

# **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

## **UNIT-1: Business Correspondence**

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### **Introduction of Business Correspondence**

Business correspondence is that part of business communication which deals with the written communication between business persons, which is necessary for their business transactions. It is also known as commercial transaction. This communication facilitates the transaction of business which is essentially carried out through the written format.

### **Meaning of Business Correspondence**

Any communication in the form of the letter is correspondence. Any person related to a business expresses oneself through business correspondence. One can also ask any doubt or uncertainty through business correspondence. A businessman writes and receives letters in his day to day life. A correspondence between two organizations or within an organization comes under this category. A letter to a supplier, complaint letters, letter of inquiry, job application letters are some of its examples.

### **Need For Business Correspondence:**

With the advent of sophisticated methods of production and enhanced communication facilities, business activities have spread out over vast geographical areas with may be production in one country and market for it in another. This entails effective communication and records of the same. As a result business communication and business correspondence in particular have become vital for the everyday activities of business communication. The latter includes the former and other forms of communication as well such as spoken communication, graphics, non-verbal communication etc. However, business correspondence consists mainly of letters and

depends on written, typed or word processor printed letters or those sent and received by fax and e-mail.

## **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**

It is not always possible for any business or organization to reach to any person in particular. This will cost any business. 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**

Any written form of communication serves as evidence. A business correspondence helps the person in a business to keep a record of all the facts. These written records will serve as evidence.

### **3. Create and Maintain Goodwill**

It helps in creating and maintaining goodwill between a business and a customer. Any letter to enquire, complaint, suggestion or feedbacks helps a company to grow and maintain goodwill.

### **4. Inexpensive and Convenient**

It is a cheap 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. 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. Even the news of the expansion of business can be spread by it.

## **Classification / Types of Business Correspondence**

A correspondence is of many types. Let us get ourselves familiar with some of them.

### **1. Internal Correspondence**

It refers to the correspondence between the individuals, departments, or branches of the same organization.

## **2. External Correspondence**

It refers to the correspondence between two individuals. These are not of the same organization. Any correspondence outside the organization is external correspondence. Customer and suppliers, banks, educational institutions, government departments come under this category.

## **3. Routine Correspondence**

It refers to the correspondence on routine manners. A correspondence made for inquiries, orders, replies, acknowledgments, invitation, and appointment letters are routine correspondence.

## **4. Sales Correspondence**

It refers to the correspondence related to the sale. Sales letters, sales reports, invoice, and confirmation of orders are sale correspondence. Delivery letters, statement of accounts etc. are also some of its examples.

## **5. Personalized Correspondence**

It refers to the correspondence based on emotional factors. Letters of the request, recommendation, and congratulations are personalized correspondence. Letter of introduction, granting and the refusal of terms are some of its examples.

## **6. Circulars**

It refers to the communication of common matter to a large number of persons or firms. Circulars, notices of tenders, change of address, an opening of the new branch come under this category. An introduction of new products is also its example.



## **Essential Elements of Effective Business Correspondence**

Any business correspondence is based on the following essentials.

### **Document Structure**

The most important thing for effective communication is that your message should be understandable and easy-to-read. To make your document look perfect, follow the basic structure. To put it short, every brilliant communication should contain three elements. These are an opening, a body, and a conclusion (or close)

### **Opening**

A good opening allows grabbing the attention of the audience. Moreover, it helps the reader or listener to understand your message at a glance. Therefore, it should be short, precise, and top-notch.

**Body**

This part is the most essential one. Here, you will need to come up with all the necessary facts, descriptions, proposals, and offers. It is vital to represent only relevant and fresh information, as well as true facts. Furthermore, the material should be clear and coherent. Avoid using any creative fonts, bright colors, and complicated charts in your message.

**Conclusion**

This part is designed to sum up your communication and clarify some points you've already described in the body. It shouldn't be too long and wordy.

**Distinctness**

This feature is another highly important element of any business communication. You will need to do your best not to make the audience feel confused when reading or listening to your message. Otherwise, your message might be easily ignored or misunderstood.

What else should you know about this element? It is better to avoid describing lots of details or provide additional data that is not related to the main topic. Most professional speakers and business writers usually try to represent all the necessary information in the simplest possible way. Avoid using tricky or uncommon terms that might appear to be unclear for the audience. Your goal is to come up with intelligible data only.

**Coherence**

Inconsistency is one of the most disappointing issues that can be often discovered in various types of business communication. In case you fail to make an audience trust you, they will not read or listen to your messages, as well as won't pay attention to the information you provide. Therefore, coherence is a basic feature of any business communication.

**Medium**

Use various channels of communication to deliver your message. It is also better to use channels that are the most convenient for the recipients. For example, if your customers prefer receiving notifications about new products available via email, it is better not to ping them via messengers but send electronic letters only.

In case you are planning to contact your audience for the first time, it is better to pay attention to these aspects:

- What channel of communication is the most popular for your readers/listeners?
- What is the most cost-effective way to contact your audience?
- What is the fastest way to provide the necessary information?

Choosing a media properly is one of the keys to effective business communication.

**Topicality**

If you want to become a reliable business partner, get fruitful cooperation with different companies, or make a fantastic presentation, you will surely need to use only up-to-date and trustworthy information. The trust of your audience is not easy to get, but it can be lost in just a couple of moments. Never show off facts you are not sure about.

**Audience**

You will need to meet the expectations of your audience. For example, if you are sending an email with a promo code your customers can use on your website, make sure your message contains the code itself. The worst thing you can do is to lie to your readers or listeners.

Furthermore, it is necessary to understand your audience. In case it is too diverse, you might need to create different messages for different target groups. This will allow you to consider the

needs and demands of a large number of different people. Your topic should fit the audience perfectly.

### **Memorable**

The best thing you can do to establish effective cooperation is to become memorable. You can use some relevant images or fonts in your message to make it unique and unforgettable. However, it is vital to find a healthy balance, not to overuse media and other types of content in your email or presentation.

## **Functions of Business Correspondence:**

### **1. The Function of Providing Contact:**

The first function of business correspondence is to provide contact between persons involved in a business transaction without meeting each other in person. Of course there are many devices like the telephone and its variations, e-mail, fax etc. which can make communication faster and easier but none provide a ready record for future reference like the letter.

### **2. The Function of Providing Reference:**

Business Correspondence provides a reference for the future. For e.g. it helps one to compare the present rates of some goods and services with the past rates of the same goods and services so that business plans may be made. Business correspondence provides a database on the basis of which decisions can be taken. For example it is usual to make a comparative statement of prices and rates when a major purchase is to be made or contract is to be given. This comparative statement is made on the basis of a written or typed quotation or tender. decision regarding the company from which the purchase is to be made or the contractor to whom the contract is to be given is based on this.



**3. The Function of creating Cordial Business Environment:**

Another functions of Business correspondence is to create a cordial atmosphere in which to carry out business. The language and tone of business letters and other forms of correspondence go a long way towards creating a pleasant and healthy atmosphere in which business is conducted. A letter of complaint which is not rude or accusatory but based on facts and is polite in tone is likely to get a better response than a vituperative one.

**4. The Function of Sales Promotion:**

The function of promoting sales through letters may be taken as the fourth function of business correspondence. These direct appeals through letters and e-mails are not to be confused with advertisements. Their purpose is to make direct sales to a very well defined target audience and also reinforce the sales efforts of the regular dealer.

**5. The Legal Function:**

The fifth function of business correspondence is the part that it plays when things go wrong and the participants in a business transaction end up in the court of law to settle their disputes. In cases of disputes connected with business matters business correspondence forms a very important reference base and also provides evidence for legal action.

**The Structure of a Business Correspondence / Letter**

Each of these types of business letters, while providing different information to the recipient, usually follows a similar format and includes the same basic components. When writing a business letter of any kind, anticipate including these elements:

- Sender's address: The sender's address is your address or the address of your business.
- Date: Include the date you wrote and sent the letter.
- Recipient's address: This is the address of the person you're sending the letter to.

- Salutation: Use a formal greeting along with the recipient's name.
- Introduction: The introductory paragraph of the letter introduces the purpose of the correspondence to the recipient.
- Body: The body paragraph or paragraphs provide details about the letter's subject or purpose.
- Closing statement: The closing paragraph of the letter summarizes and concludes the message.
- Complimentary close: Use a professional phrase along with your signature.
- Enclosures: If you're including any additional documents, like a sales brochure, a resume or an itemized receipt, specify that under the enclosures heading.

### **Common Types of Business Letters**

You can use a business letter format for a variety of professional communication needs. Consider a few of the most common types of business letters you may encounter:

- ❖ Sales letters: Companies use sales letters when soliciting business from other organizations, or occasionally, from individual customers.
- ❖ Order letters: Businesses send order letters when placing an order for a product or service. These letters include the specifics of the order and sometimes the payment.
- ❖ Complaint letters: Complaint letters are usually sent by consumers to businesses when they're unhappy with a service or product.
- ❖ Adjustment letters: Companies send adjustment letters in response to customer complaint letters. These letters usually provide a solution to the problem posed in the original complaint letter.

- ❖ Inquiry letters: Inquiry letters ask a question. You can use an inquiry letter for a number of different professional purposes.
- ❖ Follow-up letters: A follow-up letter is generally the second communication sent after initial contact.
- ❖ Letters of recommendation: A letter of recommendation often comes from a prospective employee's previous employer to the business the candidate is applying to work for.
- ❖ Acknowledgement letters: Businesses use acknowledgement letters to indicate they received a communication or request, but they have not yet made a decision or taken action.
- ❖ Cover letters: Both businesses and job seekers use cover letters to indicate what's included in a package or collection of documents.
- ❖ Letters of resignation: Employees send letters of resignation to their employers when they're planning to leave their job.

### **E-mail Writing Skills:**

Email writing skills are aptitudes that can help you create meaningful correspondence with professional and personal connections electronically. By developing your email writing skills, you can start writing better emails that communicate your points more succinctly, accurately represent your comprehension and intelligence and minimize the number of unnecessary responses. Email writing skills are like communication skills, but because they involve written responses, they can take extra time and care to develop.

#### **✓ Communication**

One of the most important skills that can influence the success of your emails is communication. When writing emails, it's essential to include ideas as succinctly as possible. Often, your audience won't take the time to read the entirety of a lengthy response, and they might not see critical information. Learning to synthesize your ideas

and communicate important points effectively can make it easier to maximize the efficiency of your correspondence.

✓ **Attention to detail**

Attention to detail is another crucial email writing skill. It applies to both your own writing and your comprehension of others' messages. In your own writing, noticing minor details can help you find grammatical errors, typos or missing information quickly. Thoroughly reading the emails you're responding to can also help ensure you address every relevant point in someone else's email.

✓ **Writing**

Writing skills are very important when writing emails. Your writing skills can help you communicate your thoughts well and can also influence your use of spelling and grammar. Developing your writing skills can make your emails easier to read and less prone to typos, which can distract your reader and prevent them from understanding the full value of your message.

✓ **Time management**

Time management is also an essential skill related to email writing. Often, especially in a professional setting, you might have to respond to multiple emails a day. Learning to write effective and professional correspondence quickly can increase your productivity and show your email recipient you value their time.

## **How to improve your email writing skills**

If you're interested in improving your email writing skills, here are some steps you can take:

### **1. Download a grammar extension**

You can find extensions for your computer that scan your emails for typos, grammatical mistakes and ineffective language. These extensions can be valuable tools for fixing your writing quickly and catching errors you may have missed while proofreading. While extensions can be

helpful tools, their suggestions aren't always correct. Be sure to proofread your writing rather than relying entirely on a spell-checking app or extension.

## **2. Proofread your work**

Reading your email before you send it can help you find errors or awkward language in your writing. If you rewrote a section of your email, spend extra time looking at the rewritten sentences when you do your review. It's common for people to repeat words or to leave partial sentences in their writing. If you're emailing an important business colleague or contact, consider asking someone else to read over the email before you send it to its final destination.

## **3. Review common grammar and spelling mistakes**

If you notice a repeat suggestion from an extension or know you struggle with common grammatical errors, review writing rules to help you learn the correct way to write certain words or phrases. Common mistakes include misusing forms of your, their and to. Realizing common mistakes can make them easier to identify in your own writing.

## **4. Slow down**

While you might feel rushed to respond to an email, slowing down can help you save valuable time. When you respond too quickly to an email, you risk forgetting important information. You might spend more time sending clarifying emails or correcting a miscommunication. By slowing down, you can ensure you communicate all your points effectively.

## **5. Be precise**

When communicating through email, always be specific with what you're talking about. For example, if you're emailing one of your business partners, it pays not to write something like 'I need this task completed by tomorrow for a client'. Although nine times out of ten they may know what you're talking about, why risk the miscommunication?

## **6. Optimize your subject line**

As you may receive countless emails every day, so does everyone else. Make your email stand out and are fit for purpose. If you receive an email with no subject line or a subject line that seems irrelevant, what do you do with it? Many people will agree that, if you don't know who the email is from, you'll just delete it. This is especially important if you're contacting new businesses in the hopes of creating a partnership or trying to generate business leads.

## **7. Be formal when appropriate**

Especially important if you're communicating with customers or other businesses, try to remain as formal as possible. This means including all your appropriate contact information in the details or signature part at the end of the email.

## **8. Edit and proofread**

This goes for any form of written work but is still a factor that is overlooked time and time again. Edit and proofread your work to ensure it makes sense and is grammatically correct. This includes spelling, sentence structure and punctuation as a well-written, perfect email says a lot about you as a person and as a business.

## **9. Get help if you need it**

If you're approaching potential buyers, potential partners and especially your customers, an email may be the only way you ever communicate to one another so you want to be sure you are getting it right the first time.

To help you reach your goals and develop your writing skills in the best way possible, here is a list of online tools you can use to better your writing talents:

- **Word Counter** – As well as highlighting your mistakes as you go, monitor the number of words you are using, allowing you to stay concise and stick to the point.

- **Paper Fellows** – A free to use online writing community full of writers and professionals from around the world who can provide you with the essential feedback back you need to develop your writing skills.
- **Microsoft Editor** – Not the best speller? Microsoft Editor is a grammar and spelling checker, built into Outlook and Word or available as an Edge or Chrome browser extension, which is used to make sure your emails aren't filled with typos.

## **10. Be consistent**

Working hand in hand with the tip above, make sure all your emails are consistent in quality and style. This shows the reader that you put hard work into everything you do, even down to the emails you send. This tip works effectively with both customers and other businesses.

## **11. Manners cost nothing**

As the old saying goes, being polite in emails costs nothing but a few extra seconds of typing but makes a world of difference. Using words such as 'please' and 'thank you' can go a long way with potential customers and leads and can open your business up to new opportunities every day.

## **12. Find your voice**

The voice of your email is one of the hardest parts to master. Trying to remain engaging and informative in your emails without sounding blunt can be a difficult and stressful task. Before clicking the send button, read through your email a couple of times, just to be sure you are giving the impression you want to give.

## **13. Teamwork is best**

Reading this list thinking that you may not be the best writer in the world? Not a problem, there are a ton of online writing services out there that are both affordable and guarantee your emails will be of high quality.