

THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE

Autonomous

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

BUSINESS LETTER WRITING

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Plan your letter before you start writing to make sure it says everything you want to say and says it in a logical sequence.
- The layout and presentation of your letter is important as they give the reader the first impression of the firm's efficiency.
- Ask yourself if the letter represents your organization in a correct way.
- Accuracy is important. Pay special attention to titles, names and addresses, prices and specifications, enclosures.
- Ask yourself if the recipient will understand your letter quickly.
- Include just the right amount of information in your letter (better include too much than too little).
- Use a simple but polite style of language. Beware of idioms.
- With a very few exceptions, business correspondence is being word processed in most places of business
- Your letter should be clear. Take care with abbreviations and figures.

Parts of a Business Letter:

- ✓ Letterhead or Return Address,
- ✓ Date Line,
- ✓ Personal or Confidential Notation,
- ✓ Inside Address,
- ✓ Attention Line,
- ✓ Salutation,
- ✓ Subject or Reference Line,
- ✓ Body or Text,
- ✓ Complimentary Close,
- ✓ Signature,

- ✓ Name and Title Lines,
- ✓ Identification Line,
- ✓ Enclosure Line,
- ✓ Copies Line,
- ✓ Postscript.

A Letter Sample

Sender's address/Business Letterhead	Bredgade 51 DK 1260 Copenhagen K. DENMARK
Date	November 27, 2013
Inside address	Soundsonic Ltd. 25 Warwick House, Warwick Street, Forrest Hill, London SE23 1JF UNITED KINGDOM
Attention line	For the attention of the Sales Manager
Subject title	Quadraphonic Sound Systems
Salutation	Dear Sir or Madam,
Body of the letter	Please would you send me details of your quadraphonic soundsystems which were advertised in the April Edition of Sound Monthly? I am particularly interested in the Omega range of equipmentthat you specialize in. Looking forward to hearing from you.
Complimentary close	Yours faithfully,
Signature	Mr. B. Kaasen
Title (p.p.)	Production Manager
Encl.:	Bill of loading (5 copies Bill of exchange (1 copy)
Copies	C.C. Messrs. Poole & Jackson Ltd. Solicitors

Tips:

- The elements of a letter should be neither too widespread nor too dense.
- If your letter is brief, use larger fonts. It will look better.
- The format should convey information clearly and logically, reflecting your organization's style.

Letterhead:

A good letterhead should be:

- Readable, informative and attractive BUT
- Not too attention occupying Mandatory elements:
 - Firm name,
 - Address (including zip code and area code)
 - Telephone number,
 - [WWW.](#)

Optional Elements:

- A logo,
- The executive's name and title,
- A list of board directors or other governing bodies. Date:
 - The date is written below the sender's address, sometimes separated from it by a space.

Two Most Common Forms:

November 27, 2009

27 November 2009

The month is never abbreviated, the day is never spelled out, and endings for numbers (27th) are not usually used.

The shortened date can also be used: 11/27/2009

27/11/2009

- Confidential or personal notation Example:
 - Private & confidential
 - Below the date but above the address of the person you are writing to (recipient)
 - Between the date line and the inside address.
 - The same notation should be put on the envelope.

Inside address

The address of the recipient: Sound Sonic Ltd.

25 Warwick House, Warwick Street, Forrest Hill,

London SE23 1JF UNITED KINGDOM

Always on the left and single spaced.

The recipient's name (if stated) is followed by the company's name, the department or division, the street address, city postal code and country

If one of the lines is very long, put half of it on the next line, indenting two or three spaces.

Recipients

The recipient's name (if stated) and the title are separated by a comma

The title can be underneath the name or omitted.

If you are writing to more than one person, make a list of the names in alphabetical order.

Attention line Example:

Attn: Sales Manager

This is used when you do not know the name of the person you are writing to.

This line can also be printed before the address of the company. Subject title

Example:

SUBJECT: Quadraphonic sound systems The subject title

Provides a further reference,

Saves introducing the subject in the first paragraph,

Immediately draws attention to the topic of the letter,

Allows the writer to refer to it throughout the letter,

Quickly identifies the purpose of the letter,

Should be less than one line/ one or two words. Reference line

Example:

Ref No: 99887/09

References indicate what the letter refers to (Your Ref.) and the correspondence to refer to when replying (Our Ref.).

When referring to an order number or to a reference number used by you or your recipient, make sure you quote all references accurately.

It can be placed instead of the subject title. Salutation

Example:

Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Dear Madam,

Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Mr. James,

Should be written below the address and with a space of one or two lines before the Body of the letter.

It is followed by a comma (,) or a colon (:), which is optional part of the letter

Deals with:

- How much information to give,
- How to plan a letter,
- What sort of style to use,
- How to make a letter as clear, informative and accurate as possible.

Length

- The length depends on:
- The subject of the letter
- The style and the language used.
- The right length includes the right amount of information

Sequence

- All the necessary points should be made in a logical sequence
- Each piece of information linking with the previous one in a pattern that can be followed.
- SO, put the ideas and information in logical order. Style
- Avoid slang, jargon, buzz words, and elitist language.
- Avoid the passive voice. Use the active voice and active verbs.
- Use full forms.
- Be brief. Give short but clear explanations, instructions, reasons. Be specific. State the facts.
- Be pleasant, positive, lively, and encouraging.
- Use the word "you" in the opening sentence, but avoid using too many "you"-s in your letter.
- "I"-s should be used when you are speaking about yourself.

"We"-s should be used when speaking on behalf of your company or a group of associates.

First Paragraph:

- State the main idea in the first or second sentence of your letter.
- These sentences should catch the reader's eye and get him to react to your letter. In the first paragraph you will:
- Thank your correspondent for his letter (if replying),
- Introduce yourself and your company if necessary,
- State the subject of the letter, and Set out the purpose of the letter.

Second Paragraphs:

- It is the main part of the letter concerned with:
- Points that need to be made,
- Answers you want to give or
- Questions you want to ask.

Final Paragraph:

- When closing the letter
- Thank the person for writing, if you reply.
- Encourage further enquiries and correspondence,
- Mention that you look forward to be hearing from the person soon.
- Important issues from the previous paragraphs may be restated.

Complimentary Close

Example: Yours sincerely, Yours faithfully,

Yours truly, Truly yours, (Am.)

- If the letter begins Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Dear Madam, or Dear Sir or Madam, it will close with Yours faithfully.
- If the letter begins with personal name (Dear Mr. James), it will close with Yours sincerely.
- Leave one line between the body of the letter and the complimentary close.
Signature
- The signature block consists of your typed name, your handwritten signature and your position in the firm.
- The handwritten signature should be between the complimentary close and the typed name and title.

Name & Title

Four or more spaces should be left below the complimentary close for your name and title.

A courtesy title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) may be included.

Omit the name and title if they appear on the letterhead.

Enclosures

Small enclosures (checks, folded flyers, business cards) are placed inside the folds of the letter.

To safeguard against overlooking them include an enclosure line in your letter.

When your enclosures are bulkier, use an appropriately sized manila envelope.

Enclosure line

Enc.: or Encl.: Bill of lading (5 copies)

Enclosures may include leaflets, prospectuses, CVs

They can be mentioned at the bottom of the letter after Enc. or Encl.

If there are a number of documents, these are listed.

C.C. (Carbon Copies)

Example:

C.C. Mr. Jones

C.C. is written when copies are sent to people other than the named recipient.

Put c.c. and list the individuals receiving the copies of the letter by full name and title.

B.C.C. (Blind Carbon Copies) is written on the copies themselves (not on the top copy) if you do not want the named recipient to know that other people have received copies.

Postscript

Example:

P.S.

A note for additional attention is usually put on the left, two or three lines below.

