

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Business letters are written on the company's letterhead stationery, which includes the organization's full name, full address and telephone, fax, or telex numbers, and (if available) the e-mail address. The parts of a business letter (see the sample letters in this chapter) are:

- Date
- Attention line
- Inside address
- Subject line
- Salutation
- Body of the letter
- Complimentary closing
- Signature
- Reference initials
- Enclosure notation
- Copy notation

Not all of the above components are always used. The "Attention line," "Subject line," and "Enclosure" notations are used only as they apply to a particular letter.

Detailed information about the use of forms of address to dignitaries and officials, punctuation marks, and the rules to capitalize words in correspondence can be found in the Quick Reference Appendix in this book.

The three business letter formats most commonly used in the international business world are:

1. **Block-style format.** There are no indentations in this letter. All lines are typed against the left-hand margin. The block-style letter is very popular, because it is simple and reflects efficiency.
2. **Modified block-style format.** The difference between the modified block-style letter format and the block-style format is the fact that the dateline and the complimentary closing are typed slightly to the right of the page center. There are no indentations.
3. **Semiblock-style format.** In the semiblock-style or indented letter format, the paragraphs are indented five spaces from the left of the margin. The dateline and the complimentary closing are typed to the right of the page center.

(Block-style business letter)

<i>letterhead</i>	ABC COMPANY 00 Wilson Street New York, NY 00000 Tel. (000) 000-0000 Fax: (000) 000-0000
<i>date</i>	July 12, 2009
<i>attention line</i>	CONFIDENTIAL
<i>inside address</i>	Mrs. Diane Warner President XYZ Company, Inc. 000 West 59th Street Chicago, IL 00000
<i>subject line</i>	<u>Subject: Block-style Letter</u>
<i>salutation</i>	Dear Mrs. Warner:
<i>body of letter</i>	<p>This is an example of a full block-style letter, one of the most frequently used forms for writing business letters in the international business world. As you can see, there are no indentations. All lines are typed against the left-hand margin.</p> <p>The block-style letter is very popular, because it is not only simple to use but also reflects efficiency. If you have any additional questions about the layout of a block-style business letter, please do not hesitate to call me at (000) 000-0000.</p>
<i>complimentary close</i>	Sincerely yours,
<i>signature line</i>	John A. Hickman Executive Vice President
<i>ref. initials</i>	JAH:gws
<i>enclosure(s)</i>	Enclosure: 1 brochure
<i>copy to</i>	cc: Mary Davis

(Modified block-style business letter)

MIRKOVICH COMPANY
00 Levitt Boulevard
Rutherford, NJ 00000
Tel. (000) 000-0000
Fax: (000) 000-0000

August 17, 2009

Mr. Matthew Ridgewood
Director of Human Resources
ABC Company
00 Berkshire Square, Suite 1288
Arlington, VA 00000

Dear Mr. Ridgewood:

Re: Modified Block-style Letter

This is an example of a modified block-style letter. As you can see, there are no indentations. All lines are typed against the left-hand margin with the exception of the dateline and complimentary closing, which are typed slightly to the right of the page center.

If you have any additional questions about the modified block-style business letter, please do not hesitate to contact me immediately.

Cordially,

Sharon B. Tate
Vice President

SBT:pr
Encls. 2 brochures
cc: Alexander Haigh, Marcia Klein

(Semiblock-style business letter)

XYZ INTERNATIONAL
0000 East Park Street
Riverside, CA 00000
Tel. (000) 000-0000
Fax: (000) 000-0000

October 4, 2009

Mr. Steve Fleming
Sales Manager
ABC Corporation
000 Jefferson Avenue
Miami, FL 00000

Dear Mr. Fleming:

This is an example of an indented or semiblock-style business letter, which many companies use. The semiblock-style gives business letters a more balanced appearance.

As you can see, the paragraphs are indented: usually five spaces from the left of the margin. However, the dateline and the complimentary closing are typed slightly to the right of the page center.

If you have any additional questions about the layout of the semiblock-style business letter, do not hesitate to call me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

William Klass
Sales Director

WK:bls
Enclosure: quarterly sales report
cc: Maria Moralez

PARTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER

DATE

The dateline in a letter is typed three or four lines below the last line of the letterhead. The standard dateline in the United States and various other countries is the full name of the month (no abbreviations), followed by the day and the year. A comma separates the day of the month from the year. No period follows the date (example: August 18, 2009). However, in Europe and many other countries the most widely used format to write a date is: day, followed by the month and the year (example: 5 November 2009).

In order to avoid confusion in international correspondence, do not use numerals to indicate a month, but always type out the full name of the month. Thus, do not write 05-09-2009 if you want to indicate the date of 5 September, because an American businessman would assume that you mean May 9 instead of September 5.

ATTENTION LINE

The attention line is sparingly used in business letters. If used, the notation "Personal" or "Confidential" is placed two or three lines below the dateline.

INSIDE ADDRESS

The inside address, which identifies the name(s) of the person(s), and the name and address of the company or organization to whom the letter is addressed, is typed two lines below the date or the attention line.

Examples:

Mr. Kenneth Maxwell
Corporate Planning Department
XYZ Company, Inc.
00 Highwood Avenue
Midland Park, MA 00000

Mrs. Karen Southerland, Director
Consumer Services Division
ABC Company
000 West 12th Street
Toronto, Ont. 000 000

The American Corporation
Attention: Mr. Dennis Rosen
Linsley Building, Suite 000
000 East 23rd Avenue
Dayton, OH 00000

123 Limited
Attention: Head of Accounting
00 Englewood Square
London 0000 000
England

College or University
 Attention: Admissions Office
 Bergenfield, AL 00000
 USA

Dr. Luigi Pirelli
 Via Vittor Pisani 00
 00000 Milan
 Italy

SUBJECT OR REFERENCE LINE

The subject or reference line (which is often underlined) is placed below the inside address. This line is used if you want to include or refer to a file or reference number (e.g., of an order, the name of a special project or a certain date) in the letter. The word "Reference" is often abbreviated as *Ref.* or *Re.*

Examples:

Subject: Holiday Schedule for 2009
Ref.: Your order No. 2338A
Re: Insurance Policy No. B444-AvZ-MA33-35

It should be pointed out that certain companies place the subject or reference line below the salutation of the letter.

SALUTATION

The salutation of a business or private letter, which greets the addressee appropriately, should use the person's name if at all possible. Always make sure that a person's name is spelled correctly. The salutation in business letters is usually followed by a colon (:). The comma (,) is seldom used in the salutation of business letters, but is instead saved for personal letters and letters of condolence and sympathy. The following are correct salutations used in letters.

Examples:

(For a man)

Dear Sir:

Dear Professor Brown:

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Dear Rabbi Goldstein:

Dear Dr. Faulkner:

Dear Senator Lyons:

(For more than one man)

Dear Sirs:

Gentlemen:

(If you know the person well)

Dear Robert,

(For a woman)

Dear Madam:

Dear Ms. Gruber:

Dear Mrs. Robertson:

Dear Mayor Kilpatrick:

Dear Miss Bloomfield:

Dear Professor Madison:

(For more than one woman)

Ladies:

(If you know the person well)

Dear Anne,

Ms. is used as a courtesy title before the surname or full name of a woman or girl. *Ms.* is a blend of *Miss* and *Mrs.* The courtesy title *Mrs.* is often used for a married woman, although many married women nowadays also use *Ms.*

If you are writing a letter to a person with a first name that does not indicate whether the person is a man or a woman (e.g. first names such as Leslie or Terry), use the following salutation: *Dear Leslie Taylor.* If you are not absolutely sure about the gender of the recipient of your letter, then do not use the words "Mr." or "Mrs." in your salutation. However, if you know the person's title (for example, "President," "Director of Operations," or "Personnel Manager"), but not whether the person is either a man or a woman, then use this gender-free title. For example, Dear President or Dear Director of Operations. Alternate salutations are: Dear Client, Dear Customer, Dear Member, Dear Valued Customer, and Ladies and Gentlemen.

Detailed information about correct forms of address (in salutation and letter address) of dignitaries and officials can be found in the Quick Reference Appendix in this book.

BODY OF THE LETTER

The body of the letter is the main part of the business letter. It is usually single-spaced and has double spacing between paragraphs and before the complimentary closing.

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING

The complimentary closing ends the letter. It is typed two lines below the last line of the body of the letter. Only the first letter of the first word of the closing is capitalized. A comma follows the closing. Complimentary closings vary in formality as indicated below.

(formal closing) Yours truly, Respectfully yours,

(less formal closing) Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Cordially,

(personal closing) Regards, Personal regards, Kindest regards,

SIGNATURE LINE

The name of the person who signs the letter is typed three or four lines below the complimentary closing. The handwritten signature is placed between the complimentary closing and the signature line. One line below the signature line the position or title of the person who signs the letter is typed.

Examples:

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Cotton
Director, Marketing Services

Yours truly,

Marion Nicholson
Secretary to Mr. Leaman

REFERENCE INITIALS, ENCLOSURE NOTATION, AND COPY NOTATION

Additional information in a business letter may be included below the last line of the signature block. For example, reference initials, enclosure notation, and copy notation.

The reference initials following the signature line usually are preceded by the writer's initials in capital letters and separated by a colon (for example: JAH); followed by the initials of the person who has typed the letter in lowercase letters (for example: gws).

Example:

JAH:gws

The enclosure notation is typed directly below the reference initials. This indicates that something has been enclosed with the letter (for example, a résumé, a brochure, a report, or a photograph). The word "enclosure" or "enclosures" is often abbreviated as *Enc.* or *Encls.*

Examples:

Enc.: 1 résumé Enc.: credit application Encls.: 3 brochures

The copy notation is typed directly below the enclosure notation or the reference initials. It indicates that a copy (abbreviated as *cc:*) of the letter has been sent to the person who has been named.

Examples:

cc: Maria Vlady cc: Susan Griffin, William King

LETTERS OF INQUIRY

A letter of inquiry is usually written to ask for specific information or sales literature about products and services, price lists, catalogs, terms of business, quotations, discount schedules, dealer prices, the name of a dealer or local supplier, or free samples or materials. Letters of inquiry are also referred to as request letters. Most letters of inquiry are short. They can be sent by mail, telex, fax, or e-mail. If necessary, you can include information about what type of company you are and how you heard about the company that you are writing to. The following types of letters are provided in this chapter:

- Letters of Inquiry and Requests for Information
- Replies to Letters of Inquiry and Requests for Information
- Follow-up Letters

LETTERS OF INQUIRY AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Sir/Madam:

Could you please send us your current catalog and price list of the video recorders advertised in this month's issue of *Professional Video Equipment News*? We are operating a video production facility and are particularly interested in Models AA5 and AA8.

Please, reply as soon as possible as we would like to make a purchasing decision early next month.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Sir/Madam:

We have seen your advertisement in the March issue of *Business Catering Management* and would be grateful if you could send us details about your catering services for medium-sized companies.

Your prompt reply would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

Please send us two copies of the color brochure on your new Samson Color Copier Model 33H advertised on page 15 in your "Office Supplies" catalog No. 93.

Thank you for your prompt response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

Could you please fax me information about the international sales training program as advertised in the April issue of *International Sales Training Magazine*? Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

We are interested in having a stand in next year's Consumer Electronics Exhibition in Boston and would be grateful if you could mail us a copy of your detailed Exhibition Folder.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

Your company has been highly recommended to us by the Alex Thallier Company in Paris, France. We are a small company specializing in cordless telephone equipment and have received numerous inquiries from our business customers for a cordless phone that delivers sound quality comparable to that of a corded telephone. We want to expand our range of equipment and would like you to send us full details of your cordless phone models as well as the latest sales catalogue and your most competitive dealer prices. Please, also include information about packing and shipping (CIF Boston) and the minimum quantity for a trial order.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

A business associate of ours, Berend Kasius of the Hilbers Company in Albany, New York, mentioned your name and showed us your company's brochure. We own and operate six medium-sized hotels in the Rochester area and are looking for a reliable fire prevention/sprinkler system for these properties. Could you mail us your latest sales catalogue and price list? Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

When we attended the International Electronics Trade Fair in London last month, we visited your stand and saw a very interesting demonstration of your automatic high-security garage doors. The ability to drive straight in and out of your garage from the comfort of your car, as well as your emphasis on theft protection, appealed to us. We believe that there is a ready market for this in the United States.

Our company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the international Zetax Corporation, well-known in the security and theft prevention industry.

Would you please send us your current sales literature and price list? Of course, we will be glad to provide the usual credit and trade references if we decide to order from your company.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

One of our business associates—Mr. Ben Nevins of Gorham Brothers in Hong Kong—informed us that your company is a major manufacturer of pure cotton-striped or solid polo shirts and terry jumpsuits in all sizes for young women. We would like you to send us detailed information and your export price list, as well as several samples of the shirts and jumpsuits.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State / Zip Code

Dear Name:

We are interested in ordering 175 new electronic memory-read typewriters for our new direct-mail facility at Reddington, Utah. Could you please send us an estimate? The enclosed specification sheet provides the necessary details.

Sincerely yours,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

We have heard from the German Consulate in Chicago that you are a leading producer of self-adjusting, all-weather sunglasses in Germany. Since there seems to be a growing interest in and demand for such high-quality ambermatic sunglasses in the United States, we would like to know the frame styles that are now available for both men and women.

We are importers of optical products, including glasses, sunglasses, binoculars, and loupes.

Please, send us your illustrated catalog, export price list, and terms of business. As a rule our domestic and international suppliers allow us to settle by monthly statements. We can supply you, of course, with business and bank references. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

We would be grateful if you would send us patterns and prices for your floral-print, quilted comforters and geometric-design bed spreads (sizes: Twin, Full, Queen, and King). Please, also inform us whether you could supply these goods from stock, because we need them before the Christmas season starts.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Date

Name/Title

Business/Organization

Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

We are the U.S. buying agents for a direct mail organization in Japan offering quality merchandise to consumers at bargain prices. Products, which carry an unconditional money-back guarantee, include tools, do-it yourself aids, automotive supplies, plus a whole range of hobby and sporting supplies.

Would you please send us your latest price lists and illustrated catalogs for all the products you stock, including detailed information on your discount system for substantial orders?

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

USEFUL SENTENCES FOR LETTERS OF INQUIRY AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

We were given your name by the XYZ Company in Billings, Montana.

We have been given your name by our business associates, Messrs. Carlson & Sons in Twin Falls, Idaho, who inform us that they have been doing business with your company since 1988.

Your company was recommended to us by Ms. Andrea Jensen of the Heyerdahl Company in Providence, Rhode Island.

The Belgian Consulate General in New York advised us that your company is looking for an import agent in Belgium to represent you.

We have learned from the Muller Company in Frankfort, Maine, that you are the manufacturer of the Selektta answering machine with built-in telephone and fax.

Mr. Frank Norris of the Butler Company in Woodlawn, Oregon, advised me that your company is interested in supplying sporting clubs and fitness centers with competitively priced, high-energy soft drinks and candy.

Your company has been highly recommended to us by Stewart, Jones & Company in Melbourne, Florida, with whom we have done business during the past twenty years.

We are a major retail store chain and are inviting estimates for the supply and installation of new universal product code cash registers in all of our 12 outlets in the Chicago metropolitan area.

We are writing to several industrial coffee machine manufacturers to invite estimates for the installation and maintenance of automatic coffee machines in our headquarters in Williamsburg, Virginia, as well as at our two production facilities in the Philadelphia area, in accordance with the attached specification list.

We are interested in importing Dutch cheese (in particular Edam, Gouda and Zaanlander) and would like to receive a copy of your latest sales brochure, export price list, and export terms.

Please let me know what quantities your company can supply from stock and your earliest date of delivery. In addition, I would like to know if your company is prepared to grant a ten-percent discount.

Please e-mail us details about your Document Binding machine as advertised in the Sunday edition of *The Newark Gazette*.

We have studied the specifications of your electronic typewriters (Model 227BB) and would like a quote from you for the supply of 200 of these typewriters.

Since we intend to place a substantial order for your new line of BMX lightweight binoculars and monoculars, we would like to know whether you are prepared to grant special quantity discounts for orders in excess of \$10,000.

If your products and terms of business are as competitive as we have heard from our associates, Berrbaum Company in Denver, we would be interested to discuss a long-term contract with your company.

Provided you can offer competitive prices and guarantee delivery within five weeks from receipt of our order, we intend to place orders with your company throughout the year.

We believe that there is a promising market in the Pacific Northwest for your company's high-quality products, provided they are competitively priced.

If the price is right and your goods are up to sample, they should readily sell in the Italian market.

Would it be possible for us to have a dozen sets of your imported knit sweatshirts for young women (BO157—White, Pink, Melon, and Indigo Blue; Misses sizes: small, medium, and large) on approval before we place a firm order? We intend to test the response to and demand for these colorful knits in our stores in Gainesville, Morristown, and Dugan.

Please let us know on what terms you can deliver the video recorders.

Please reply as soon as possible because we would like to make a decision early next month.

Please send us your latest catalog and full details of your export prices, discounts, and terms of payment.

Please fax me your quotation as soon as possible.

We would appreciate a prompt reply quoting export trade and delivery prices to Martinsville, West Virginia.