

实用商务英语系列教材

实用商务英语写作

Contemporary Business Writing

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Contents

序

前言

Part One	Fundamentals of Modern Business Writing	
	现代商务写作的基本原则	1
Chapter 1	An Overview of Business Writing	
	商务写作概论	1
Chapter 2	Adaptation and Selection of Words	
	针对读者合理选词	12
Chapter 3	Construction of Effective Sentences and Paragraphs	
	有效地组织句子与段落	29
Chapter 4	Writing for Effects	
	商务写作的特殊技巧	56
Part Two	Letter Writing	
	信函写作	77
Chapter 5	Business Correspondence	
	贸易信函	77
Chapter 6	Invitations and Thank-you Letters	
	邀请函与感谢信	127
Chapter 7	Notes and Announcements	
	便条与通知	146

Chapter 8	Letters of Application	
	申请信	172
Chapter 9	Resume	
	简历	211
Chapter 10	Letters of Recommendation	
	推荐信	233
Part Three	Report Writing	
	报告写作	257
Chapter 11	Memorandum, Informal, Short Reports	
	备忘录与非正式的短篇报告	257
Chapter 12	Proposals and Formal Reports	
	意向书与正式报告	285
APPENDIX	Punctuation Marks	
附录	标点符号	330
Reference	参考书目	363

前言

中国经济的国际化使英语在商务上的应用远远超越贸易领域,它渗透到我们经济生活的各个方面。商务写作能力是每个从事国际商务工作人员走向成功的关键之一。而从我们对毕业生的调查中发现,他们大多缺乏这个能力。这其中有教师水平和教学方法上的原因,但最根本的问题是教学思想不对头,教材不适用。近五十年来英美国家的商务工作者越来越讲究商务交际技巧,在我国近二十年,经贸部门实际使用的英语也发生了很大的变化。但是我国目前这方面的教材从内容到语言大多滞后于时代的发展。多数教材是以语言本身为主,提供范文、例句让学生模仿,缺乏对写作方法的指导,尤其是缺乏把写作作为一种交际手段,缺乏对学生掌握如何通过写作达到理想的交际作用的指导。而且就语言本身而言,在教材中存在大量陈腐过时的词句,有的书还在大量沿用英美国家早已摒弃的所谓商业用语。我们有些教师将这些过时的东西奉为经典,让学生死记硬背。诚然,英美国家商务写作方面的新东西在国内近年出版的教材中有所反映,但至今还没有一本较为成熟的商务英语写作教材。教师上课只能从各种书中寻找材料,教材很不系统。这就是我们下决心写这本书的初衷。

实用商务英语写作是经贸英语专业的骨干专业课之一,是经贸英语专业区别于其他英语专业方向的特色课之一。商务英语写作过去在许多院校被细划为外贸函电、外贸应用文等课。本书把商务工作中可能遇到的各种写作任务融为一体,并付之以新的内容。本书从商务交际原则出发,强调写作过程中注重读者的商业心理和心理接受过程;突出商务写作的特点,强调通俗易懂、简明完整、清楚正确的写作风格和原则。

本书分三部分，十二章。第一部分商务写作的基本原则，包括四章，主要阐述在商务英语写作中如何适应读者心理，进行合理选词，如何组织清楚的句子和段落，以及达到有效写作的组织技巧等。第二部分信函写作，包括六章。各章首先从理论上对各种信函(贸易、社交、申请信、简历、推荐信、通知、便条等)的写作原则和方法加以阐述，然后结合实例给予说明。第三部分报告写作，包括两章，介绍了较短的非正式报告(备忘录、意向书、以及其他非正式报告)和正式的报告。各章主课文后面配有注释、讨论题和应用题。讨论题的目的是帮助学生进一步掌握每章的写作原则和写作方法。应用题的目的是让学生针对给予的具体情况练习写作，提高他们的创造力和想象力。本书第一、二、三、四、十二章由胡英坤教授编写；第五、六章由车丽娟副教授编写；第七章由李明媚副教授编写；第八、九、十章由苏丽文讲师编写；第十一章由胡英坤和李明媚共同编写。全书由胡英坤教授策划与定稿。本书在写作过程中得到何宝善教授的大力帮助与有益的指导。美国专家 Larry MoCoskey 对全书进行了审校。对于他们的帮助和辛勤劳动，我们在此表示深切感谢。

本书的特点是既有理论又有实例，吸收了英美近年商务交际的新思想。它不仅可以提高学生语言基本功，而且有利于他们了解和学习语言应用的社会环境，掌握有效交际技巧，全面提高商务英语写作能力。本书全文用英文写作，力求遵循书中所提倡的有效交际宗旨，做到简洁、易懂、完整、准确，适合中国经贸英语专业的学生水平。我们真诚希望本书会是一本充满时代气息，适用性强的国际商务英语写作教材之一。同时，我们恳请同行、使用这部书的同学以及其他读者对书中的缺点和不足之处提出批评和指正。

编者

1999 年 7 月

序

近年来国际商务活动的环境发生了很大的变化。经济全球化、科学技术新发展、商业企业组织机构的革命性改组以及世界范围的政治、法律乃至道德等方面的新趋势,都对人们的商务交际活动产生了很大的影响。因此,从事商务活动的人,无论是高级管理人员,还是一般工作人员,都必须进行自我调整,适应新的商业环境,掌握新的交际原则和技巧,以求做到能够顺应潮流,得心应手地迎接交际领域中的种种挑战,取得事业的成功。为了适应这一新潮流,近年来在欧美等国一门新学科应运而生,即“交际学”。这门新学科运用社会学、心理学、行为科学、语言学等学科的最新研究成果,对在新的社会文化环境中,人们如何进行有效的交际,提出了一整套新的指导原则和技巧。商务交际是一般交际原则和技巧在商务活动中的具体运用。对于商务人员来说,熟练掌握运用这些原则和技巧,乃是进行有效交际,取得事业成功的关键。

那么,究竟什么是“交际”呢?在某种意义上,这是指在人与人之间,通过共同的象征、信号和行为系统,彼此交换信息和传递意思的过程。具体地说,就是人们通过听、说、写、读等交际手段,相互表达感情和交流思想的过程。主要目的是提供信息 to inform;说服他人 to persuade;取悦于人 to entertain。也就是说,使交际对象及其周围的人、群体和组织在接收到传达的信息时,哪怕是令人十分不快的消息,都会感觉良好。做到了这一点,也就是做到了有效交际 effective communications。主要交际方式有:口头方式和书面方式。胡英坤教授等编著的这部商务写作教材就是在这些原则的指导下,结合国内外最新研究成果以及他们多年来研修成果和

教学经验,以全新的思维框架和表达方式编写的一部专门针对商务交际中书面表达方式的商业应用文写作的教材。在有原则指导的基础上配大量的实例和应用练习,实用性强,对学生学习掌握当代商业应用文写作技巧极有价值。这部教材的宗旨是在商务英语写作的文章风格、用字遣词和篇章结构诸方面提倡文字的口语化,通俗易懂,简明完整和清楚准确。这些特征在电子商务中表现得尤为突出。同时力求矫正多年来商业信函写作中的流弊,如历来为某些人所标榜的八股文式的矫揉造作的浮华文体、佶屈聱牙的生僻词语、繁芜冗赘的句型结构、苍白无力的陈词滥调和迂腐可憎的商业行话 commercial jargon 等,这些陈腐的东西,都应在被摒弃之列。总之,当代商务写作要求做到言之有物,实用有效,能够达到上述的三个交际目的。这是近年来英美应用文体的大潮流、大趋势,也是商务写作中应该遵循的方向。

《实用商务英语写作》是近年来国内出版的惟一一部用英文编写的体现上述交际原则的教材。这部作品本身的文风体现了编著者在书中倡导的风格,做到了言简意赅,清晰流畅,立意新颖,内容广泛,超过了一般“商业应用文”的范围,其中不仅有常用的商业信函 commercial letters,还包括广义上的 business writing,即不属于 personal 或 private 性质的应用文。在这一点上,这部著作另辟蹊径,颇具特色,传统的“外贸函电”和“商业应用文”之类的教材不可与之同日而语。因此,本书不仅是在校大学生的必读教材,帮助他们掌握有效写作的原则和技巧,为将来步入社会做好技术上的准备,而且也是在职的商务工作人员的良师益友,一册在手,受益终身。

何宝善

1999年8月

Part One Fundamentals of Modern Business Writing

现代商务写作的基本原则

Chapter 1	An Overview of Business Writing
	商务写作概论

The ability to write effectively is a valuable business asset . One reason is that a great deal of business is transacted in writing . With the wide use of fax and recent development of EDP, even more writing is involved in every part of business . More than at any previous time business people feel the need to put ideas and information into written form . Another reason is that the effective business writer can use his skill to help increase his company 's sales and profits by promoting good relations with customers, employees, and the general public . Still another reason is that proficiency in writing gives the man or woman in business a personal advantage over less capable writers and contributes substantially to his self-confidence—a necessary quality for business success .

Functions of Business Writing

Every business message is designed to achieve a specific business objective . Its success depends on what it says and to what extent it induces a favorable response from the reader . Thus, business writing has three functions: (1) to inform, (2) to influence, and (3) to entertain .

Messages to inform are used to convey the vast amount of information needed to complete the day-to-day operations of the business - explain instructions to employees, announce meetings and procedures, acknowledge orders, accept contracts for services, etc . The major purpose of most of these messages is to have the receiver understand a body of information and concentrate on the logical presentation of the content .

In addition to providing information, a business message must also influence the reader 's attitudes and actions . These messages might include letters promoting a product or service and seeking support for ideas and worthy causes presented to supervisors, stockholders, customers/ clients, and others .

To secure the desired response, it is necessary to have an adequate knowledge of the English language and an understanding of human nature . The writer should have an acquaintance with the particular interest and, if possible, the emotions of the reader . It seems easy enough, for example, to ask payment of a bill, but it is quite difficult to secure payment without offending the reader and losing his or her future patronage . No communication is wholly successful unless it retains the reader 's goodwill .

Criteria for Effective Business Writing

A business message is considered successful when (1) the receiver interprets the message as the sender intended it and (2) it achieves the sender's purposes. In order to meet these objectives, American experts in business communication developed six C's principles: Courtesy, Correctness, Conciseness, Clarity, Concreteness and Completeness.

A . COURTESY Review of actual business correspondence reveals that special attention should be devoted to assuring the courtesy of business communication. Effective writers visualize the reader before starting to write. They will consider the reader's desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reaction to their request.

B . CORRECTNESS Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling is a basic requirement for business writing. In addition, correctness means choosing the correct level of language, and using accurate information and data.

C . CONCISENESS Effective writing is concise - each word, sentence, and paragraph counts. Conciseness means to write in the fewest possible words without sacrificing completeness and courtesy. Because a wordy message requires more time to write and read, business people put a high premium on conciseness in business messages. Conciseness will give emphasis to your message.

D . CLARITY Clarity tells the reader exactly what he or she wants and needs to know, using words and a format that make your writings totally understood with just one reading. Short, familiar words and simple, short sentences rather than long, difficult words

and complex and long sentences are better for this purpose .

E . CONCRETENESS Your writing should be vivid, specific and definite rather than vague, general and abstract, especially when you are requiring a response, solving problems, making an offer or acceptance, etc .

F . COMPLETENESS Include all the necessary information and data in the message because information and data can help senders get receivers ' responses and achieve desired objectives . An incomplete message may result in increased communication costs, loss of goodwill, sales, and valued customers, cost of returning goods, and wasted time trying to make sense out of the incomplete message .

Adapting to Modern Changes in Business Writing

Languages are products of the times and always bear the marks of a particular time . The rapid development of technology has brought changes to business writing . Fax and e-mail send messages quickly, and narrow the distance between people in different locations . Business writing, in general, should assume a friendly, easy, and conversational style .

There were times when the prevailing rule for business writing was that it should be written in the driest possible manner and in language so stilted and formal that the true personality of the writer was completely hidden . Unfortunately, that rule was never abolished, and even now there are some that foolishly cling to it .

The awareness of change - the appreciation of up-to-date ways of doing business - is most important to anyone who aspires to be-

come a successful writer . He gains nothing by imitating the past . Like life-styles and working conditions, the standards for business writings have changed . In the following chapters we will discuss in detail the basic principles of modern business writing and appropriate approaches to specific writing tasks .

Examples of Poor and Better Business Letters

In the following examples of business letters, both poor and better writing is presented . Problems illustrated in the poor examples are common in business letters . The contrasts will hopefully clarify the different impacts of poor and better writing on the readers, which will guide conscious efforts to improve our business writing skills .

Example 1

POOR

Dear Mr . Hua,

We are in receipt of and would like to thank you for your letter and catalogue of June 14, 1993 .

After close examination we have come to the conclusion that your products are of no interest to us, but we wish you every success in your future endeavors .

Sincerely,

BETTER

Dear Mr . Hua,

Thank you for your letter and catalogue sent on July 14, 1993 . We appreciate your interest in our company though your products fall out of our line for the time being . We wish you every success in your future endeavors .

Sincerely yours,

Example 2

POOR

Dear Mr . Fritz,

We are sorry to have your complaint about the poor performance of our Monay batteries . You claim your flashlight was damaged . Under separate cover we are sending you a new flashlight which we hope is not inferior to the one you

submitted to us under our guarantee . Monay batteries are included . They were tested beforehand for any obvious defects .

Less than 1/ 2 per cent of our total production is unsatisfactory, and we are usually inclined to feel that the user of the flashlight is at fault, not the batteries . Since it is possible for some defective batteries to slip by our rigid inspection process, we follow the practice of replacing any damaged flashlights that are called to our attention .

It is unfortunate that you have had this inconvenience . We trust you will experience no further difficulties with our product .

Very truly yours,

BETTER

Dear Mr . Frita,

We are sorry to learn of your recent experience with a set of Monay flashlight batteries . Under separate cover we are sending you a new flashlight of comparable value with one you submitted to us under our guarantee . Fresh Monay batteries are included .

Far more than 99 .5 per cent of our entire Monay battery production is satisfactory . It would be nice if this record were

100 per cent, but in the absence of a perfect record, we do appreciate it when a customer brings an unsatisfactory experience to our attention .

We are sure that the fresh Monay batteries we are sending you will give you the same dependable service that has made Monay batteries so famous all over the world .

Very truly yours,

Example 3

POOR

Dear Mr . Bell,

If you were like the majority of our other customers, you would never have allowed your Grayson 's charge account to become past due .

You have now owed us \$ 342 .87 since June 12, the day on which payment was to have been received for the merchandise we sold you on account on May 4 . In case you have forgotten, the past-due status of your account is costing you money because 1 .5 per cent interest per month is being charged on the unpaid balance . As of July 13, the interest charge is \$ 5 .14, making the current balance of the account \$ 348 .01 .

Get a check to us as soon as possible so that you can avoid further interest charges .

Sincerely,

BETTER

Dear Mr . Bell,

Because I know you are familiar with the benefits of a good credit record, the past-due status of your Grayson 's charge account must be an oversight on your part .

Please take just a minute to write us a check for \$ 348 .01, the current balance of your account . Since June 12 , the day by which payment of \$ 342 .87 was to have been received, your account has accumulated \$ 5 .14 in interest charges . To avoid additional charges, please send us a check for the current balance of the account . We are sure the Collingwood metal art frames you purchased from us are popular with your customers . The corner clamp patented by Collingwood makes these metal frames easy to assemble .

Please send us a check today using the stamped, preaddressed envelope that is enclosed .

Sincerely,