

# How to Write an Attractive Business Letter

In general, business letters writing has only two goals:

To make people understand you.

To get them to take some action.

So, there are some important tips to write an attractive letter to achieve those goals.

## 10 Tips to Write an Attractive Business Letter

### 1. Write Concisely

Some editors estimate that a third of the words in a typical letter is wasted. At every stage of writing your letter, look at it and decide what to remove – there will always be something. Remember that you want your reader to understand you and take action. Anything that does not help him or her do that is unnecessary. Avoid repeating anything, other than for specific emphasis. Remove needless words from every sentence, needless sentences from every paragraph, and needless paragraphs entirely.

### 2. Be Complete

Don't take conciseness too far. You should write not just what must be said, but also what should be said to achieve your goal. Your letter should not read like a telegram but should tell your reader everything he or she needs to know, and then prod for action. Make sure that you include enough background for your reader to get what you mean, and that you come across as tactful and polite, not terse and unfeeling.

### 3. Use Nouns and Verbs

If you think of writing as driving a car, nouns and verbs are the wheels and engine, while adjectives and adverbs are the body and trim. No matter how fancy the paint and details, without power and grip your car goes nowhere. Adjectives and adverbs can enhance sturdy nouns and verbs, but they can't rescue weak ones. Instead of "I definitely believe that the performance will be a very successful one," write "I know the performance will succeed." The second sentence is both stronger and shorter.

### 4. Write Actively

Good writers use the active voice whenever they can. Inactive sentences, people do things – they act and interact. The active voice is vigorous and brief, showing who acts and how. In passive sentences, things are done – people are acted upon or, worse, disappear entirely. In most contexts, the passive voice is vague and evasive, making your reader unsure who is doing what.

So instead of "The report will be sent to you" and "The source of your problem has been determined" (passive), write "I will send you the report" and "Our technical team has found what caused your problem" (active). Remove "there is," "it appears," "are done," and similar phrases by rebuilding passive sentences as active ones.

### 5. Be Specific

Most people use specific language when they talk casually: they tell stories with details, colors, and smells. Write the same way. Use words to paint pictures in your reader's mind, not to ask him or her to dissect abstract concepts. If you have numbers, use them. Don't discuss ideas without examples. Avoid abbreviations not everyone knows. Everybody understands words that apply to everyday life, so

use everyday words and your reader will understand you.

## 6. Write Interesting Sentences

Vary the length of your sentences to avoid lulling your reader to sleep. Make some short and sharp. Draw others out by linking two or three together: the clip with commas, stitch with semicolons; even staple with dashes – if you like. Don't make all your sentences the same.

## 7. Write to Your Readers, Not Down to Them

Most people understand far more words than they use, either in writing or speech. If you read any general how-to book, business letter, newspaper, or even these writing guidelines, you will find each written at roughly the same level of language. None treats its readers as children, but none is likely to use the word “turpitude” either. Even if you are writing to tell your readers something they know nothing about, think of them as intelligent but uninformed, not dumb.

Avoid using “we” if you don't have to – use it if you are really talking about a group opinion, position, or action (such as a company policy or a decision voted on at a meeting), but don't use it to replace “I” with something more pompous. Readers like to see that you are a person, not a vague corporate “we” or an impersonal “the writer.” Your reader isn't stupid and doesn't like being talked down to.

## 8. Use a Positive Tone

Use negatives such as “don't,” “won't,” and “not” only to deny, not to evade or be indecisive. Instead of “We can't decide until

tomorrow," write "We should decide tomorrow," or, better yet, "We will decide tomorrow." Even many negative statements have single words that work better than negative statements: "disagreeable" instead of "not nice," "late" instead of "not on time," "wrong" instead of "non-optimal," "rarely" instead of "not very often," and so on.

## 9. Be Correct

Good writing is correct in two ways:

- In technique.

- In facts.

Reference books, such as style guides and dictionaries, will help you write with proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and formatting. The facts, however, are yours alone. Letters serve as records of what you say, often spending years in filing cabinets for later reference, so your facts must be correct.

If you have relevant information, present it. If you are uncertain, say so. If you merely suspect something, make the suspicion clear so your reader does not think you know more than you do. Check your letter over before you send it, to save the awkwardness of correcting a mistake after your reader sees it.

## 10. Be Clear

Good business writing is all about being clear. A letter is not a poem, a mystery story, or a morality play. It should not have subtle allegorical overtones requiring careful study, or different shades of meaning. In short, it should not be open to interpretation.