

辽宁省高等教育自学考试教材
英语专业用书

英语外贸函电

English Business Correspondence

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前言

外贸英语是 ESP (English for Specific Purpose: 特殊用途英语) 的一种。外贸函电是在外经贸活动和社交活动中使用广泛的交际手段,也是外贸英语的一个重要组成部分。

受辽宁省高等教育自考委员会的委托,我们编写了《英语外贸函电》(English Business Correspondence),系省内英语自考本科教材。全书共分三个部分:第一部分:如何写外贸函电(How to Write Business Correspondence);第二部分:函电信样(Specimen Letters of Business Correspondence)和第三部分:函电的表达手段(Means of Business Correspondence)。第一部分有 7 课;第二部分是全书的主干,共 18 课,是按对外贸易的各个业务环节编写的;第三部分共 3 课。

一般来说,外贸函电属技能课,它要求学员在掌握书写原理的基础上反复训练,反复实践,因为 Practice makes perfect. 而所谓的“书写原理”与英语的基本语法、基本词汇、基本句法密切相关,因此欲写好外贸函电首先要打好基本功。有了扎实的基本功,再持之以恒,就一定会成功地写出合格的英语外贸函电。

本书由桑思民策划、组织并审阅,由徐启华、朱传枝、蔡桦和石晓杰编写。

书中可能会有些缺点,我们会在今后的教学中不断完善和提高。

大连外国语学院

1999.6.1

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Chapter One

How to Write Business Correspondence

Introduction

一、商业信件的三个目的

一般来说,商业信件有三个基本目的:

第一个目的,也是最明显的,就是通知收信人——尽可能准确地将你的一些想法和信息告诉收信人。因此,下面的一些句子经常出现在商业信件中:

I will be staying at the Clinton Hotel during the week of January 7.

We shipped 300 000 barrels of crude oil via the Erie Railroad on August 8. The shipment should arrive in Jersey City by the 24th.

I am happy to tell you that Regent Magazine has decided to buy your article at the price we asked.

第二个目的,是让收信人做些什么。于是,商业信件中经常包括这样的话:

Since I am very much interested in exploring some of the ideas we discussed recently, please call me at 787-6852 and we can arrange a meeting.

If the shipment does not arrive by the 24th, send me a wire, and I will look into the problem.

Please sign the three copies of the contract and return them to me at the above address.

第三个目的,在商业信件中表现得不十分明显,即给对方留下好印象。因此,信中应包括这样的句子:

Thank you for filling in and returning Form 308 so promptly.

I appreciate your efforts on behalf of Mr. Sears.

Please send the information to the following people.

这样的句子都能使收信人对写信人及他(她)所在的公司产生好感。

二、合格书信的重要性

大多数商业信件的目的一是通告收信人,二是使自己的信得到答复。实现这些目的是公司进行下一步行动的基础。对于许多公司来说,每年用于信件的费用是很大的。没有任何公司或企业希望把钱花在那些由于没能将自己的想法和了解到的事实通知对方而得不到答复的信件上。模糊不清或没有说服力的信件不仅浪费了时间和金钱,而且也给对方留下了不好的印象。

与告诉收信人及得到对方适当行动同样重要的是给对方一个好印象。能做到这一点的信件大多是达到了前两个目的,因此特别吸引人。进一步讲,这样的信件经常有两个重要的附带效果:第一,能帮助你公司销售商品或得到提供服务的机会;第二,能帮助你在事业上不断进取。譬如,你是否希望上司接到下面这样的信件?

Mrs. Ruth Klein
Manager
Adjustments Department
Connelly's Department Store
Boston, Massachusetts 02184

Dear Mrs. Klein,

I am writing to you about an extremely insulting letter which I just received from one of your employees, Mr. James Weed. I'm an adult and I expect not to be so treated. Mr. Weed, however, seems to think I deserve a slap on the wrist because I thought your store should pay for repairs on a watch that I dropped. Mr. Weed may be right about the guarantee not covering breakage, but he doesn't have

to be so snide about it.

You may be interested to know that I am taking the watch to a reputable jeweler to have it repaired at my own expense. I am also taking my business, which is considerable, to Allen's Department Store in the future.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Anne Turner

或者,你还是更希望上司收到如下的信件?

June 10

Mrs. Ruth Klein

Manager

Adjustments Department

Connelly's Department Store

Boston, Massachusetts 02184

Dear Mrs. Klein,

This letter is to authorize you to make the necessary repairs on my watch and to charge the expense to my account.

Also, I would like to say that I have never been turned down in such a nice way as Mr. James Weed did. I had originally asked your store to pay for the repairs under the guarantee. But Mr. Weed explained that the guarantee did not cover breakage. His letter was so courteous and clear that I could not help but accept defeat graciously.

In this day and age, when one is constantly bombarded by words written by apparent robots, Mr. Weed's letter came as a welcome relief.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Anne Turner

三、合格的商业信件的特征

合格的商业信件应具有以下特征：明晰、简洁、有条理、自然、有礼貌、人格化。

我们逐一地来讨论一下这几点特征。为了达到目的，明晰是最基本的。收信人必须清楚理解信件所表达的内容。请看下面的例子：

Dear Mr. Apdecker,

Contingent upon approval of those concerned, the remuneration of an individual partner for profit-sharing purposes will be deemed to be such proportion of the total available remuneration of all partners as the proportion of each partner's capital investment.

现在，比较另一封信件：

Dear Mr. Apdecker,

If all three partners so agree, each partner will share in the profits in proportion to her or his initial capital investment. For instance, if Partner A invests \$ 10 000 and Partners B and C invest \$ 5 000 each, Partner A will receive one half the profit while Partners B and C will receive one-quarter of the profit each.

后面的例子更能达到通告对方的目的。应该承认，像前封内容模糊的信在现实生活中很少，但是，如果一封信给客户留下了疑团，它的目的就没有达到。

在现代社会中，随着人们工作、生活节奏的加快，他们希望尽可能用最短的时间获得信息。这就意味着用最少的词汇表达最完整的意思。但这并不是说信很短或不连贯。所谓简洁，就是用最少的词汇既表达你想表达的内容，又不失明晰和彬彬有礼。

繁琐的句子：It is hoped that word from Mr. Lewis in connection with the completion of the project will be received by us at an

early date. (25 个单词)

简洁的句子: We hope to hear soon from Mr Lewis about completing the project. (12 个单词, 少用 13 个单词)

通过以上两个句子的比较, 如果你接到的信中有许多类似上面的句子, 不管信本身的内容多么令你感兴趣, 它也可能令你扫兴。

书信应该有条理, 就是说, 对你要写的东西应该完全心中有数。不是坐下来想你要写什么, 而是首先坐下来写你想写的东西。例如, 你要写一封复信, 回答收信人提出的询问。为了获取必要的信息, 你得去查阅对方的信用档案, 并和有关主管部门商谈。你能将你所做的这些调查告诉收信人吗? 大概不。他首先感兴趣的是你为他找到的信息, 而不是你怎样找到的。因此, 如果你的信这样开始: "Upon receiving your letter I went to the company library and also looked in our credit files..." 那么就不大成功了。

许多人在写信时最易出现的错误之一是使用陈旧的、华丽的、言过其实的语言。这种花哨的文风也许 100 年前人们还可以接受。请看下面的例子, 这是从 1884 年出版的有关商业信件范例中选出来的, 是一位水果经纪人写给一位有潜力的主顾的。

New York, May 1st, 1885

No. 50 Front St.

MESSRS. POPHAM, MAYO & CO.

No. 55 Beaver St., New York

GENTLEMEN:

I beg to inform you that I have this day opened an office at the above number for transaction of business as broker in fruits and spices.

The knowledge and experience gained in 15 years, while in the employ of Messrs. Stark Bros. & Co., enables me to give you every

assurance, while soliciting your countenance and support, that all orders entrusted to me for execution will receive my most careful attention.

Referring to Messrs. S. B. & Co., my late employers, as above, and Messrs. Dows, Cattlin & Co., of Front St.,

I remain, respectfully.

Your obedient servant,

在商业信件中使用很陈旧的表达法,诸如“I beg to inform you”和“in the employ of”,当今的人已不再用了。尽管如此,类似的华丽的辞藻、陈旧的表达方式仍然令人惊奇地出现在许多商业信件中。为此,我们再强调一下,商业信件要自然,要将重心放在所表达的意见或事实上。

商业信件不仅要自然,而且要彬彬有礼。对对方有礼貌不仅仅表现在使用诸如“please”和“thank you”之类的字眼上——尽管它们在其中也非常重要——还表现在用肯定的方式代替否定的表达,譬如,要说“We will try to have your toaster repaired by August 6,”而不要说“We cannot have your toaster repaired until August 6.”更为重要的是,有礼貌是你对对方的态度。如果你对对方友好、关心,那么,从你的信中便可以反映出来。

最后,我们要讲的是人格化。从信中,应该让人感觉到是两个人之间是在交流,而不是向对方堆砌信息。当今社会,由于公司、机构越来越庞大,个人对其提出的建议,对方组织或代理人不感兴趣时非常敏感,因而这一点就显得特别重要。所以,写信时要努力为对方着想,将他们当作具有自我感觉、有困难需要帮助的人来看待。

以上提及的六部分,是合格的商业信件所必须具备的特征。

Unit 1

Writing Concise Sentences

前面我们说过了,简洁的句子就是用最少的单词表达最完整的意思。在这一课里,我们将通过展示商业信件中一些典型的范例——冗赘句子的识别和删除——帮助你书写简洁的句子。

一、多余的单词和短语

商业信件中一些冗词赘语应该毫不犹豫地砍掉,看下面的例句:

1. Please be advised that your payment arrived on June 13. (10 个单词)

在这个句子中“Please be advised that”表达出必要的内容了吗?

用 Yes 或 No 标明你的选择。如果选择 No, 那么写出你认为简洁的句子。

答案:No。

Your payment arrived on June 13. (6 个单词, 少 4 个)

或者,

We received your payment on June 13. (7 个单词, 少 3 个)

2. I wish to tell you that our meeting for April 10 has been postponed to April 16. (17 个单词)

在不改变句子内容的前提下, 将例句中可删除的短语划去。

答案:~~I wish to tell you that~~ our meeting for April 10 has been postponed to April 16. (11 个单词, 少 6 个)

3. 将下列句子中没必要的短语划去。

A. Our accountant is making a study along the lines of product