

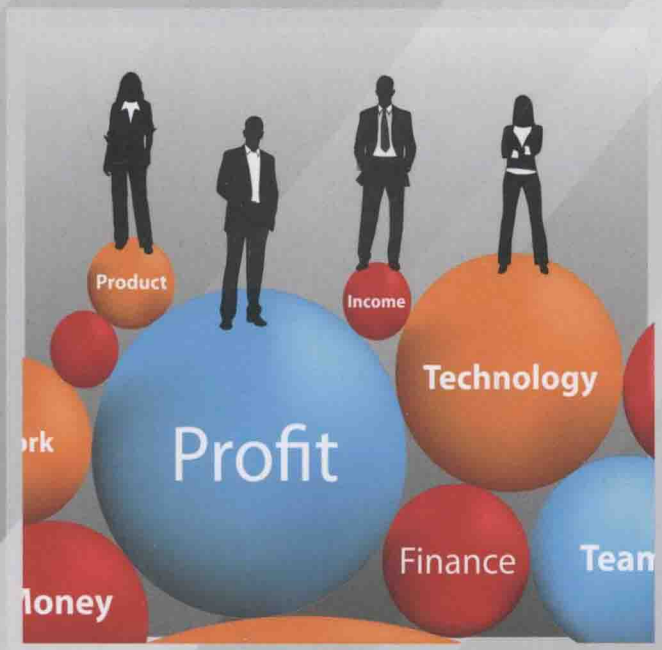


21st Century International Business English Writing
—Theory and Practice (Second Edition)

21世纪国际商务英语写作

——理论与实践(第二版)

许小平 编著



华中科技大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

本书分为理论篇与实践篇两大部分,共 17 章。第一部分理论篇主要内容:商务英语写作的基本原则,词的选择与句子修辞,段落与作文以及文章语气、风格等;第二部分实践篇主要内容:备忘录、电子邮件、商业书信的格式,简历与求职信、询盘与报盘、订货与付款、装运与保险、索赔与代理以及合同文本的写作等。

本书既可作为高等院校经贸类专业及 MBA 专业的教材、BEC 考试的培训教材,也可作为从事外经贸工作和涉外企业的人员的参考书。

再版说明

本书自 2000 年出版以来,一直作为华中科技大学经济学院本专科生的专业英语教材,受到许多大专院校师生及国际贸易实务界人士的好评,先后进行了三次印刷,并且在 2007 年被评为华中科技大学精品教材,同时也获得再版的机会。

第二版的一个主要改变,就是增加了一章备忘录与电子邮件的写作内容,并且更新了一些过时的资料和内容,尽量选用最新的材料。此外,在第二版中,增加了习题参考答案,便于教师在教学过程中指导学生习作,也有利于广大自学读者检验自己所掌握这门知识的程度。其中英译汉和汉译英答案供参考,读者不必拘泥一种译法。

我相信此次再版不但能使本书内容更丰富、更切合实际,而且也能让使用本书的学习者除了能学习国际贸易实务知识外,还能提高自己的商务英语写作能力。

最后,我要借此机会感谢华中科技大学教务处、经济学院。没有他们的大力支持,就不会有本书第二版。

许小平
华中科技大学
2010 年 1 月

第一版前言

为满足我国日益对外开放的需要,加快培养和造就大批既掌握外语又精通专业的涉外经贸类专门人材的步伐,提高广大读者对外经贸等相关工作的能力与素质,笔者根据自己多年教授“国际商务英语写作”的教学实践,参考国外有关最新国际商务沟通理论与案例,并且结合我国的具体国情,编写了《21 世纪国际商务英语写作——理论与实践》一书。

全书分为理论篇和实践篇两大部分,共 16 章。第一部分(1—4 章)系统讲述了国际商务英语写作的理论知识,即从词的选择到句子的修辞,从段落到作文,最后讲述文章的语气、风格等;第二部分(5—16 章)系统介绍了国际商务信件和合同的语言形式、体裁、写作技巧及使用习惯,并提供大量规范范例,例如:如何写简历、求职信,如何询盘与报盘,如何订货与付款,如何写索赔与代理以及合同文本等,并在每章的最后附有针对性很强的练习,让读者对所学的内容进行检测与巩固。

本书有以下特点:

①内容新颖、丰富。本书运用大量国内外的典型案例,给读者提供最新的学习资料和有价值的信息。

②结构布局合理。本书既注重理论知识的传授,又充分考虑到学习者的运用能力的培养,两者结合得当。

③针对性强,适用范围广。本书既可作为大专院校经贸类专业的商务英语写作教材,也可用作 MBA 专业教材,BEC 考试等的培训教材,还可作为学习者拓宽该领域的知识、提高素质与能力之用。

本书在写作与出版过程中得到华中科技大学经济学院和华中科技大学出版社的大力支持,在此表示衷心的感谢!

许小平
2000 年 2 月

CONTENTS

PART ONE A RHETORIC FOR BUSINESS WRITERS

Chapter 1	The Basic Principles of Good Business Writing	(1)
Chapter 2	Diction and Effective Sentences	(9)
Chapter 3	The Paragraph and the Whole Composition	(30)
Chapter 4	Style and Tone	(50)

PART TWO INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS WRITING

Chapter 5	Memos and E-mail Messages	(69)
Chapter 6	Format and Layout of Business Letters	(84)
Chapter 7	Resumes and Job Application Letters	(96)
Chapter 8	Enquiries and Replies	(111)
Chapter 9	Quotations, Sales Letters, Firm Offers and Counter Offers	(123)
Chapter 10	Orders and Order Acknowledgements	(134)
Chapter 11	Payments	(147)
Chapter 12	Shipment and Packing	(164)
Chapter 13	Insurance	(177)
Chapter 14	Complaints and Claims	(192)
Chapter 15	Agencies	(209)
Chapter 16	International Commercial Contracts(I)	(222)
Chapter 17	International Commercial Contracts(II)	(235)

Appendix A	Business Telex Abbreviations	(252)
Appendix B	Business Abbreviations	(259)
Appendix C	Keys to the Exercises	(264)
Bibliography	(285)

PART ONE A RHETORIC FOR BUSINESS WRITERS

Chapter 1 The Basic Principles of Good Business Writing

Business people aren't the only ones who write business documents. You write quite a few yourself, or soon will, especially to request information, place orders, register complaints, and apply for jobs. There's nothing mysterious or difficult about business writing. True, it follows its own special format, but otherwise it breaks no new writing ground. As always, deciding what to say and how to say it is vital to your success.

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

Good business writing meets five basic criteria: it's clear, complete, and correct; it saves the reader's time, and it builds goodwill.

1. It's clear. The meaning the reader gets is the meaning the writer intended. The reader doesn't have to guess.

2. It's complete. All of the reader's questions are answered. The reader has enough information to evaluate the message and act on it.

3. It's correct. All of the information in the message is accurate. The message is free from errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, word order, and sentence structure.

4. It saves the reader's time. The style, organization, and visual impact of the message help the reader to read, understand, and act on the information as quickly as possible.

5. It builds goodwill. The message presents a positive image of the writer and his

or her organization. It treats the reader as a person, not a number. It cements a good relationship between the writer and the reader.

Whether a document satisfies the criteria for effective messages depends on the interactions among the writer, the audience, the purposes of the message, and the situation. No single set of words will work in all possible situations.

We can judge whether a document is *correct* by measuring it against the facts and against standard English grammar and usage.

No absolute rule can tell us whether a draft is *clear* or *complete*. Are the following sentences clear?

We are not taking full advantage of Title 20 money.

No deduction shall be allowed under subsection (a) for any contribution or gift which would be allowable as a deduction under section 170 were it not for the percentage limitations, the dollar limitations, or the requirements as to the time of payment, set forth in such section.

We can't say whether these sentences will be clear to a reader without knowing who the reader is. Some readers may find these sentences clear; others will be lost. Similarly, a memo which seems complete to one reader could leave another reader with several questions. A document which saves the time of readers in one situation may take unnecessary time for other readers in another situation. A series of words which maintains goodwill when the writer and reader already have a long-established regard for each other may be inadequate for a writer who's trying to overcome an initial negative image.

HOW TO CREATE MESSAGES THAT MEET THE CRITERIA

To create good messages, use this seven-step process.

Before you write,

1. Analyze your audience, your purposes, and the situation.
2. Use this analysis to organize your information.
3. Use this analysis to design the physical appearance of your document.

Revise your document to

4. Be friendly and businesslike.
5. Emphasize the positive.
6. Use standard English; double-check names and numbers.

After your message is delivered,

7. Use the response you get to measure your success and to help you plan future

messages.

This whole chapter is about these seven steps. Here is a brief explanation of each of them.

Before You Write

Time spent planning will pay off in better messages that you produce more quickly. Planning is important even if you will compose a written message that can go through several drafts. Planning is crucial if you dictate or deliver an oral presentation, since you'll want to get things right the first time.

1. Analyze your audience, your purposes, and the situation. Be sure that you can answer the following six questions before you begin composing your message:

- Who is (are) your audience(s)? What characteristics are relevant to this particular message? If you are writing or speaking to more than one person, how do the people in your audience differ?

How much does your audience know about your topic? How will it respond to your message? Some characteristics of your readers will be irrelevant; focus on ones that matter for this message. Whenever you write to several people or to a group (like a memo to all employees), try to identify the subgroups that may respond differently to what you have to say.

- What are your purposes in writing?

Decide what your needs are. What must this message do to solve the organizational problem? What must it do to meet your own needs? What do you want your readers to do? To think or to feel? 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 organization you want to project.

Even in a simple message, you may have several related purposes: to announce a new policy, to make readers aware of the policy's provisions and requirements, and to have them feel that the policy is a good one, that the organization cares about its employees, and that you are a competent writer and manager.

- What information must your message include?

Make a list of the points that must be included; check your draft to make sure you include them all. If you're not sure whether a particular fact must be included, ask your instructor or your boss.

You can include information without emphasizing it.

- How can you build support for your position? What reasons or reader benefits will your reader find convincing?

Brainstorm to develop reasons for your decision, the logic behind your argument, and possible benefits to readers if they do as you ask. Reasons and reader benefits do not have to be monetary. Making the reader's job easier or more pleasant is a good reader benefit. In an informative or persuasive message, identify at least five reader benefits. In your message, use those that you can develop most easily and most effectively.

Be sure that the benefits are adapted to your reader. Many people do not identify closely with their companies; the fact that the company benefits from a policy will help the reader only if the saving or profit is passed directly on to the employees. That is rarely the case; savings and profits are often eaten up by returns to stockholders, bonuses to executives, and investments in plants and equipment or in research and development.

- What objection(s) can you expect your reader(s) to have? What negative elements of your message must you deemphasize or overcome?

Some negative elements can only be deemphasized. Others can be overcome. Be creative; is there any advantage associated with (even though not caused by) the negative? Can you rephrase or redefine the negative to make the reader see it differently?

- What aspects of the total situation may affect reader response? The economy? The time of year? Morale in the organization? The relationship between the reader and writer? Any special circumstances?

Readers may like you or resent you. You may be younger or older than the people you're writing to. The organization may be prosperous or going through hard times; it may have just been reorganized or may be stable. All these different situations will affect what you say and how you say it.

2. Use this analysis to organize your information. Remember these three basic principles:

- Put good news first.
 - In general, put what the reader wants to know first. In the subject line or first paragraph, make it clear that you're writing about something that is important to the reader.
 - Disregard point 2 and approach the subject indirectly when
- 4 •

- a. You have bad news to give the reader.
- b. You must persuade a reluctant reader.

3. Use this analysis to design the physical appearance of your document. You can design the physical appearance of your document to get your points to your reader more quickly. A clear, easy-to-read typeface is only the first step in creating a well-designed document. To make a document visually attractive,

- Use a subject line to orient the reader quickly.
- Use headings to group related ideas.
- Use lists and indented sections to emphasize, subpoints and examples.
- Number points that must be followed in sequence.
- Use short paragraphs—usually six typed lines or less.

If you plan these design elements before you begin composing, you'll save time and the final document will probably be better.

The best physical form for a document depends on how it will be used. For example, a document that will be updated frequently needs to be in a looseleaf binder, so the reader can easily throw away old pages and insert new ones.

When You Revise Your Draft

As you'll see, it's easier to write if you don't worry about too many things while you're getting ideas down on paper. But before you type up a final copy, revising and editing are crucial. Check for friendliness and for positive emphasis. Check to be sure that grammar, spelling, and numbers are correct.

4. Be friendly and businesslike. In addition to being an organizational member or a consumer, your reader has feelings just as you do. Writing that keeps the reader in mind uses you-attitude. Read your message over as if you were in your reader's shoes. How would you feel if you received it?

Good business writing is both friendly and businesslike. If you're too stiff, you put extra distance between your reader and yourself. If you try to be too chummy, you'll sound unprofessional. When you write to strangers, use simple, everyday words and make your message as personal and friendly as possible. When you write to friends, remember that your message will be filed and read by people you've never even heard of: avoid slang, cliches, and jokes.

5. Emphasize the positive. Sometimes you must mention limitations, drawbacks, or other negative elements but don't dwell on them. People will respond better to you

and your organization if you seem confident. Expect success, not failure. If you don't believe that what you're writing about is a good idea, why should they?

You emphasize the positive when you

- Focus on what is possible, not what is impossible.
- Eliminate negative words whenever possible.

• Put positive information first, give it more space, or set it off visually in an indented list. Since these techniques emphasize information, don't use them for negative information. Put negative information in the middle of a paragraph or document; present it as briefly as possible.

6. Use standard English; double-check names and numbers. Business people care about correctness in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If your grasp of mechanics is fuzzy, if standard English is not your native dialect, or if English is not your native language, you'll need to spend some time memorizing rules and perhaps find a good book or a tutor to help you. If you know how to write correctly but rarely take the time to do so, now is the time to begin to edit and proofread to eliminate careless errors.

Always proofread your document before you send it out. Double-check the reader's name, any numbers, and first and last paragraphs.

After Your Message Is Delivered

7. Evaluate the feedback, or response, you get. The real test of any message is "Did you get what you wanted, when you wanted it?" If the answer is *no*, then the message has failed — even if the grammar is perfect, the words elegant, the approach creative, the document stunningly attractive. If the message fails, you need to find out why.

Analyze your successes, too. You know you've succeeded when you get the results you want, both in terms of objective, concrete actions and in terms of image and goodwill. You want to know *why* your message worked. Often, you'll find that the principles in this book explain the results you get. If your results are different, why? There has to be a reason, and if you can find what it is, you'll be more successful more often.

NOTES

1. rhetoric *n.* 修辞学;运用语言的技能
2. goodwill *n.* 友好;信誉,商誉

3. evaluate *v.* 评价, 评论
4. positive image *n.* 正面形象, 积极形象
negative image *n.* 负面形象, 消极形象
5. document *n.* 公文; 单据; 文件
6. memo *n.* 备忘录; 便条
7. brainstorm *n.* 妙主意; 灵感
8. stockholder *n.* 股票持有人
9. bonuses to executives 给管理人员的奖金
10. subject line 事由
11. chummy *adj.* 友善, 亲切
12. avoid slang, cliches 避免使用俚语和陈词滥调
13. proofread *v.* 校对
14. feedback *n.* 反馈

EXERCISES FOR CHAPTER 1

1-1 Rewrite the following letter, substituting simpler words.

Dear Sir,

On January 6, I purchased a kit from your establishment: Model #316 - B. Subsequently it came to my attention that several of the components were in absence: the wing-nut bolts, the six brass screws and the lockwedge. The components are insignificant in monetary value, but without them I cannot implement the directions and conclude the project. I trust that you will cooperate to the fullest extent possible by sending these components at the earliest practicable date.

Yours sincerely,
Mr. George Widgen

1-2 Rewrite the following letter, taking out every unnecessary word.

Dear Sir,

This is the occasion of the third time I have written to you about a kit I ordered and subsequently received with three missing parts. My first two letters, which outlined the problem in minute detail, were not answered, although I sincerely requested prompt service. The missing parts, as noted previously, are two wing-nut bolts, six brass screws, and a lockwedge, which the man at the local hardware had never heard of. Notwithstanding the fact that I have already lost three precious weeks because of your

policy of refusing to acknowledge customer complaints and your failure to answer my previous letters, I would appreciate having the missing parts without even further delay so I don't suffer the loss of even more wasted time.

If this letter is also ignored like the last two, I shall feel forced to make formal complaint to the Post Office Department in order to get the restitution I deserve.

I hope to hear from you soon so I don't have to take this dire step, and I trust that you will demonstrate your good faith by communicating with me at once.

Sincerely yours,

George Widgen

1-3 Evaluate each of the following letter openings.

1. I need a replacement head gasket for the model 7-B whammle I bought from you last August 10.
2. As far as I'm concerned, your recent vote was criminal!
3. This is the third time I've written you about my problem.
4. Things are pretty slow here, so I thought I'd drop you a line.

Chapter 2 Diction and Effective Sentences

Diction

Diction is the choice and use of words. As a business communicator, you have two things to worry about in choosing and revising your words: correctness and effectiveness. Correctness is generally the easier of the two qualities to achieve, particularly if you have heard “good” English all your life. Without even thinking about grammar and usage, you will generally know what’s correct; the words will sound “right” to you. But sometimes you may stumble over an unusual situation. Editors and grammarians themselves occasionally have questions—and even disputes—about correct usage.

The “rules” of grammar are constantly changing to reflect changes in the way people speak. So if you have doubts about what is correct, don’t be lazy. Look up the answer and use the proper form of expression. And if you suspect that your ear for correct usage is not particularly good, check any number of special reference books available in libraries and bookstores. Most authorities agree on the basic conventions.

Just as important as using the correct words is choosing the best words for the job at hand. Word effectiveness is generally more difficult to achieve than correctness, particularly in written communication. Professional writers have to work at their craft, using what you might call tricks of the trade to improve their writing style. In the rest of this chapter, you will learn some of these techniques.

FUNCTIONAL WORDS AND CONTENT WORDS

Words can be divided into two categories: functional and content. Functional words express relationships and have only one unchanging meaning in any given context. They include conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and pronouns. Your main concern with functional words is to use them correctly.

Content words, on the other hand, are multidimensional and, therefore, subject to various interpretations. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are in this category.