

Business Letter Writing

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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.

Points to remember:

- 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).

Points to remember:

- 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.

Elements 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 sound systems which were advertised in the April edition of Sound Monthly. I am particularly interested in the Omega range of equipment that you specialize in. •Looking forward to hearing from you
Complimentary close	➤Yours faithfully,
Signature	➤B. Kaasen (Ms)
Title (p.p.)	➤Production Manager
Enc. : 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



Alpha Chi Omega

*American University
Beta Rho Chapter P M B #291
4410 Massachusetts Avenue, Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia 20016-5572*

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 bellow the sender's address, sometimes separated from it by a space.

- Two most common forms:

November 27, 2009 (AmE)

27 November 2009 (BrE)

- 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 (AmE)

27 / 11 / 2009 (BrE)

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:

Soundsonic 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 Manage

- 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

Body 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

It is 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 and 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.

Copies line - 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.

Per pro

- The term *per pro* is sometimes used in signatures and means:

for and on behalf of.

Postscript

Example:

P.S.

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