

高等学校商务英语规划教材

Business English Writing

商务英语函电



盛美娟 ○ 编著

华中科技大学出版社
<http://www.hustp.com>

高等学校商务英语规划教材

商务英语函电

Business English Writing

编 著: 盛美娟

华中科技大学出版社

中国·武汉

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

商务英语函电/盛美娟 编著. —武汉:华中科技大学出版社, 2009 年 7 月
ISBN 978-7-5609-5676-3

I. 商… II. 盛… III. 国际贸易-英语-电报信函-写作-高等学校-教材 IV. H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2009)第 159814 号

商务英语函电

盛美娟 编著

策划编辑:杨 鸥 刘 平

责任编辑:张 欣

责任校对:李 琴

封面设计:范翠璇

责任监印:熊庆玉

出版发行:华中科技大学出版社(中国·武汉)

武昌喻家山 邮编:430074 电话:(027)87557437

录 排:武汉星明图文有限公司

印 刷:湖北开元印刷有限公司

开本:787 mm×1092 mm 1/16

版次:2009 年 7 月第 1 版

ISBN 978-7-5609-5676-3/H·698

印张:11.25

印次:2009 年 7 月第 1 次印刷

字数:200 000

定价:20.00 元

(本书若有印装质量问题,请向出版社发行部调换)

前 言

全球化的深入发展不仅使国际贸易空前繁荣,而且使企业的跨国生产和经营成为当今世界经济不可阻挡的潮流。竞争的国际化不断凸显商务英语这一沟通平台的重要价值。培养具有扎实的英语语言功底、跨文化交际能力、丰富的国际商务知识和跨文化管理能力的国际商务人才是我国成功参与国际竞争的重要前提。

本教材突破传统教材的局限性,结合笔者多年从事国际商务活动及商务英语写作教学的经验,在参考大量国内外相关资料的基础上,将理论与实践紧密结合,拓宽商务视野,丰富教学内容,从而使之成为真正实用的商务英语写作用书。本教材的特点主要表现在以下三个方面:

1. 视野广,内容丰富。

随着商务活动形式的不断丰富和通信技术的不断更新,商务英语的范畴在不断扩大,商务沟通的方式也在不断地更新和发展。为适应当前国际商务发展的需要,本教材本着大商务的原则,在重点介绍与国际贸易相关的信函写作的基础上,增加了跨国公司日常业务运作所需的商务文书写作以及求职简历的撰写等方面的内容,以提高学生全面的商务写作能力,满足他们参加商务英语相关资格考试(如剑桥商务英语考试)、求职和未来职业发展的需要。对于跨文化沟通知识的介绍有利于培养学生的跨文化意识,提高其跨文化沟通能力。附录中列出了大量国际商务中常用的缩略语、组织机构名称、贸易术语、专业词汇等,可以丰富学生的商务知识。

2. 理论与实践紧密结合。

为了加深学生对商务英语写作的了解和熟练掌握,本教材不仅介绍了商务英语写作所要遵循的一般原则及技巧,还对每一类具体商务信函的组织原则及写作技巧作了详细的阐述。本教材所提供的大量信函很多选自实际应用的范例,能真切反映商务活动的实际过程,有助于消除学生“学无以致用”的担忧,从而提高其学习积极性。另外,本书的主要内容用英文编写,可用于双语教学和英语教学,有助于培养学生直接用英语思维的习惯和提高其实际英语应用能力。

3. 操作性强。

商务英语写作是一种极有用的技能,学生必须练好基本功。为方便学生学习,本教材的每个章节提供专题简介、信函组织原则和写作技巧、正文信函、生词解释及关键词语的用法、有用的句型、练习等诸多部分的内容编排。此种编排有利于学生更有针对性地进行写作,通过大量的练习,举一反三,不断地提高其写作的真实性和得体性。

本书适合商务英语专业和国际经济与贸易专业的学生、国际商务从业人员参考使用,可以作为各级院校的教学用书、公司培训用书以及自学参考用书。

本书编写得到了华中科技大学出版社杨鸥等编辑以及从事国际商务活动的朋友们的大力支持,编写过程中还参考了许多国内外相关著作和论文的研究成果,在此一并表示深深的谢意。由于编者水平有限和时间有限,书中不妥之处在所难免,敬请读者、同仁、专家不吝赐教,批评指正。

盛美娟

2009年7月

Contents

Part One The Building Blocks of Business Communication	(1)
Chapter 1 An Insight into Business Communication	(1)
Chapter 2 Selection of Communication Channels	(8)
Chapter 3 Structure and Styles of Business Letters	(16)
Chapter 4 Creating Effective Business Communication	(30)
Chapter 5 Cross-Cultural Communication	(41)
Part Two International Business Correspondence	(48)
Chapter 6 Establishing Business Relations	(48)
Chapter 7 Enquiries and Replies	(55)
Chapter 8 Offers, Quotations and Counter-Offers	(62)
Chapter 9 Orders and Their Fulfillment	(69)
Chapter 10 Terms of Payment	(77)
Chapter 11 Packing	(87)
Chapter 12 Insurance	(94)
Chapter 13 Shipment	(103)
Chapter 14 Complaints and Claims	(113)
Chapter 15 Business Contract	(122)
Part Three Interoffice Communication	(130)
Chapter 16 Memorandums	(130)
Chapter 17 Reports	(138)
Chapter 18 Resumes	(145)
Appendix I	(153)
Abbreviations Used in International Trade	(153)
Appendix II	(158)
INCOTERMS 2000, and Expressions Related to Trade	(158)
Appendix III	(167)
Shipping Documents	(167)
参考文献	(173)

Part One The Building Blocks of Business Communication

Chapter 1 An Insight into Business Communication

1. The Importance of Communication to Businesses

Communication is the process of exchanging message between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behaviors. The message involved is usually facts, ideas, emotions and other information type. Communication can be verbal (using words to convey the message, either in an oral form or written form) or nonverbal (using gestures, stance, tone of voice, and so on to reinforce the verbal message). Verbal communication can be further divided into oral or written one. Oral communication usually takes on the forms of face-to-face or phone conversations, voice mail, informal or formal meetings, while written communication often takes on the forms of e-mail messages, letters, memos and reports. Nonverbal communication takes place all the time through the use of gestures, facial expressions, stance, tone of voice, the size of an office, and so on.

The ability to communicate is important in all aspects of our life. Effective communication can help us to satisfy the needs of both others and ourselves, to accomplish tasks and achieve goals, to establish and enhance good relationship with friends, groups and organizations.

Communication is a major and essential part of the work of business. Without communication, business can barely exist. In every business, communication is the way through which people get their points across and get work done. For instance, management performs its basic functions through communication. Managers direct through communication, coordinate through communication, and control through communication.

In today's highly competitive market place, good communication matters more than ever. Employees want to know where the business is headed and how they can contribute. Customers want to know how your product or service provides value for them that can't be found elsewhere. Other stakeholders want to know how your organization affects them. You only meet those needs to keep competitive if you can communicate effectively.

2. The Importance of Communication to Individuals at Work

In business, having excellent communication skills is the qualification most required by employers recruiting and promoting individuals. The ability to communicate effectively with others is named by many employers as a top attribute of the successful business person. In obtaining a job, your resume and job application letter will be screened for evidence of your job-related knowledge and experience. Good writing skills will enable you to make your resume and job application letter distinguish from others', thus leaving big impression on the recruiter and winning the opportunity for interviewing. At the job interview, good oral communication skills will help you shine and get the job for sure. Once you are employed, communication becomes even more important as you advance. Today in business world, regardless of the level of your job or position, your

communication skills are vital to your success. The ability to communicate effectively with customers, colleagues, subordinates and supervisors may be the determining factor in your career advance. If you lack such ability, you are unlikely to be promoted to the higher positions. Improving your communication skills actually increases your chances for success in business.

3. Flow of Information in the Process of Business Communication

Business communication is a complex process which involves people encoding and decoding messages while simultaneously serving as both senders and receivers. Encoding refers to the process in which the sender selects and organizes the message before it is sent. While receiving the message, the receiver will decode it — interpreting the message and giving feedback. As factors such as differences in culture, age, experience and other categories are easy to cause misunderstanding, feedback helps people clear up possible misunderstandings and thus improve the effectiveness of communication. The above process continues, cycle after cycle, as long as people involved want to communicate.

Communication activities of an organization can be classified into three categories: interoffice communication, external communication and interpersonal communication.

All the communication — oral, nonverbal or written that occurs in conducting work within a business is classified as interoffice communication. This is the communication among the staff within a business that is done to implement its operation plan—to produce products, provide a service, or sell goods. Interoffice communication takes on many forms. Conversations, the grapevine, phone calls, notes, memos, reports, databases and e-mails are largely used to reach the goal of smooth management.

Information flow of interoffice communication can be upward, downward and horizontal. Upward communication refers to the messages from employees and the front line supervisors moving up through echelons until they reach the top management. Downward communication goes from the top administrators down to the workers. The information exchange between or among individuals on the same hierarchical level is horizontal communication. As most of the information, instructions, orders needed to achieve the business's objectives originate at the top and must be communicated to the workers, downward communication takes the dominating position. However, most companies recognize the need for more upward communication. They have found that administrators need to be better informed of the things at the bottom. Interoffice communication will be fully discussed in Part Three of this book.

The work-related communication that a business does with individuals or groups outside of it is external communication. This is the communication of a business with its public — suppliers, customers, government agencies, the press and the general public. Most of the information flow of the external communication is horizontal. The external communication, particularly the horizontal communication among trading companies in an international context is the major focus of this book and will be discussed thoroughly in Part Two.

Interpersonal communication refers to the non-business-related exchanges of information and feelings among people at work. Human-beings are social animals that have the need to communicate even when they have little or nothing to say. The workers' attitudes toward the business, each other and their assignments directly affect their willingness to work. Interpersonal skills such as listening and dealing with conflicts could promote cooperation and ensure a productive team.

4. Purposes of Business Communication

No communication is done without any purpose. We conduct communication to satisfy needs in both our work and non-work lives. Each of us wants to be heard, appreciated and wanted. We also want to accomplish tasks and achieve goals. Obviously, a major purpose of communication is to help people feel good about themselves and about their friends, groups and organization.

Business communication is much more purposeful. The primary purposes of business communication are to inform, request or persuade and build goodwill. Goodwill is the favorable attitude and feeling people have toward a business, and it is an intangible asset to a business. The image people have of a business, or what people think of a business, often determines where they do business. By creating goodwill, a business can keep customer loyalty which is vital to gaining ground in fierce competition.

In certain situation, specific purposes will be prevailing. These purposes could be informing, establishing and maintaining good relationships, requesting, explaining, persuading, apologizing, and showing acceptance or rejection. Most often you may find it inevitable to have several purposes mixed up in one letter. Consider the situation in which you want to write a letter to persuade your client to buy goods from you, persuading is the primary purpose while building up goodwill is secondary yet very necessary. No matter the client buys the goods from you or not, goodwill created in your letter will help to set up and maintain good relationship with this client and make it possible for him or her to buy from you in the future.

Knowing the specific purposes clearly will help you decide what to say and how to say, thus making business communication more effective. Before you communicate, list all your purposes, major and minor. Specify exactly what you want your reader to know or think or do. Specify exactly what kind of image of yourself and of your company you want to project. The following questions will be helpful in identifying and analyzing your purposes of communication.

- What is the problem I need to solve?
- What must this message do to solve the problem?
- What do I want the audience to do, to think, to feel or to take an action?
- How will the audience react to my information?

5. The Challenge to Business Communication

Communication does not take place in a vacuum, but rather is influenced by a number of forces at work. Rapid changes in business world not only highlight the importance of communication but also issue challenge. To be an effective communicator in business, the strategic forces influencing business communication should be carefully considered: technology, focus on quality and customer's needs, team, diversity in the age of globalization, ethical and legal concern.

Technology has the greatest impact on how communication is conducted. Electronic mail, voice mail, teleconference, computer network, fax machine, and the Internet have expanded our channels of communication. These new methods of electronic communication allow for increased horizontal and vertical (either downward or upward) communication within a business. The technological advances in communication are changing the way businesses operate. For example, intranets (web pages just for employees) give everyone in an organization access to information, and extranets (web pages for external audience) help to save time and money and improve quality. Memos, faxes and videophones allow employees to work at home rather than communicate to a central office; faxes and e-mail make it easy to communicate across oceans and time zones. Yet technological change carries

costs. Large investment is required as a business brings in new equipment for communication and offers training to its employees. For employees, learning to use new-generation software and improved hardware takes time and involves inconvenience and frustrations. In addition, information overload often occurs as information arrives faster than people can handle it. In the information age, identifying the important messages for time processing is the necessary skill for efficient work.

Satisfaction with quality and customer service is the foundation for every company to survive in the increasingly competitive marketplace as it can increase the customer loyalty to a maximum degree. Increasing focus on quality and customers' needs is the core of the company's operation. As customers' needs are diversified and changing as time goes, identifying the changes and trends is critical to the company's decision making in production and marketing. Communication is at the center of the focus on quality and customers' needs. For example, while talking with the customers with a view to knowing what they really want, active listening which means paying careful attention to customers' feedback should be applied. Brainstorming and group problem solving are two essential ways to develop more efficient methods to do things; and good ideas resulted should be communicated smoothly throughout the company so that they can be fully utilized.

A cross-functional team is a new mode of cooperation to get work done with efficiency in a work place. In such a team, people with supplementary skills work for a common purpose. Team members set their own goals, in cooperation with management, and plan how to achieve those goals and how their work is to be accomplished. They handle a wide array of functions and work with a minimum of direct supervision. Communication is the key to a successful cross-functional team. Open lines of communication are usually adopted to increase interaction between employees and management. For example, information must flow vertically up to management and down to workers, as well as horizontally among team members, other teams, and supervisors so that all affected parties are kept well informed as projects progress. Interpersonal communication skills such as listening and dealing with conflicts should be commanded as well to promote friendship, coordination and group loyalty.

The influence of diversity on business communication has long been aware of. Differences between the sender and the receiver of messages in areas such as culture, age, gender, race, religion and education require sensitivity on the part of both parties so that the intended message is the one that is received. Diversity challenges the effectiveness of business communication more than ever with the increasing expansion of globalization. In today's global economy, importing and exporting are just the start. Transnational production and operation are becoming an irresistible trend. Meanwhile, Chinese government is taking strategic measures to encourage Chinese enterprises to go global with the aim of expanding world market further. Haier Electronics Group Co. has set the precedence while many others are following suit. Successful communication in the global market must often span barrier of language and requires a person to consider different world views resulting from societal, religious or other cultural factors. When a person fails to consider these factors, communication suffers, and the result is often embarrassing and potentially costly. To help employees reach their fullest potentials and contribute to the company's goals, more and more companies have undertaken diverse initiatives such as providing diversity training seminars to help workers understand and appreciate differences in terms of culture, gender, age, race, religion and so on. Refer to Chapter 5 for more information about diversities in culture.

Legal and ethical concerns act as a strategic force influencing business communication in that

they set boundaries in which communication can occur. International, nation and local laws affect the way that various business activities can be conducted. Legal fees usually cost businesses a great deal, which forces the businesses to have the built-in reserve in order to protect themselves against lawsuits. Clear and open communication can reduce lawsuits by giving all the parties a chance to shape policies and by clarifying exactly what is and isn't being proposed. Except for the legal concerns, businesses should also be concerned about ethical issues such as offering safe product, being good environmental citizens, offering a good workplace for their employees, contributing to the needs of the communities in which they operate. Ethical concerns don't carry the same clear cost as legal fees. But businesses that are willing to commit fraud will leave customers with a distrust of themselves. Enron Corporation (once the largest company in the world providing natural gas and electricity) was found to have improved its financial image by moving debts off its books and using other accounting trick. As a result of the scandal, it went bankrupt and thousands of company employees lost their jobs. In 2008, San Lu Group Co.'s baby milk food contaminated with melamine has caused kidney stones for thousands of babies in China. Customers all around China flew into fury. The distrust from the public put the whole milk industry into a marketing disaster. To regain public trust, businesses must both act ethically and convince the public that they are doing so. In this sense, smooth communication with the public is critical.

6. The Increasing Use of Written Communication in Business

Written communication has always been playing a significant role in the business world with no substitute for it. The major advantages of written communication are as follows.

- Most written messages tend to be formal.
- Written messages can be deliberately prepared and designed with enough time.
- Written messages provide the reader with convenience to read and reply carefully to them.
- Written messages can function as permanent record for future reference.
- Written messages can give detailed and complex information that is necessary to the reader.
- Written messages can serve as proof of the communication and become documents that may be legally acceptable as a binding contract or as evidence in case a dispute or lawsuit occurs.

Information revolution brings about dramatic changes to business communication and drives it to go back to depending more on writing to reach its goal. People at work now write more than anytime in the past for the following reasons. Firstly, the Internet, a loose connection of millions of computers at thousands of sites around the world, allows users to have quick access to information of all types needed for business writing. Secondly, the use of computer as well as the unceasing advent of many different kinds of software brings whole new possibilities for not only message clarification and refinement but also document preparation and presentation. Thirdly, more and more documents either for internal use or external use are sent swiftly through the Internet (online) known as electronic mails with an aim to save time and money.

Your written messages are a permanent record of your ability to write. In today's business world, as you need to write more, your performance is largely judged by your writing. Good business writing is clear, complete and correct. It saves the reader's time and helps to build goodwill. It is worth every minute it takes and every penny it costs. But when writing isn't as good as it could be, you and your organization pay a price in wasted time, wasted efforts and lost goodwill. However, writing skills are not something inborn, they are acquired through learning and

practicing assiduously.

China's entry of WTO accelerated its integration into the world economy with the increasing expansion of import and export, and the booming of the business activities conducted by multinationals. It brings people who are engaged in business lots of opportunities and gives great challenge as well. Learning to write business messages in English related to international trade, interoffice work and job hunting is the imperative task for people who are at work and college students who are aiming to work in business. The aim of this book is to help the reader master the writing skills in relation to the above mentioned subjects. The real-world examples and applications provided by this book will be more valuable.

Words and Expressions

effective	<i>adj.</i>	有效的	strategic	<i>adj</i>	关键的, 战略的
accomplish	<i>v.</i>	完成	originate	<i>v.</i>	起源
resolve	<i>v.</i>	解决	purposeful	<i>adj.</i>	有目的的
attribute	<i>n.</i>	特征, 属性	loyalty	<i>n.</i>	忠诚
screen	<i>v.</i>	选拔, 筛选	diversity	<i>n.</i>	差异, 多样性
encode	<i>v.</i>	编码	ethical	<i>adj.</i>	伦理的, 道德的
decode	<i>v.</i>	解码, 译码	inborn	<i>adj.</i>	与生俱来的, 天生的
horizontal	<i>adj.</i>	水平的	melamine	<i>n.</i>	三聚氰胺

Notes

1. verbal communication 语言沟通
2. nonverbal communication 非语言沟通
3. In business, having excellent communication skills is the qualification most required by employers recruiting and promoting individuals. 企业在招聘、提拔员工时, 雇主首先要求他们具备良好的沟通技能。
4. Information flow of interoffice communication can be upward, downward and horizontal. 公司内部的信息流通可以是自下而上或者自上而下的纵向沟通, 亦可以是同级之间的横向沟通。
horizontal communication 横向沟通
vertical communication 纵向沟通
5. Interpersonal communication refers to the non-business-related exchanges of information and feelings among people at work. 人际交流是指工作中人们之间的非业务信息和情感的交流。
6. cross-functional team 跨职能团队
7. Written communication has always been playing a significant role in the business world with no substitute for it. 书面沟通总是在商务活动中发挥着不可替代的重要作用。
8. But when writing isn't as good as it could be, you and your organization pay a price in wasted time, wasted efforts and lost goodwill. 不得体的写作不仅给你和你的公司造成时间和精力浪费, 而且有损商誉。

Exercises

1. Answer the following questions.

- (1) Explain the concept of communication. Mention the different types of communication.
 - (2) Do you communicate well? Why or why not?
 - (3) Explain the importance of communication to businesses.
 - (4) Explain the importance of communication to individuals at work.
 - (5) What are the purposes of business communication?
 - (6) What are the five strategic forces influencing business communication? How do they affect business communication?
 - (7) What are the advantages of written business communication?
 - (8) Why is it imperative for Chinese people engaged in business to learn the skills of writing business messages in English?
2. Analyze the following cases and identify the sources for ineffective communication.
- (1) You have received one cover letter for a US\$ 500000 Sales Contract from your client asking you "to take a moment not to read and sign this contract".
What impression will you have about the writer and the writer's company? How will it affect your future dealing with this company?
 - (2) You are the newly nominated manager of Sales Department with 12 staff. Kathy Smith, one of the staff here has strong leadership qualities, and all her co-workers look up to her. She dominates conversations with them and expresses strong viewpoints on most matters. Although she is a good worker, her dominating personality has caused problems for you. Today you directed your subordinates to change a certain work procedure. The change has proven superior whenever it has been tried. The staff quickly got into discussion with Kathy, the obvious leader. In a few minutes, she appeared in your office and said, "We have thought it over, your idea won't work." Explain how you will handle the situation?
3. Activities
- (1) Search online to locate a current newspaper or magazine article that describes an illegal or unethical act by a business organization or its employee(s). Be prepared to share details of the incident in an informal presentation to the class and explain how you would deal with the situation if you were the leader of the company.
 - (2) Using the Internet to locate an article that describes how a company or organization is using teams in its operation. Write a one-page summary of the article.

Chapter 2 Selection of Communication Channels

1. Introduction

Communication channel refers to the mechanism through which people convey a message between or among them, either verbally or in other media. There are many types of communication channel. They vary in speed, accuracy of transmission, cost, the number of messages carried, the number of people reached, efficiency and ability to promote goodwill. Furthermore, how the message is delivered will affect the work efficiency of the reader in executing what is expected by the writer of the message. Appropriate channel of communication contributes to effective communication. Choosing the best channel to communicate should always be the first thing to consider when a communication is planned.

Considering the degree of formality, communication channels can be divided into two categories: formal and informal. Paper documents, meetings and presentations are formal and give people considerable control over the message. E-mail and phone calls are less formal but more personal, they are mainly used for routine interchanges with people known well.

Communication channels can also be classified roughly as written or oral. Written channel refers to the use of such paper-based media as letters, memos, reports, proposals, faxes, e-mails, flyers, catalogues, mobile-phone messages, etc. Written channels are mainly used to send formal messages for the purpose of allowing both the writer and the reader enough time to write and reply, keeping the documents for future reference or using them as evidence for possible arbitration. Oral channel includes face-to-face talks, speeches, meetings or conferences, presentations, voicemail, telephone conversations, videoconferences and others. Oral channels are usually direct, confidential, personal and encouraging collaboration, therefore they are better for making decisions, and clearing up misunderstandings.

2. Varieties of Communication Channel

Various types of channel are in business use. The most popular channels are letters, faxes, e-mails, memorandums, reports, meetings, websites and telephones. Depending on the preference of audience, the purposes of writing, and the situation, one channel may be better than another. Sometimes more than one channel may be used to send more than one message at a time.

(1) Letter

Letters are mainly used to communicate with the audience outside companies. But in large organizations where each unit is autonomous, letters are also widely used as the interoffice communication channel. Letters are usually sent through post office, and regarded as the most formal way of communication. They are also much more protective of the communicator's privacy, therefore for messages that are formal, private, confidential, and do not need urgent feedback, letters are usually the best choice. Documents such as contracts, price lists, catalogues, brochures, and even samples without much weight and capacity are often enclosed in letters for the sake of convenience. Express mail is a kind of letter that can arrive at the reader's place at a fast speed. It is popular in sending documents that are original and in urgent need.

(2) Fax

Fax is the abbreviation for facsimile. It refers to the copy of documents sent through fax

machine which can transmit images through phone lines. Most organizations have a separate telephone line just for the fax, so that faxes can be sent and received 24 hours a day. Fax enjoys a fast speed, and messages sent through fax machine can reach the audience within seconds. Therefore, faxes are the convenient communication channel when exact copy of the written message is urgently required by the audience far away. The drawback of fax is that it lacks privacy of a letter, and the quality can hardly be assured—the copy received by the audience may not be as clear as the original message. Confirmation of the information received through fax is thus necessary.

(3) E-mail

E-mail is the short form of “electronic mail” which is sent through the Internet. With the popularity of computer use and the development of Internet technology, e-mail is now widely and frequently used for conveying information in the business world for it has the advantages of high speed, low cost and convenient access to both working staff inside a company and business counterparts outside the company without the restriction on office hours. Documents with large information capacity and complicated content can be attached to e-mail when it is being sent. To send messages which require immediate response, e-mail is a good choice. The major disadvantage of e-mail is that it can not be used for highly confidential messages because its security is low. With overuse, e-mail is easy to cause information overload which is hard to handle.

(4) Memorandum

Memorandum (often simplified as “memo”) is the major channel for routine interoffice communication with a purpose of making a request, giving instructions, making announcements or answering a request. It saves the time of both the sender and the reader by avoiding the time-consuming meetings and the telephone calls requiring immediate attention. As a written message, it can be filed and referred to later on if any question arises about the subject matter of the memorandum. Memorandums may be delivered by hand or by post office, by fax or by e-mail.

(5) Report

Report is the more formal written communication channel that is mainly used inside the company. It relays information in detail for the company to make plans and solve problems. Written reports serve not only as a way of relaying information, but also as an official record that the information was, in fact, relayed. Report writing involves more efforts and time, therefore, it is mainly used when serious problems need to be solved or important decisions are to be made.

(6) Meeting

Meeting is one commonly used interoffice communication channel through which a group of people meet and have discussion over something important. At a meeting, with the discussion going further, ideas could be fully exchanged, which is conducive to problem solving. As a result, meetings are often used even if they are time-consuming.

(7) Website

Website is more and more frequently used for business communication, especially in the age when e-commerce flourishes. It links up suppliers and customers and allows them to share information so that a business deal could be reached. Companies are also using websites to promote

public relations. Individual persons may design their personal websites for different purposes such as selling goods, raising money, or other activities.

The website's function of information supply and exchange is highly interactive and user-driven. User's needs, interests and preferences are kept as the first priority.

Website is a kind of mass media, which aims at communicating information to the public. It provides detailed information about a company and the products or services the company offers by combining word description, pictures, tables, graphs, videos and flashes, which contributes to a sound understanding from the public. Furthermore, through formatting, sequencing the information into manageable chunks and providing specific links, a website can tailor information to specific readers and enable them to input their information so that interactive communication is available.

Though having advantages mentioned above, website provides little security for privacy and is vulnerable to information loss in case of technical problems and attacks of computer viruses. In addition, maintaining a website will be a large cost for a company or an individual.

(8) Telephone

Telephone is known for its convenience and fast speed of information exchange. For matters that require immediate feedback, using telephone call is a good choice. But telephone is restricted to office hours, and it can be expensive for long-distance call. In addition, as information exchanged over the phone can not be used as a permanent record, after the call, written message to the same effect should be sent as confirmation and for file.

3. Guidelines for Using E-mail to Communicate

E-mail has its own format and norms. Going into the details of its form and norms ensures effective communication through e-mail.

(1) Format of e-mail

The format of e-mail is automatically created by the e-mail system itself. It mainly covers the following parts.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| ● sender's e-mail address | ● subject line |
| ● reader's e-mail address | ● attachment |
| ● Cc (other readers' e-mail address) | ● message |

Cc is the abbreviation for carbon copy. It is used to make the reader aware of whom copies of the message are being sent to at the same time. Other readers' e-mail address should be listed in this blank.

Subject lines or e-mails are much more important than those for letters and memorandums. People at work receive a great many of e-mails (including junk mails) which are hard for them to give immediate processing. Through the subject line, the reader can identify the important e-mails and deal with them promptly. Subject lines for e-mails should be specific, concise and catchy. When the e-mail message is replied to, the e-mail system automatically creates a subject line "Re:[subject line of the incoming e-mail]". If the subject line is good, using it is acceptable. If not, a new subject line should be created. For several rounds of replying to e-mails, "Re:Re:Re:Re:" at the start of subject should be avoided.

Attachment of the e-mail is the special device to which necessary documents can be attached. If attachment is provided, mention it in the message below.

Message is the major part of an e-mail, the content and the layout of it are much similar to those of a letter which will be fully discussed in Chapter 3. The difference is that the e-mail begins with the salutation and detailed information about the writer and the company he or she represents will be displayed at the bottom. "Best regards", "All the best", "Best wishes", "Thank you" can be used as complimentary close when writing to people known well to the writer, otherwise, "Sincerely yours" should be used.

(2) Tips for writing

To effectively organize e-mails, apply the following tips.

- Use polite expressions to create a good image of the writer and the organization the writer represents, though e-mail is the less formal communication channel.
- Make the message concise. E-mail message should be no longer than one screen and wordiness should be avoided.
- Use simple language such as short and familiar words to make the message clear.
- Give specific information to ensure a sound understanding from the reader.
- Don't cover private information in an e-mail, because it guarantees little privacy.
- Never send angry messages through e-mail. Use face-to-face talk to work it out whenever a conflict arises.

(3) A sample of e-mail

From: tina-zhang@yahoo.com
To: cathy2008@sina.com
Cc: mikelee@sina.com
Subject: Shipment of Order No. 123
Dear Miss Foster: We are writing to inform you that the goods under Order No. 123 are ready for shipment. We have booked the shipping space with Cosco, which offers good quality service for shipping. Once the goods are shipped, we will send you the shipping advice immediately. Sincerely yours Tina Zhang Export Department Shanghai Wooden Industries Co., Ltd. Tel: 021-50277648 Fax: 021-50277649 E-mail: tina-zhang@yahoo.com

4. Guidelines for Using Faxes to Communicate

Fax also has its own format and norms.

(1) Format of fax

Most organization has printed fax form which covers the following parts.

- head segment
- reader's information block
- sender's information block
- date
- number of pages
- subject line
- message

The head segment of fax provides the name, address and other contact information of the sender's company such as telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and website.

The reader's block gives the information about the reader's name, title and fax number.

The sender's block gives the information about the sender's name, title and fax number.

Date should be expressed in words to avoid ambiguity.

Number of pages indicates how many pages are included. This part is important, as one or more pages may be lost during transmission. The number of pages is usually indicated as "1/1" for only one page, "1/2" for the first page of two in total, 2/2 for the second page of two in total, "1/3" for the first page of three in total, and so on.

Subject line indicates the major topic of the fax message. It is optional for a fax.

Message is the most important part of a fax. The layout of it is much similar to that of a letter. The difference is that the fax message begins with the salutation. "Best regards", "All the best", "Best wishes", "Thank you" can be used as complimentary close for the reader known well to the writer, otherwise, "Sincerely yours" should be used.

(2) Tips for writing

To effectively organize faxes, apply the following tips.

- Use polite expressions to create a good image of the writer and the organization the writer represents, no matter formal message or informal message is sent through fax.
- Make the message concise. Though faxes could be longer to cover several pages, wordiness should be avoided.
- Use simple language such as short and familiar words to make the message clear.
- Give specific information to help the reader understand the message.
- Accentuate the color of the words, pictures, tables and graphs in the fax to ensure a clear copy received by the reader.