

5 Important Points to Consider when Writing a Business Letter

Written by Alex Buffet

[Business letters](#) are a staple of communication for companies large and small. Time was when schools would teach children how to write a formal business letter, back when consumers had to routinely address correspondence to corporations to do everything from seek a refund to send away to order a product. In today's electronic era, you are less likely to have to write these kinds of business letters, but they are still necessary for some forms of request, particularly when you need an official record of a complaint or an effort to communicate with a company. To that end, it helps to know some of the most important points about how to write a business letter.



1. Keep It Relatively Formal

Thanks to email and texting, it can be easy to slip into informal language, including abbreviations and even emojis. Some companies report receiving communications on paper in which the writer has even underlined words and told them to put them into a browser to “click the link,” as though the paper copy contained a URL! Instead, your business letter should maintain a formal tone and use regular standard English and conventional grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

2. Keep Your Letter Concise

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On the other hand, many people who write letters to businesses have a tendency to put in too many details and too many extra words. Instead, you should try to keep your writing as simple and direct as possible. This means that you should cut out unnecessary words and focus only on the details that are most important. Remember, the person reading your letter won't have much time and won't be interested in your entire life story. Imagine that the reader has only a few seconds to decide what to do with your letter. How can you tell the reader what you're trying to communicate in just a few sentences? The shorter you can make it, the more effective your letter will be. Just don't leave out important information in the race to get your letter down to fighting weight.

3. Keep a Positive Tone

It can be tempting to use a letter to attack the business and try to explain all of the reasons that you are angry and upset with them. However, if you are too negative and too critical, you risk creating a situation where the reader will become upset and unhelpful. By all means explain what is wrong, but remember that there is a real human being reading your letter, so remaining polite and positive will usually achieve better results.

4. Keep to the Active Voice

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A business letter is strongest when it uses the active voice. The active voice helps to make the writing clearer and more direct. When you use the passive voice, it can hide important details. For example, “The product got broken” doesn’t offer as much information as “The defective part caused the product to break.” Use the active voice to make sure you are conveying the right information.

5. Keep Checking Your Facts

Finally, make sure that your facts are completely correct. A business letter is designed to achieve a result, so you need to make sure that everything you say is 100% correct. Any mistake could be a reason for a company to deny your request, so double and triple check your facts and avoid any and all exaggeration and hyperbole. This way you can keep your letter factual and avoid any embarrassing needs for correction later on.

Business letters are formulaic, and overall, they are relatively easy to write. However, there are some challenges, especially for those who haven’t written on in a while. By following our tips, you can be sure that your next business letter will get the job done.

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