply.

(7) You should be responsible for the loss.

As we need hardly point out that you should be responsible for the loss.

Use passive voice of the verb:

(1) You didn't enclose the price list in your letter.

The price list was not enclosed in your letter.

(2) You made a mistake during the course of shipment.

A mistake was made during the course of shipment.

(3) You ignored the pollution factor in the discussion.

The pollution factor was ignored in the discussion.

(4) You should use a cover page for your fax.

A cover page should be used for your fax.



## 2) Personal

Being personal means you should add personal touch in your writing to show your courtesy by treating your readers as an individual person instead of an object. When you speak to a person, you often use words like “you” “I” and “we”. If you can also use these personal pronouns when you write, your sentences will sound more personal. Everyone likes to hear or read his own name. So, you should use the person's name for the salutation whenever possible. Sometimes, you can even use the person's name in the body of the text. However, you'd better not use the name more than once in the text of a business correspondence. To be personal, the sentence should be written with the active voice of the verb. Because when you use the active voice of the verb, you emphasize the person (the doer) doing the action. While using the passive voice emphasizes the action and often does not mention the “doer”. So, the passive voice sounds impersonal.

Letters that appear to be written for one reader tend to make the reader feel important and appreciated. To single out your reader in a letter, you should write for his or her particular situation. What you say throughout the letter should make it clear that the reader is getting individual treatment. Consider the following situation: A company training director is writing to the director of a management-training program asking for additional information on the program. The individualistic closing should be something like “We look forward to the possibility of