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实用商务英语写作

Practical Business English Writing

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副主编 谢振新 周春芳 周 雷

Nucleus



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内 容 提 要

《实用商务英语写作》旨在帮助英语专业本科学生掌握日常工作、学习和未来的求职过程中英语主要应用文体的写作知识和技能而撰写的教材。全书分为“商务写作与沟通”、“商务写作文体”、“语言方法与写作”、“商务信函写作”、“工作相关写作”、“商誉与社交写作”、“日常办公写作”、“企业报告写作”、“商务合同写作”、“企业简介”、“商业广告”、“公司治理”、“商务建议”和“企业章程”十四章,对每种应用文体的介绍包括文体结构和写作技巧、实用表达、实例和词汇与术语,每章的结尾还配有情景写作任务。

本书也可作为非英语专业本科生的教材及参考书,可供大学英语教师、外企或合资企业工作人员和需要撰写英语应用文者使用,具有较高的实用价值和参考意义。

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前 言

进入 21 世纪后,我国高等教育专业设置产生了巨大变化,英语专业从原来仅有的英语文学专业扩展出新的商务英语专业和翻译专业,充分反映了科学技术进步和社会对高校人才培养提出新的要求。为此,《实用商务英语写作》成为商务英语专业的一门重要专业课程。

每一种语言的表达方式都有其文化的内涵。这种文化的内涵反映了同一种文化中的人们共同习得。不同的文化有其不同的语言表达方式,这种语言表达的差异性正是我们在实用商务英语写作教学时必须注意和学会正确使用的关键所在。

西方人写作除了注重实证分析、实例分析的方法外,在写作思维模式上也与我们有较大差异:在句法结构上,西方人善于运用各种具体的连接手段来达到语法形式的完整。英语句子组织结构严密,层次有序,句法功能一目了然。

习惯用语是人们经常使用的在意义和结构上比较固定的语句,是同一文化中的人们在长期的生活、生产实践和社会活动中形成的表达方式。它反映了同一文化中的人们或一个民族的物质与社会生活,以及历史,风俗、习惯,是文化的组成部分,在英语写作教学时必须特别注意这种差异性。英语习惯用语准确掌握并在英语写作时正确应用,会使文章表达精练、语意准确,更加符合语言所属文化的习惯,使读者不致产生误解。

在写作模式上,中西方存在较大差异。中国人习惯分步骤,一部分一部分地去写,即写完一部分再写另一部分,以此类推。西方人与我们有所不同,他们在写作过程中是首先将所想到的所有问题都列出来,然后再进行排序,将与题目有



关的,能说明主题的问题选择出来,列出整篇文章序号,然后再进行论述、写作。

因此,在实用英语写作教学中,按照相应的写作模式,学生在不断的写作实践过程中,勤写多练,逐步总结经验,才能使英语写作能力得到切实的培养和提高。

在本教材编写中,我们对每种应用文体的介绍包括文体结构和写作技巧、实用表达、实例和词汇与术语,每章的结尾还配有情景写作任务。

因编者水平有限,如有不当之处,望读者给予诚挚的批评和指正。

编 者

2015 年元月

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Chapter 1

Business Writing and Communication

With the further development of China's reform and opening-up as well as acceleration of global economic and trade integration, Chinese foreign trade is booming and international business communication is becoming much more frequent. As the bridge of language, business writing has become the most important form of written communication in international business intercourse and thus been widely applied in the foreign trade and business activities. It plays a significant role in making the world of business run efficiently, smoothly and productively. No modern businesses could exist for a long time without letters and other forms of written communications. Learning and mastering the effective business writing skills can have a positive influence on an individual's career advancement.

1.1 Definition and Importance of Business Writing

The term "business writing" refers to any piece of writings produced in a business context. Almost all business activities are envisioned, planned, implemented and analyzed in some forms of the written words. These forms include letters, emails, faxes, memos, presentations, reports, resumes, tenders and other kinds of documents that communicate something about business. Collectively, they record the proposals, activities and results of countless business transactions.

Business writing is utilitarian, aiming to serve one or more of the



following purposes, such as:

To explain or justify actions already taken — “There was a delay in shipping because the demand exceeded our expectations, and we had to order a second printing.

To convey information — “The balance of your order will be dispatched on 26 January and will arrive on the following day.”

To influence the reader to take some action — “We hope that you will find that our new, Web-based cash management services can reduce your capital requirements and save you money.”

To deliver good or bad news — “It is with regret that we have to tell you that, owing to ill health, Mr. Martin, our Managing Director, will be retiring from active business on the 25th October.”

To direct action — “You are required by law to operate your business in a manner which is safe and healthy for your workforce.”

Effective business writing can be an important part of a business career. Public and private entities rely upon the business writings to communicate vital information, both internally and externally, regarding the condition and conduct of their business. It is fundamentally important that they should be written in a clear and concise manner. When they are, the risk of miscommunication is substantially decreased.

Poorly written business documents can produce unintended results and potentially disastrous consequences. Strong writing competencies can help reduce or avoid this all together. Well chosen words, well organized and well written, increase the likelihood of effective business communication.

Therefore, writers must make careful decisions about what to write and how to get their information across effectively and efficiently.

1.2 General Steps for Business Writing

Business writing is intended to convey information to someone else or to



request information from them. To make effective writing for business, you must be complete, concise, and accurate. Your text should be written in such a way that the reader will be able to easily understand what you are expressing or asking them to do something.

A lot of writing for business is sloppy, poorly written, disorganized, littered with jargon, and incomplete. Often it is either too long or too short. All these lead to ineffective business writing.

Whether you are writing an annual sales report, an email to your manager, or an instruction manual for a software package, there are certain steps that you need to follow in order to create effective business writing, covering: preparing, researching, organizing, outlining, drafting, reviewing and revising. The emphasis on each step may vary, depending on what you are writing, but the steps will be the same. They break the larger writing task into smaller ones. Proceeding through them one at a time will help you write successful business documents. According to the complexity of the writing task, they will be either more or less demanding. An annual report requires far more, for instance, than a note or memo.

1.2.1 Preparing

Adequate preparation for writing is as important as the act itself. There are three preliminary considerations that are fundamental to the task. You must establish a document's objective, identify its readers and determine its scope. All other steps in the writing process follow and develop from these determinations.

1.2.1.1 Objective

Establishing an objective will answer one critical question about your writing task. What do you want the reader to know or do, or be able to do after reading your document? The answer needs to be specific and detailed. If the objective is too general, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to present a credible argument or a compelling reason to read the document. For example:



Not Good; To analyze the proposed new sewage purification system in ABC Factory

Good; To analyze how the proposed new sewage purification system in ABC Factory will benefit the factory, the neighboring residents, and the environment.

A specific objective, simply stated, can be viewed as a top sentence for your writing project. Notice how the above example includes three main topic areas and how easy it will be to convert them into main headings below the topic sentence in an outline.

1.2.1.2 Readers

To identify your readers, you have to answer another critical question about the writing task. How can you help them understand your objective? Knowing who your readers are and what they need from you is crucial to satisfying your objective. It will also determine the scope of your writing task. Successful business writers know that the answers to who and what will lead to. Therefore, you need to target your audience and get to know a few things about them.

Meanwhile, you may need to ask yourself some key questions: Who will read your document? Will it be one person or many? Why they want to read your document? What are their positions in or outside the company? What do they know about the subject you mention? What do they need to know? What will they want to know? Will they be expecting your document? What will they do with your document (Read it, file it, make a decision based on it, or use it for evidence, etc.)? How can you give them the information they want and need quickly?

Similarly, it is necessary for you to notice the hierarchical status of different readers. Understand that this status defines the reader's relationship to a subject or topic. It indicates something about what their perspective or personal interest might be and something about how much they might already know, or how much they might need to know about the material.



Once you have a clear understanding of your readers, you are prepared to determine the scope of your document and write effectively, both of which will help your readers understand your objective.

The following is a report to the director, with the subject of hardware and software upgrade plan. Try to find what is inappropriate in this report.

Network Upgrade Team Meeting with Solutions Computer Systems

● Executive Summary

1. We met with John Smith and Russell Webster of Innovation Computer Co., Ltd. on May 20, 2013. We discussed our current problems and their possible solutions. They have identified a plan to increase our network capabilities and give us the functionality we would like for the future. We have an estimate of the cost.

● Meeting Summary

2. The meeting with John and Russell started half an hour late, for they got a flat tire. After some coffee, we got started.

3. Janet explained what kind of problems we are having now. She also talked about the capabilities we would like to have in the future. John and Russell have some very good initial ideas about how to solve our current problems and they even brought up some issues that we hadn't considered yet. They say that they need more information to give us a concrete plan, but that they have a direction in mind for us. They have suggested a plan for network solutions that include new hardware and software upgrades. Their plan seems to fit the needs we have discussed in the past.

4. When we discussed our budget, we were a little surprised at their estimate, but they are quoting based on their solutions for the new issues



that came up for the meeting. So, even though their estimate was one of the higher ones we have encountered so far, I think that the price seems fair and that we will end up with much improved functionality in our network ...

In paragraph 1, there is not any concrete and detailed information, such as: What happened to the network of the company? How could these problems be solved? What is the specific quotation? Only after reading the whole report, can the reader get the corresponding answers, which is time-consuming. Therefore, the writer of report should concentrate on the following questions: What problems does the company want to solve? What solutions has Innovation Computer Co., Ltd. provided? What is their quotation? What suggestions does the writer of report offer?

Paragraph 2 and 3 contain too much unnecessary and inessential information, including stating time for meeting, flat tire, and drinking coffee, which is of no importance for busy director who will make decision on this report. Furthermore, there's no detailed description of what new issues have been brought up by Innovation Computer Co., Ltd.. The writer of report should focus on the following questions: What new issues have been put forward at the meeting? What specific solutions has Innovation Computer Co., Ltd. provided? How do these solutions meet the requirements of the company? What suggestions does the writer of report offer?

1.2.2 Scope

Determining the scope of your writing task will answer a final question: What kind of information is needed, and how much of it will be enough for the reader to understand your objective? In light of both the objective and the audience, this will either be elementary, intermediate or advanced.



What and how much to include is a decision based on whom the reader is, why they are targeted and what relationship they have to your document's topic. Successful business writers keep all of this in mind as they gather information in the research step of the writing process.

1.2.3 Researching

Researching is an investigative process. The information and data necessary for the completion of a writing task is gathered in this step. The amount required will depend on the document's primary objective, the breadth of its scope and its intended audience: the more complex your topic is, the more in depth the research is.

A letter or memo may require no more than a list of related ideas and your research may consist only of finding the name of the contact person to whom you are writing. A report or summary, on the other hand, may require something more. Before writing a report projecting the earnings-to-expense ratio for the coming year, for instance, you might want to meet with the accounting staff for a review of quarterly financials from previous years.

Regardless of the amount of research, the information you gather will fall into one of two categories. Depending upon the source, your information will be either primary or secondary. Depending upon your objective, scope and audience you may rely more heavily on one than the other.

Information gathered from multiple sources will provide the facts that substantiate and clarify your objective. As you identify relevant sources of information, include yourself. Personal experience counts. After all, among the credentials underscoring your involvement in the writing task are your background qualifications and your first-hand knowledge of the topic. Search your own personal resources. Check your own databases. Look in the file cabinet.

As your research progresses, compile notes, either on index cards or in a computer. Include what you already know about the subject and what remains



to be discovered. Brainstorm with yourself and others. Ask lots of questions. Who, what, and where? When, how and why? Note your sources and double-check your facts. Accuracy is mandatory. The Writing Studio's Bibliography tool allows you to take and organize your notes and sources. You can view the Bibliography tool in a new browser window.

Thorough research is the backbone of any successful business document. Once completed, you must organize your notes and prepare an outline that illustrates the manner in which your information will be presented in the written document.

1.2.4 Organizing

Organizing is a sorting and categorizing procedure. It prepares the writer to present research materials in a methodical manner. It is also the design stage of a writing task, the step in which decisions are made on how a topic will be developed. A well-organized presentation maximizes the likelihood that your reader will easily comprehend the objective of your written document.

Organizing a business letter or memo is easier than organizing a report or summary. Regardless, the subject or topic of your document will be a determining factor in selecting an appropriate organizational method, any one of which will follow a logical, sequentially ordered pattern. Be sure to select one that best suits your objective.

Begin by gathering all of your research notes and dividing them into groups. Put all the notes that contain information pertaining to one specific point in one group and all that pertain to another specific point in a second group, and so on, until all of your notes are organized in groups according to the information they have in common.

As you sort and categorize your notes, the groups they fall into will take on identities of their own. A logical thread of ideas will connect one to another. The larger the scope of your writing task, the more likely it is that