

GOVT. PG COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, GANDHINAGAR, JAMMU

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BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

→ MEANING

Communication through exchange of letters is known as correspondence. A Businessman also writes and receives letters in his day to-day transactions, which may be called business correspondence. Business correspondence is a form of written communication used for business purposes. It is usually made between organizations, within the organization, or between clients and the organization. Email can be considered as a form of business correspondence when used to represent a company or for the purpose of the business.

Written communication is important in a business for various reasons. It serves as a formal way of exchanging information while maintaining professional relationships between organizations, employees, and clients. It can also serve as future reference for the information being communicated.

Businessmen may write letters to supplier of goods and also receive letters from the suppliers. Customers may write letters to businessmen seeking information about availability of goods, price, quality, sample etc. or place order for purchase of goods. Thus, business letters may be defined as a media or means through which views are expressed and ideas or information is communicated in writing in the process of business activities.

→ IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

A business correspondence has numbers of importance. Its most important feature is the ease of reaching and communicating with different parties. It is not always possible to meet persons face to face.

A business correspondence helps to meet some organizational goals. One can achieve the objectives through it. Let us study some of them in details.

1. Maintaining a Proper Relationship

Now-a-days business activities are not confined to any one area or locality. The businessmen as well as customers are scattered throughout the country. Thus, there is a need to maintain proper relationship among them by using appropriate means of communication.

Here, the business correspondence will be a rescue for any business. It helps in maintaining the proper relationships between the parties. Business correspondence strengthens the business. It also helps in the internal communication. It makes communication within the organization more clear and precise.

2. Serves as Evidence

Business enterprises cannot memorize all facts and figures in a conversation that normally takes place among with internal as well as external parties. Through written communication in the form letters or emails, a person I business can keep a record of all the information. Thus, business correspondence can serve as evidence in case of dispute between two parties.

3. Create and Maintain Goodwill

Sometimes business letters are written to create and enhance goodwill. Businessmen at times send letters to enquire about complaints and suggestions of their customers. They also send letters to inform the customers about the availability of a new product, clearance sale etc. All this results in cordial relations with the customers, which enhances the goodwill of the business.

4. Inexpensive and Convenient

It is considered an economical and convenient form of business communication.

5. Formal Communication

A business communication serves as a formal communication between two persons. It may be a seller and a buyer. It can be between an employee and the employer. The language used is formal and logical. It helps in removing the ambiguity and the doubts of the person involved in the business. The formal communication in business is followed and acceptable.

6. Helps in the Expansion of Business

A business correspondence helps a business to achieve the set goal. It also ensures the expansion of a business. Business requires information regarding competing products, prevailing prices, promotion, market activities, etc. With no waste of time and proper utilization of manpower and resources, a business can expand.

Any information regarding some resources or any product or market can be easily done. He can also receive orders from different countries and, thus enhance sales. Even the news of the expansion of business can be spread by it.

→ THE 5 TYPES OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

There are different kinds of business correspondence that are typically used in organizations. The 5 most common types of business correspondence include **internal correspondence, external correspondence, sales correspondence, personalized correspondence, and circulars.**

1. Internal Correspondence

Internal correspondence is a written communication between the employees, units, departments, and branches of the same organization. Internal correspondence can either be formal or less formal. Routine internal correspondence are usually less formal, such as quick instructions between a supervisor and a staff, and these are normally in the form of email.

There are other more formal types of internal correspondence which include promotion letter, written reprimand, notice to explain,

memorandum, formal requests for approval, and letter of approval or dismissal. These types of communication are ideally printed on paper, signed by the sender, and physically received by the recipient.

2. External Correspondence

External correspondence takes place between different organizations, or between an organization and their individual clients. This is a form of written communication made by a company to those who do not belong to their organization.

External correspondence is commonly made to vendors, creditors, suppliers, existing customers, prospective clients, financial institutions, government offices, law and accounting firms, business affiliates, sponsors or donors, and other offices that have either direct or indirect business relationship with the company.

3. Sales Correspondence

Sales correspondence refers to sales-related communications. It is not limited to just selling a product or service, but it also includes other activities relating to sales. Sales correspondence include marketing letters, offer and discount letters, sales proposals, invoices, statement of accounts, sales reports, order confirmation, purchase orders, letters of authorization, collection letters, and such.

For the purpose of selling, it is important to know how to write quality sales letters to be able to communicate effectively. Also, marketing and offer letters should reflect truthful and non-misleading information. Other kinds of sales correspondence — such as invoice, purchase orders, and collection letters — must contain accurate information.

4. Personalized Correspondence

Personalized correspondence involved personal and emotional factors. Despite being labeled as “personalized”, this type of correspondence can also be used for business purposes. Examples of personalized correspondence include letters of gratitude, letters of favours or requests, appreciation notes, letters of congratulations of commendation, and such.

This particular type of correspondence doesn't need to have a very formal tone. Though this can be done via email, writing an actual, physical letter is more preferable because it has a sense of personal touch. You may use a regular office paper for this, or perhaps a personalized yet cheap note pads, or a greeting card for a certain purpose (e.g. Thank You card, Congratulations card, etc).

5. Circulars

Circulars are notices that are communicated to a large number of people within the organization. It is also referred to as office instructions or announcements. Often, general announcements (such as changes in contact information, details about meetings with shareholders, instructions about certain protocols, etc) are being communicated via circulars.

→ THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE (THE 7CS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION)

1. Consideration / Conversational (Your attitude)

Try to visualize your reader's circumstances, problems, emotions, their desires etc. and indicate that you understand these by using your words with care. If you are writing a sales letter, show the recipient how the product would be beneficial for them. When you write with consideration, you generate goodwill.

2. Courtesy (Be courteous)

Be courteous and polite. Avoid making negative statements and an accusatory tone accusing the recipient. eg. Instead of writing, "You did not send the cheque", use "The cheque wasn't enclosed." Even if you are writing a complaint letter, your tone must be polite and courteous at all times.

3. Clarity (Be clear)

One has to be clear and specific in their letter. The words used should be unambiguous and not vague. Avoid giving abstract information. Eg. Instead of 'visualize', use 'see'. Instead of 'at the present time', write 'now'. Instead of using 'the website is now fully operational with

the e-commerce functionality setup', write 'the company has launched its website'.

4. Concreteness (Be convincing)

A good business letter always provides concrete information (specific information).

Eg. Instead of saying, "I expect the consignment/order to reach me at the earliest", use "I expect the order to be delivered to me by the 21st of March 2013.

5. Correctness

While writing a business letter, the principle of correctness should be followed. The writer must ensure correctness in his tone, format and information that he provides in the letter. The facts mentioned must be true and correct. Grammatical structures and spellings should be correct.

6. Conciseness

Use only necessary details and short sentences. Be direct and avoid long redundant expressions.

Use the "Keep it short and simple" formula.

7. Completeness

Provide complete information in the letter and try to keep it as brief as possible.

→ STEPS INVOLVED IN FORMATTING A BUSINESS E- MAIL

Email has become the main way that many business professionals communicate. Most of us send out more business emails than any other form of business communication. Every day you have email going out to your boss, your clients, your vendors, and your professional contacts.

Your emails are important. A good email can lead to business success. While a bad email can harm a professional relationship, sidetrack your project, or cause damage to your reputation. Despite its importance, email formatting is often ignored. Proper formatting improves the

chances that a recipient will read, respond, and react positively to your email.

1. Find Your Business Email Audience

Not all email audiences are the same. For that reason, not all business email should be formatted and written in the same way. Some business email should be structured in a more formal style. But, if you're more familiar with your recipient, it's okay to structure your email in a less formal style.

The email style you choose determines your email opening and closing. It can also determine the language you use and the tone of the email. Here's a quick summary of some general rules about when to use a formal versus informal email style.

Use a *formal* email style:

- if it is required in your organization
- if the recipients are not well known to you
- when sending an email to someone who is above you in authority such as your boss or a teacher

Use an *informal* email style:

- if it is encouraged in your organization (your boss and others use an informal style)
- for a business colleague who is well-known to you and/or on friendly terms
- for personal emails that may contain both business and non-business topics

The choice between formal and informal style varies from company to company. That's why it's important to know what's accepted in your company. If you're not sure whether you should use a formal email structure or an informal email structure, it's often safer to use a more formal style.

2. Know the Structure of a Business Email

The way you format your business email makes a difference. A good business email structure helps communicate your message clearly. A badly formatted email can leave a poor impression.

All good business emails should have at least these parts:

- **Subject Line.** The subject line is the first part of the email your reader sees. It can determine whether your reader opens the email. Most experts agree that subject lines should be short (six to ten words) and specific.
- **Salutation.** The salutation is how you greet the reader. It's important that you understand whether you are addressing a formal or informal audience.
- **Introduction.** The introductory sentence tells the reader what the email is about. It also conveys a positive tone by using the word "Welcome."
- **Body Text.** The body text conveys the main message of the email. It should also include an introduction and conclusion. It should be written in short paragraphs of one to two sentences. Where it will add clarity, use bulleted or numbered lists.
- **Conclusion.** The conclusion summarizes the post. It includes the call to action "Let me know if you have any questions."
- **Signature.** Your signature can be formal or informal, depending on your audience. A good email signature template helps your reader find all the information about you that they need.

Use a proper email format. Structure your email so that the first few sentences of the body text explain what the email is about. The last few sentences should be a conclusion that summarizes the business email. The conclusion is also a good place to include a call to action. A call to action tells the email reader what to do next and how to do it.

STEP 3 – STAY ON TARGET

The body of your email is going to have a lot to do with whether or not your prime objective is met. Long and rambling content is most likely not going to be much help. This means that you have to be very clear and precise in the way you present the topic of your letter. Short sentences with one to two sentence paragraphs are a good start. Bullet points help hammer home your message without a lot of extra words. You have to be able to say what you are trying to say in as few words as possible and still be understood.

STEP 4 – REVIEW BEFORE SENDING

The last thing you want to have happened is to send an email to a business professional that happens to contain several typos. So, you can easily avoid this by doing three things. Run your finished letter through the spelling and grammar correction tool on your computer. Second, give it a complete proofreading after scanning for other errors. Read your email aloud so that you can hear how it actually sounds. If you need to make any corrections in a sentence or paragraph structure, now is the time to do that before sending.

Get an expert advice on how to make your writing better and to help catch possible mistakes.

STEP 5 – USE THE CORRECT ADDRESS

As obvious as this may seem, be sure that the business letter you are sending is actually going to the recipient's business email address. In other words, if you have more than one address for this person, refrain from sending it to all of them or they will be ignored.

Final thoughts

The body of the email has to be shorter than a typical handwritten business letter in order to get the points across quickly. However, the format still has to be formal and contain correct salutations and parting words. The body also should not contain any glaring mistakes in grammar or spelling in order to be taken seriously as a business letter.

→ ESSENTIALS OF AN EFFECTIVE NOTE MAKING

1. Using your own words!

While it is extremely tempting to simply copy what your teacher is saying, this is not an effective way to learn. A thumb rule I tend to use: If I don't understand a word, I don't write it down. If I don't understand it initially, there is no chance I'll remember what it meant in 3 weeks time. While this might make your sentence more scattered and not as eloquent as when your teacher says them, it will ensure that your understanding is much better.

2. Don't capture everything

This is a general note-taking tip but is also highly relevant for conferences. Talks or presentations are usually short and trying to blindly copy everything that is being said, won't allow you to listen and actually understand the content.

3. Consider digital note-taking over analog note-taking

There are a bunch of obvious reasons for taking digital notes in general, especially for conferences: Notes are better organized and can be backed up and can also be shared easily. However, a few more unpopular advantages are:

- A. You can add photos to your notes
- B. Come prepared with conference note-taking templates
- C. You can combine handwriting and typed text

4. Follow a note-taking structure

Structure of good notes:

The Note Taking technique which I personally prefer is the Cornell note-taking method. Cornell's method involves dividing your A4 into into 3 parts:

1. Use the Note Taking Area to take notes in your class
2. Use the Cue Column to review your notes. After class, go back and read the Note Taking Area. Write down the key topics, people, events and questions which will help you remember what is in the Note Taking Area
3. In the Summary section, write 1-2 sentences which summarise exactly what is in your Note Taking Area.

5. Remember the 5 R's of note making

1. **Record:** During the lecture, write all meaningful information legibly.
2. **Reduce:** After the lecture, write a summary of the ideas and facts using key words as cue words. Summarizing as you study helps to:
 - Clarify meanings and relationships of ideas
 - Reinforce continuity
 - Strengthen memory retention
 - Prepare for exams in advance
3. **Recite:** To study properly, you must recite all the information in your own words without looking at our notes or the text.
4. **Reflect:** Think about your own opinions and ideas as you read over your notes. Raise questions, then try to answer them creatively. Record original ideas in your notebook and review them regularly. Use your creative ideas when answering exam questions, in classroom discussions, and when writing papers.
5. **Review:** Before reading or studying new material, take ten minutes to quickly review your older notes. Skim over the main ideas and details. Review enhances your retention of old material while adding new material to your memory.

→ PARTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER

The essential parts of a business letter are as follows:

1. Heading -The heading of a business letter usually contains the name and postal address of the business, E-mail address, Web-site address, Telephone Number, Fax Number, Trade Mark or logo of the business (if any).

2. Date - The date is normally written on the right hand side corner after the heading as the day, month and years. Some examples are 28th Feb., 2003 or Feb. 28, 2003.

3. Reference- It indicates letter number and the department from where the letter is being sent and the year. It helps in future reference. This reference number is given on the left hand corner after the heading.

4. Inside address - This includes the name and full address of the person or the firm to whom the letter is to be sent. This is written on the left hand side of the sheet below the reference number. Letters should be addressed to the responsible head e.g., the Secretary, the Principal, the Chairman, the Manager etc.

5. Subject - It is a statement in brief, that indicates the matter to which the letter relates. It attracts the attention of the receiver immediately and helps him to know quickly what the letter is about. For example, Subject: Fire Insurance policy

6. Salutation - This is placed below the inside address. It is usually followed by a comma (,). Various forms of salutation are: Sir/Madam: For official and formal correspondence Dear Sir/Madam: For addressing an individual Dear Sirs/Dear Madam: For addressing a firm or company.

7. Body of the letter- This comes after salutation. This is the main part of the letter and it contains the actual message of the sender. It is divided into three parts.

(a) Opening part - It is the introductory part of the letter. In this part, attention of the reader should be drawn to the previous correspondence, if any.

(b) Main part - This part usually contains the subject matter of the letter. It should be precise and written in clear words.

(c) Concluding Part - It contains a statement the of sender's intentions, hopes or expectations concerning the next step to be taken. Further, the sender should always look forward to getting a positive response. At the end, terms like Thanking you, With regards, With warm regards may be used.

8. Complimentary close - It is merely a polite way of ending a letter. It must be in accordance with the salutation. For example: Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely etc.

9. Signature - It is written in ink, immediately below the complimentary close. As far as possible, the signature should be legible. The name of the writer should be typed immediately below the signature. The designation is given below the typed name

10. Enclosures - This is required when some documents like cheque, draft, bills, receipts, lists, invoices etc. are attached with the letter. These enclosures are listed one by one in serial numbers.

11. Copy circulation - This is required when copies of the letter are also sent to persons apart of the addressee. It is denoted as C.C.

12. Post script - This is required when the writer wants to add something, which is not included in the body of the letter. It is expressed as P.S. For example, P.S. - In our offer, we provide two years warranty.

