

UNITÀ DIDATTICA 2

THE FORMS OF BUSINESS LETTER

2.1 – Application for a job

When writing a letter of application for a job, it is important to say *Content plan*
where you read or heard about the job, give your personal details:

- age, education, qualifications;
- describe other interests if relevant to the job;
- describe your work experience, if any; mention your present job;
- gives the names and addresses of your references.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- saying where you read or heard about the company/job:
 - with reference to your advertisement in...
 - I read about your company in...
 - Mr/Mrs...told me about your company;
- asking for a job:
 - I wish to apply for the position of...
 - I should like to apply for the post of...
 - I am interested in the position of...;
- stating your interests:
 - I am especially interested in...
 - my special interest is...;
- giving your reasons for applying:
 - I feel I have the qualifications for the post you are offering...;
 - I think I have the right experience for this job...;
 - I wish to obtain a post which offers better career prospects...;

- stating your experience:
 - I have had experience in...;
 - for the last years I have been working as...with...;
 - for over...years I have been employed as...with...;
- closing:
 - I hope you will call me for an interview...;
 - I hope you will give my application favourable; consideration...
 - I look forward to hearing from you...

2.2 – Enquiries and replies to enquiries

An enquiry is often the first step in a commercial transaction; it is used to ask for catalogues, price-lists and samples, or to have information about sales terms.

Content plan

When writing a letter of enquiry it is necessary:

- to start by mentioning where you obtained the name of the firm;
- give concise information about your own business;
- make your request in a concise and clear way; end soliciting a prompt reply.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- giving the source of information:
 - Mr/Mrs...informed us that you are a supplier/producer of...
 - Your firm has been recommended to us by Mr/Mrs...
 - We visited your stand at the...fair and we are interested in...
 - With reference to your advertisement in...;
- giving information about the firm:
 - We are leading importers/exporters/manufacturers of...in...
 - We have been operating in the...market for/since...;

- making requests
 - We should be pleased if you would send us information about/details of...
 - We should like to receive your catalogue/price-list...
 - Could you please send us your condition of sales?

There are different types of enquiries and replies vary accordingly; they must always be concise, complete and accurate.

Content plan

When writing a reply it is important: to thank the writer for the enquiry, quoting the reference number and the date, or the contents; supply all the information required; refer to any enclosures such as catalogues or samples; be extremely accurate about the prices, conditions and terms of the business; indicate that you could send additional information if required; close by saying that you hope to include the addressee among your customers. If you have to make a negative reply, always be polite and encouraging.

Useful expressions:

- expressing thanks for the enquiry:
 - We thank you for your enquiry of...
 - Thank you for your letter requesting information about...;
- referring to literature enclosed or sent:
 - As requested we are pleased to send our catalogues...
 - As requested we are sending you herewith our current price-list...;
- quoting prices:
 - Our quotation is...
 - Our prices are quoted...;
- specifying payment:
 - We usually require payment by banker's draft...

Phraseology

- Payment must be made by...;
- specifying delivery
 - We can deliver the articles from stock...
 - We can supply the items required within the time you require...
 - The articles can be delivered...;
- specifying discounts:
 - We usually grant a...% discount for orders of...and over
 - All prices are subjected to a...% discount for bulk orders...;
- praising your products:
 - We feel sure that you will appreciate the quality of our products...
 - We feel sure that you will agree that our offer is competitive...;
- soliciting further contact:
 - If you need further information/assistance, please write to us again
 - We hope that our offer will meet your approval and we look forward to hearing from you soon...;
- giving reasons for refusing the request:
 - We are very sorry to inform you we can't...
 - Much to our regret we have to inform you that we cannot accept new orders...;
- suggesting alternatives:
 - We are sure you will understand our situation and we would like to suggest our product... which is quite similar to...

- We shall contact you as soon as the present situation changes...

2.3 – Offers

Voluntary offers, often called unsolicited offers, are used to introduce a company to potential new customers; to launch new products and services and to announce special discounts or conditions of sales.

Content plan

When writing an offer, it is necessary:

- to explain how you obtained the addressee's name;
- to give details of your firm and product or service;
- to describe your present market and explain why you want to expand it;
- to specify your terms of business and refer to enclosures or illustration material;
- close with an expectation of favourable reply.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- explaining how you obtained the addressee's name:
 - We have been given your name by...
 - Your company has been recommended to us by...;
- giving details of your firm:
 - We are a leading manufacturer of...
 - We are a company specialized in...
 - We are well-known in the field of...;
- introducing a new product/service:
 - We feel you may be interested to hear about our...
 - We are pleased to inform you that our...;

- stressing the benefits of the new product:
 - Our...is a completely new product with serious competition...
 - We would like to stress the reliability and durability of our...;
- closing:
 - We are sure you will give serious consideration to...
 - We trust you will not miss the opportunity of trying our...
 - ...and we look forward to receive your order soon...
 - ...we would be very pleased to count you among our customers...

2.4 – Orders and replies to orders

When an offer is considered satisfactory, the next stage in a commercial transaction is the placing of an order. This can be done in different ways (telephone, e-mail...) but it must be always confirmed by letter.

Content plan

When writing an order it is important to:

- refer to the supplier's offer or to his or her catalogue and advertising;
- give full details about the quantity, model and price of goods;
- state your requirements for delivery times, packing, transport, insurance, methods of payment and so on: encourage the supplier to execute the order promptly and with care.

Useful expressions:

- referring to previous correspondence:
 - With reference to our letter of...please ship the following goods...
 - Further to our phone call of...we ask you to supply the articles listed on the enclosed order form...;

Phraseology

- specifying quality:
 - We expect the goods to be up to the quality of the sample...
 - We expect the articles to match the description in your catalogue...
 - Please note that we reserve the right to reject the goods if they do not correspond to the catalogue/are not exactly the same as...
 - Please note that we shall refuse the articles if they are not in good conditions/are not top quality...;

- specifying delivery:
 - We remind you that delivery must be effected before / within...
 - Please ensure that consignment is to take place not later than...
 - Our order is conditional on the goods being delivered by...;

- specifying packing:
 - Please ensure that the goods are packed in accordance with the enclosed instructions...
 - Please see that the goods are suitably packed to avoid damage in transit...;

- specifying transport and insurance:
 - The goods are to be sent through our regular shipping agents...
 - Please have the goods shipped by...
 - As to insurance, please provide for it and charge the cost to us...
 - As regards insurance we shall effect it at our end...;

- payment:
 - We will arrange for payment by...as stated in your offer...
 - We propose to settle payment by...on...days terms...
 - We have given instructions to our bank that will transfer the sum of...to your account...
 - We authorize you to send us your draft for the amount due...;
- requesting confirmation and accurate execution:
 - We trust you will give our order your best attention...
 - We would be grateful if you would give our order your immediate attention...
 - We look forward to receiving your confirmation...

When confirming an order, the supplier should:

Content plan

- express thanks for the order, quoting its date and number;
- repeat all data about quantity and price, packaging, delivery, payment, insurance and so on;
- assure prompt execution and immediate notification of dispatch.

Orders can also be modified, delayed or even refused. In this case the supplier should:

- express thanks for the order and repeat its contents;
- clearly state the reasons for the inability to execute it;
- propose a different solution and ask for approval and assure the buyer of the willingness to cooperate.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- confirming an order:
 - We have today received your order number...dated...
 - Thank you very much for your order...
 - ...which we are pleased to confirm as follows...;

- assuring prompt execution:
 - We are pleased to inform you that we can fulfil the order within...
 - We shall advise you as soon as the order is ready for shipment...;
- refusing an order:
 - We regret to inform you that, owing to..., we have to decline further orders/delay deliveries...;
- apologizing:
 - We hope you will understand our situation and we assure we shall contact you as soon as the situation is resolved.../as soon as possible...;
- suggesting modifications to an order:
 - With regard to article...we are sorry to inform you that...
 - We are sorry we cannot accept your order at the price requested.../agree to your request of...
 - We therefore suggest delivery/replacing the article...;
- requesting the buyer's confirmation:
 - Please let us know whether the replacement meets your requirements...
 - Please let us know whether you confirm your order/you accept the proposals regarding...

2.5 – Complaints and replies to complaints

There are many different reasons for complaints: delivery of wrong or damaged goods, delays in delivery times, delivery of the wrong quantity of goods.

Content plan

When making a complaint the customer should:

- make detailed references to the order concerned;
- state the complaint clearly;
- describe the consequence of the mistake; suggest the necessary adjustments.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- referring to the order:
 - We are writing with reference to our order...confirmed on...
 - We refer to our order...which was confirmed by you on...;
- complaining about goods:
 - We regret to inform you that on checking the goods we found that...
 - ...they do not correspond to.../they are missing.../they are damaged...
 - We regret to inform you that the goods have not reached us yet...;
- stating reasons:
 - We believe that this is due to a mistake in...
 - Apparently this is due to manufacturing defects...;
- soliciting prompt delivery:
 - As the delay is already causing us great inconvenience...
 - As we stressed the importance of early delivery...
...we must insist on immediate delivery...;
- threatening enforcement:
 - Please note that unless the goods are delivered by.../we hear from you...

- ...we shall be forced to cancel our order.../withdraw from the contract...

When answering to a complaint, the supplier should:

Content plan

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint and apologize;
- briefly state the causes; discuss the suggested adjustments accurately, accept them or make a counter-proposal;
- apologize for any inconvenience; assure the customer of better service in future.

Useful expressions:

Phraseology

- acknowledging the complaint:
 - Thank you for your letter in which you complain about...
 - We regret to learn from your letter that...
 - ...and we thank you for advising us immediately;
- giving an explanation:
 - We admit that the mistake is due to an oversight...
 - We presume that the damage is due to...
 - Unfortunately a strike in our factory has held up production;
- commenting on the proposed adjustments:
 - We are prepared to replace the goods at no extra cost to you...
 - We are ready to accept your proposal
 - We are shipping the goods today...;
- apologizing and assuring of better service:
 - We are sure that this will settle the matter to your satisfaction...
 - We apologize for the delay/the inconvenience caused...

-we assure you that your future orders will receive more attention...

Test

1. What are the characteristics of a letter of application for a job? (about 5 lines)
2. Write a letter to apply for the position of a secretary to the Sales Manager at American Airlines (requirements: audio and typing skills, previous experience in travel business). (about 20 lines)
3. Write a letter of application for the position of sales and marketing manager for a multinational auto components manufacturing (requirements: experience with an engineering firm, speak English and be prepared to travel). (about 20 lines)
4. What do customers usually ask for in an enquiry? (about 5 lines)
5. How should they state their request? (about 5 lines)
6. Write an enquiry: your company is in urgent need of a consignment of 2500 halogen lamps, write to Oxonensis Bulb Ltd and ask for a quotation. (about 20 lines)
7. You are the general manager of a leading Italian firm in the field of security system; write to an American firm asking for information about their new door-lock. (about 20 lines)
8. What are the characteristics of a reply to an enquiry? (about 5 lines)
9. Your company manufactures cotton materials. Specify, in a reply to an enquiry, your best terms and delivery times to an Indian importer. About 20 lines
10. Write a negative reply for the enquiry in question 3. (about 20 lines)
11. You work for a company that manufactures electronic toys. Answer an enquiry which your firm received at a trade fair in Hamburg. (about 20 lines)
12. What are the voluntary offers used for? (about 5 lines)
13. What are their characteristics? (about 5 lines)
14. You work for a producer of fruit juice; write to your usual importer in England offering special discounts: minimum 500 cartons of juice, 2% discount; minimum 1000 cartons of juice, 3 % discount; minimum 2000 cartons of juice, 5% discount. (about 20 lines)
15. You have to promote a new type of shoes; write to a leading Italian shoe importer describing the product and stressing the quality. (about 20 lines)
16. How can an order be placed? (about 5 lines)
17. What are the characteristics of an order letter? (about 5 lines)

18. After a long discussion over possible discounts, you are ordering quartz watches from a They producer; write a letter. (about 20 lines)
19. A famous Californian beachwear producer has launched a new line of bikinis; write thanking them for the catalogue and place an order. (about 20 lines)
20. What are the characteristics of a reply to order? (about 5 lines)
21. Write a letter of reply to order in question 4. (about 20 lines)
22. Write a letter to a customer: inform him/her that you cannot effect delivery of the shoes they ordered by the requested date, because of a strike. Suggest an alternative and ask for confirmation. (about 20 lines)
23. What are the most common reason for complaints? (about 5 lines)
24. What content plan should a complaint follow? (about 5 lines)
25. What content plan should a reply to complaint follow? (about 5 lines)
26. Write a letter to your supplier in Denmark; five wooden tables, out of the twenty you have ordered, have their tops scratched, even if the packaging was in good order and seemed adequate. Propose returning the damaged goods and ask for reimbursement by bank transfer. (about 20 lines)
27. Write a letter replying to question 4. (about 20 lines)
28. Write a letter to your supplier in Japan: you have received a different model of alarm clocks, they are more expensive and therefore harder to place in your market. Suggest to retain the goods at a discount of 30% which will be deducted from the cost of the next shipment. (about 20 lines).