

普通高等教育国际经济与贸易专业规划教材

外贸函电

仲鑫 编著



机械工业出版社
CHINA MACHINE PRESS

普通高等教育国际经济与贸易专业规划教材

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Foreign Trade Correspondence in English

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本书共分 15 章, 主要由两部分内容构成: 一是介绍了英文信件的格式、内容以及有效写作的方法; 二是从交易程序出发, 分别从建立业务关系, 发盘、接受以及合同的签订、促销, 合同交易条款包括支付、包装、运输、保险和争端解决等, 以及贸易方式四个方面阐释了外贸函电写作的内容和技巧。

本书的主要特色在于: 一是从遣词、造句和组段三个层面阐释了商业信件的写作技巧; 二是每章后配有书面磋商的有效词句及课外阅读材料; 三是每章后附有注释及练习。本书可作为国际经济与贸易、世界经济、国际金融、工商管理等专业在校研究生、本科生、辅修生、夜大生选用, 更能外贸工作者提供学习的方便。

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

外贸函电/仲鑫编著. —北京: 机械工业出版社, 2006.1

普通高等教育国际经济与贸易专业规划教材

ISBN 7-111-18076-3

I. 外... II. 仲... III. 对外贸易—英语—电报信函—高等学校—教材 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2005) 第 147512 号

机械工业出版社 (北京市百万庄大街 22 号 邮政编码 100037)

策划编辑: 常爱艳 责任编辑: 苏颖杰 版式设计: 霍永明

封面设计: 鞠 杨 责任印制: 洪汉军

北京瑞德印刷有限公司印刷

2006 年 1 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

1000mm×1400mm B5·8 5 印张·326 千字

定价: 22.00 元

凡购本书, 如有缺页、倒页、脱页, 由本社发行部调换

本社购书热线电话 (010) 68326294

封面无防伪标均为盗版

前言

入世后,我国外贸经营权由审批制改为登记制。大量的生产企业,科技企业,外资、合资企业,甚至民营企业都纷纷取得了进出口经营权,外贸队伍迅速壮大。另外,随着全球经济的发展和通信技术的进步,旅游、运输和商务变得越来越具有国际化的特征,并且这一趋势将持续到未来一段可预见的时间内。这将对我国管理人员或企业与外商交流的能力提出更高的要求。

交流是确保国际贸易顺利进行的必备技能。无论你在国际贸易活动中身处何职,你的成就在很大程度上将由交流的能力来决定。职位越高,你所需的交流能力就越强。很显然,提高你的交流技能将会增加你在国际商务中获得成功的机会。商务,尤其是国际商务,需要交流者具备各式各样的交流技能。由于英语已经成为世界性的语言,运用英语的技能变得越来越重要。良好的英语交流能力将会使你在国际商务中领先一筹。交流可以采取不同的方式:口头、书面表达和网络等。书面交流作为国际商务的主要形式是本书的主要讨论对象。因为这是同外商进行交流而必备的重要技能。本书着重培养学生的交流技能和英语能力。

当然,要使企业能够顺利地进行对外贸易,外贸人员除了必须具备一定程度的英语交流能力外,还要掌握国际贸易的基本理论和进出口贸易全流程的操作,不仅要对自己销售的商品了如指掌,包括产地、生产工艺流程、包装、成本、价格和利润空间等,还要懂得谈判、签约、信用证、保险、报关、报验、国际运输等业务。这就要求外贸人员必须具备撰写外贸信件以及进行商务会话的能力。

我们编著本书的主要目的就是帮助国际商务等专业或对国际贸易感兴趣的学生提高他们的书面交流能力。本书共分15章,主要由两部分内容构成:一是介绍了英文信件的格式、内容以及有效写作的方法;二是从交易程序出发,分别从建立业务关系,发盘、接受以及合同的签订、促销,合同交易条款包括支付、包装、运输、保险和争端解决等,以及贸易方式四个方面阐释了外贸函电写作的内容和技巧。本书的主要特色在于:一是从遣词、造句和组段三个层面阐释了商业信件的写作技巧;二是每章后配有书面磋商的有用词句及课外阅读材料;三是每章后附有注释及练习。如果选用本书的教材,我们可为教师提供练习参考答案及相关电子文档。

本书可作为国际经济与贸易、世界经济、国际金融、工商管理等专业在校研究生、本科生、辅修生、夜大生选用,更能为实际外贸工作者提供学习的方便。

通过学习本书，学生可以系统地了解外贸函电的阅读和撰写，并熟练掌握撰写外贸函电的方法，为将来从事外贸工作打下坚实的基础。同时，本书作为一本英文读物，当然也适用于英语专业或对英语学习感兴趣的读者阅读。此外，本书也可以作为从事国际贸易的工作人员的案头资料，以备不时之需。

作 者

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Chapter 1 Structure and Layout¹ of International Business Letter

1. Format of Letter Typing

(1) Indented Form

The sender's address is printed in the up-middle part or typed in the up-right part with date below it. The receiver's address starts from the left margin. The opening line in each paragraph is indented and the complimentary close as well as the signature is typed at the right bottom.

Specimen Letter 1-1 (Indented Letter)

Lyons and Jackson
5 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10071
Telex: NY6506077
Telephone: 6508825

January 5th, 2002

Mr. Harry A. Walkman
Pine Lane
Portland, Maine

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your information about letter format we requested last month. I'm writing to you in the indented form because, to my opinion, this format looks beautiful even it is hard to type. This is a conventional format that makes me happy since I'm old-fashioned.

I'd like to do further discussion with you about some other formats, but it

should be at your convenience².

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

J. F. Chen

Professor of Business Communication

(2) Modified Block Form

The format most frequently used for business letters these days is the so-called modified block form. Paragraphs are not indented but the date, complimentary close and signature are aligned slightly past the center of the page.

Specimen Letter 1-2 (Modified Block Letter)

Greensburg University of Pennsylvania
Department of Business Education
Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601

October 20, 2002

Mr. Xie Longcheng
Department of Foreign Trade
No. 2 Foreign Language Institute
Beijing, China

Dear Mr. Xie,

I was happy to receive your request for information about business letter formats. You'll find enclosed with this letter a copy of the pamphlet³ you requested. I am glad to be able to help you in this way in the preparation of your new business correspondence course.

To answer your question, the format of this letter is the one most frequently used in business today. It's called the modified block format. Except for the heading, the date and the signature, all its elements begin at the left-hand margin. There is no indentation at the beginning of a paragraph. The body of the letter is single-spaced, with double-spacing between the paragraphs

Typists generally like the modified block format. It has a clean, precise appear-

ance, and is quicker to type. No need to fiddle with⁴ indentations.

You'll see other formats in use, but the modified block form seems to have the widest appeal.

You can't go wrong adopting it for your official correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

David Parnell

Professor of Business Communication

DP: ms

Copy: L. K

(3) Full Block Form

In this form, every part of a letter is typed from the left margin. It is convenient to type but the layout is not so beautiful.

Specimen Letter 1-3 (Full Block Letter)

Greensburg University of Pennsylvania
Department of Business Education
Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601

October 20, 2002

Mr. Xie Longcheng
Department of Foreign Trade
No. 2 Foreign Language Institute
Beijing, China

Dear Mr. Xie,

Perhaps you prefer this alternative format, known in most textbooks as full block style. This means to keep all lines flush on the left margin.

Your first glance at the page will have told you that there is no indention so that every line starts from left-hand margin.

It has been shown that this practice, when applied on a large scale, saves a significant amount of typist's time.

If it is used in very short letter, it is necessary to leave an extra space between paragraphs in order to make them off clearly.

Sincerely yours,
K. Liu

(4) Semi-block Form

Semi-block letter is the same with the modified block form except that the first sentence of each paragraph is indented. This format is also known as modified block paragraph.

Specimen Letter 1-4 (Semi-block Letter)

October 20, 2002

Mr. Xie Longcheng
Department of Foreign Trade
No. 2 Foreign Language Institute
Beijing, China

Dear Mr. Xie,

You will see that I am now indenting my paragraph openings, but I have still blocked the inside address, the reference initials and copy notation. Because of the mixture of blocked and indented lines, this style is known as semi-block or semi-indented. It is similar to the modified block style with one exception: the first sentence of each paragraph is indented.

The semi-block style is relatively popular. It is widely used in business correspondence. You may adopt this format in accordance with your liking.

The style people finally choose is often influenced by the style of their letterhead; in fact, sometimes the letterhead is redesigned to suit changing styles in letter display.

I think I have now said enough on letter display. You can see it is mainly a matter of choosing from the accepted practices those appeal to your artistic sense and to your sense of logic.

I look forward to hearing what you think.

Sincerely yours,
David Parnell
Professor of Business Communication

DP: ms

Copy: X. Zhong

2. Structure of a Business Letter

In modern international business letter writing, formality is rapidly giving way to a less conventional and friendlier style, but the mechanical structure of a letter still follows a more or less set pattern determined by custom and not resulting from any deliberate plan. Choice of layout is a matter of individual taste, but it is better to follow established practice, to which the business world has become accustomed.

A well-arranged business letter usually consists of seven principle parts and some miscellaneous matters:

Principle Parts

The Heading;

The Date;

The Inside Address;

The Salutation;

The Body of the Letter;

The Complimentary Close;

The Signature.

Miscellaneous Matters

The Reference;

For the attention of. . . ;

The Subject Heading;

The Enclosure;

The Identification Marks;

Copy Notation;

The Postscript.

(1) Principle Parts

1) The Heading

The first and most obvious part of a company's business letter is its letterhead. The role of a letterhead is to identify where the letter comes from. A letterhead contains the organization's name, address, telephone numbers, possibly the name of the chief executive and other useful information. Sometimes a trademark or slogan is effectively incorporated.

Most business organizations select their letterhead style carefully, often deliberately aiming for a certain effect (conservative, attractive, adventurous, understated, etc.) that is thought to fit the image the company is attempting to project its corporate identity. The heading is usually printed on the letter paper used in the firm.

Specially designed letterhead paper can contribute a great deal to business letter's initial impact on the receiver. It can set the tone for what fol-

lows. It is then up to⁵ the writer, of course, to maintain that good impression.

For example:

China National Import & Export Corporation
Shanghai China
Telegraphic Address: CNIEC Shanghai
Telephone: 021-64357356
Fax: 021-64357358

2) The Date

The date should be placed three to six spaces below the letterhead to the right for indented style and to the left for block style.

The date should be typed in full and not abbreviated (e. g. December for Dec.) and there is a growing tendency to omit the -th, -st, -nd and -rd that follow the day (e. g. 2 June for 2nd June).

The recommended forms for date are as follows:

7 July 2003 (British) or July 7 2003 (American)

Avoid giving the date in figures, for the practice to write date varies in different countries. English style follows the order of day, month and year while the U. S. month, day and year. For example, 2/3/2003 could be taken as either February 3 or March 2.

3) The Inside Address

Business letters should always contain the name and complete address of the person or organization for which the letter is intended. This practice serves several purposes:

① The letter is more likely to be inserted in the correct envelope and should therefore arrive at the right destination.

② If a letter is accidentally placed in the wrong envelope, the person receiving it will realize on opening it that it was intended for someone else.

③ The inside address may also serve as the outside address when window envelopes are used.

④ The envelope is usually thrown away. The letter itself must clearly indicate for whom the message was intended.

Depending on the letter's length, place the inside address two to six spaces below the date line. The usual sequence of display of the inside address in a busi-

ness letter is as follows:

- ① name of person addressed;
- ② title of person addressed;
- ③ name of organization ;
- ④ street number and name;
- ⑤ city, state (abbreviated) and postal code;
- ⑥ country of destination (if necessary).

Whenever possible, address your letter to a specific reader, using that reader's position title (Executive Vice President, Director, Dean, etc.) or one of the traditional courtesy titles: Mr. , Mrs. , Miss, or Ms. including a courtesy title even when a position title follows:

Ms. Demy More

Director

Dawson & Jones Corp.

437 Fifth Street

Boone, Conn.

US

If your addressee⁶ has earned some other titles, for example, Professor Gene Thibadeau, Dr. Robert Morris, General John Taylor, Reverend⁷ Terry Foster, Senator John Smith and so on, one thing we have to keep in mind is that inside title of respect can not be abbreviated except Mr. , Ms. and Dr.

4) The Salutation

The salutation is the customary greeting in every letter. It is usually positioned on the left side of the sheet, about double space below the inside address.

Although business letter tends to be friendlier than conventional one, it is always formal comparing with ordinary personal letter. If you are writing to an individual you know by name, the most appropriate salutation is to use the individual's name, e. g. "Dear Mr. Stuart". If you are writing to one you know by name but not by sex, your salutation would be, for instance, "Dear A. K. Clancy". If the receiver's name and sex were unknown, "Dear Madam or Sir" would be a preferable salutation. But the Americans usually use "Gentlemen" instead of "Dear Sirs".

5) The Body of the Letter

Begin your letter on the second line below the salutation. For letters that will fill most of the page, use single spacing within paragraph and double spacing

between paragraphs. For short letters, double-space within paragraphs and triple-space between to balance the page.

The most important part of any business letter is the body of the letter, which contains the message from the writer to the addressee. You may observe all the correct forms for writing business letters but if the body of the letter is so poorly written or so poorly organized that it does not accomplish its purpose, the letter is a failure. The body of the letter deserves special attention, therefore, no matter how brief it may be. A business letter that has only one or two short paragraphs is just as important as a two or three pages long business letter. If there is a reason for writing the letter, there is a reason for making it an effective letter.

Before beginning to write the message, you must first of all consider the following two points: ① What is your aim in writing this letter? ② What is the best way to go about it?

The main purpose of business letter is to sell or buy products or services. In order to reach your final aim, ① your letter must be concise, clear, correct, complete and courteous and ② your letter must be very well organized with one topic to each paragraph. Further discussion of the body of the letter is deferred to Chapter 2, which deals with the writing principles and use of language.

The body of the letter should start on the next line under the salutation and about an inch from the left-hand side of the letter paper.

6) The Complimentary Close

This is the goodbye you say to your correspondent before you sign your name and slip the letter into the envelope. It usually consists of a few conventional words or phrases which are placed under the body of the letter. The first letter of the first word in the close should be capitalized and there is sometimes (not always) a comma after the last word.

Since it is a business letter, your closing should be polite but not overly intimate or too modest.

The following are some most commonly used complimentary closes:

Yours faithfully;	Respectfully;
Yours truly;	Cordially (yours);
Very truly yours;	Sincerely (yours);
Very sincerely yours;	Best wishes;
Very cordially yours;	Warmest regards.

Some Americans prefer to use "Yours truly".

7) The signature

The person taking legal responsibility for it should sign a letter in ink. Since 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.

There are generally four ways of signing a business letter:

① An official signing for his company:

Yours faithfully,
For the Overseas Co. Ltd.
(Signature)
W. Black
President

② A partner signing for his firm:

Yours faithfully,
(Signature)
Jackson Brown Co.

③ An employee with special authority to sign:

Yours faithfully,
per pro⁸ Hopkins, Wright & Co.
(signature)
J. Bell

④ An employee without special authority to sign:

Yours faithfully,
For Sales Manager
(signatuer)
R. Hopkins

(2) Miscellaneous Matters

1) The Reference

In business communication, when a firm writes to another, each will give a reference. The reference may include a file number, departmental code or the initials of the signer followed by those of the typist of the letter. These are marked "our ref"; and "your ref"; to avoid confusion:

Your ref: JBD/WM
Our ref: WDW/LP

They are typed immediately below the letterhead. If desired, the reference

initials can also be placed at the lower left margin two lines below the name of the signer.

Where the heading does not provide for it, the reference may form part of the first paragraph of the reply letter. Fox example:

Dear Sir;

Thank you for your letter, reference PC/MJ, of August 24,...

The reference may also be used as a subject heading. Fox exmple;

Dear Sir;

Your Ref: PC/NJ

Thank you for your letter of August 24,...

The reference can be either typed, for instance, CN; sh, CN; SH or CN/SH and cn/ sh.

2) For the Attention of ...

The phrase "for the attention of" also known as attention line is used if the writer of the letter wishes to direct the letter to a specific individual or section of a firm. It generally follows the inside name and is usually typed about twos line spacing above the salutation, underlined and centered over the body of the letter.

Fox example;

The secretary

The London Export Corp.

6 and 7 Clifford street

London, W, 1, England

For the attention of Mr. R. Hawkeye

The other form, "Attention: Mr. R. Hawkeye" can also be used. It depends on which one you prefer. It doesn't make any difference.

3) The Subject Heading

Many business letters generally adopt two kinds of subject headings. One is the main heading, the other paragraph heading. The former summarizes the topic of your letter while the latter summarizes the main idea of the paragraph. Headings are especially useful if two companies have a lot of correspondence with each other on a variety of subjects, as it immediately tells what the letter or paragraph is about. It is also useful as a guide for filing.

Typed about two lines spacing below the salutation, the subject heading is usually underlined and centered over the body of the letter, and helps to ensure that the letter goes to the right person or department without delay. For exam-

ple:

Subject: Chinese Light Industrial Products

Since the subject heading's content and placement indicate its function, the word "Subject" can be omitted. For example:

Chinese Light Industrial Products

Sometimes a subject line is used to refer to an account number or invoice number. And sometimes, instead of the word "Subject", the Latin "Re" is used at the head of a subject line. For examples:

Subject: Credit Account of Mr. Andy Haley, # 34-2145

Re: Your Order No. 107/5

Paragraph heading appears at the beginning of each paragraph. Block capitals may be used, followed by a full stop, colon or dash to emphasize the distinction between heading and text.

4) The Enclosure

If other documents (catalogues, price lists, etc.) are enclosed in your letter, enclosure notation is added at the left bottom right under the identification marks. It is typed either as "Enclosure (s)", "Encl. " or "Enc". The usual forms for indicating enclosures are as follows:

Enclosure:	Price List
Encl.	Check
Enc.	Catalogue
Enclosures	L/C ⁹ No. 555, \$ 1 million
	B/L ¹⁰ No. 678
Enclosures	1. Recommendation (I)
	2. Invoices ¹¹ 4
	3. Order Form No. 432

5) Identification Marks

The marks are usually the initials of the person who dictated the letter and the initials of the secretary or typists. The identification marks indicate who should shoulder the responsibility of the letter if any dispute concerning the letter happens. The initials are positioned two spaces below the signature against the left margin. The two groups of initials are separated either by a colon or a slant. For example:

PC: DM, PC/DM, pc/dm

6) Copy Notation