

TOPIC D: HOW TO WRITE THE BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

Business/customer letters are the main way businesses officially communicate with their customers and other businesses. A good business/customer letter is brief, straightforward, and polite. Business/customer letters are the product of the person writing them and reflect the personal preferences of the writer. However, always learn the preferred style of your company as you are a representative of the company and all correspondence should be uniform, as in stationery and envelopes. A **business letter** is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8½"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery. The block style is becoming more widely used to eliminate visual clutter.



The Business/Customer Letter Style Guide

1. The Heading.

This contains the return address (usually two or three lines) with the date on the last line. Sometimes it may be necessary to include a line after the address and before the date for a phone number, fax number, e-mail address, or something similar. Often a line is skipped between the address and date. That should always be done if the heading is next to the left margin. It is not necessary to type the return address if you are using stationery with the return address already imprinted. Always include the date.

2. The Inside Address.

This is the address where you are sending your letter. Make it as complete as possible. Include titles and names if you know them. This is always on the left margin. If an 8½" x 11" paper is folded in thirds to fit in a standard 9" business envelope, the inside address can appear through the window in the envelope. An inside address also helps the recipient route the letter properly and can help should the envelope be damaged and the address become unreadable. Skip a line after the heading before the inside address. Skip another line after the inside address before the greeting.

3. The Greeting.

The greeting can also be referred to as the salutation. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word "Dear" and always includes the person's last name. It normally has a title. Use a first name only if the title is unclear--for example, you are writing to someone named "Leslie," but do not know whether the person is male or female. The greeting in a business letter always ends in a colon.

4. The Body.

The body is written as text. A business letter is never hand written. Regardless of format, skip a line between paragraphs. Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

5. The Complimentary Close.

This short, polite closing ends with a comma. It is either at the left margin or its left edge is in the center. It begins at the same column as the heading.

6. The Signature Line.

Skip two lines (unless you have unusually wide or narrow lines) and type out the name to be signed. The signature line may include a second line for a title, if appropriate. The signature should start directly above the first letter of the signature line in the space between the close and the signature line. Use blue or black ink.

John L. Stone
1616 West 5th Street
Abilene, Texas 58774
Home: (477) 337-2929 Cell: (477)333-3030.
jlstone@whoohoo.com

August 10, 2010

Fred Johnson, President
Johnson's Carpet Cleaning
588 State Street
Abilene, Texas 58774

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I am writing to you to express my satisfaction with the recent services of your company at my home here in Abilene. I had your team of professionals come to my home last Wednesday to clean the carpets in my family room, dining room, and living room.

The team of three, Joe, Bill, and Catherine, were on time and showed confidence in knowledge of their job. I am expecting out of town guests this week and am thrilled with the appearance of my home since I received this service.

Please accept my sincerest appreciation for the work and professionalism of this team! Job well done! I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my experience with you or potential customers. You may contact me at my home number, (477) 337-2929, or my cell phone (477)333-3030.

Sincerely,

John L. Stone

John L. Stone



Balloon City, Inc.
1587 Anthem Drive
Arlington, Virginia 24335
Phone:(804) 223-4991/Fax: (804)223-4990

January 24, 2010

Delores Harrison, Superintendent
Franklin County School Board
3344 Schoolhouse Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 23998

Dear Ms. Harrison:

I am writing to you in reference to the project mishap that occurred on this past Saturday, January 22, 2010, at your district team meeting with the order of balloons and streamers. I understand that you had a choice in selecting Balloon City as your decoration vendor and we appreciate that choice. Having the decorations delivered damaged and replaced in a timely fashion in preparation of your meeting is our fault and responsibility.

The discrepancy in the blue color streamers are a vendor issue. The popped balloons should have been replaced with extra balloons and the portable helium tank in the delivery truck. Our staff who delivered and set up the decorations did not come prepared with the extra balloons and tank, nor were there extra matching colored streamers available to replace the irregular, blue colored streamers. Our staff made an effort to correct the decorations by returning to our store and warehouse to get the replacement materials to finish the project. This delay was frustrating and embarrassing to you as your guests were arriving and the decorations were still going up.

Please accept my sincerest apology for these errors. This is not how we intend to manage projects for our customers. Therefore, I am offering this project order to you at no cost and a future project order at a discount of 25%. We hope that you will allow us to serve you again and demonstrate our capability in designing and decorating your event in a correct and timely manner. As a result of this project mishap, we have instituted a new project planner form and checklist to prevent any future incidents like this.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lockhart
Patricia Lockhart
President, Balloon City, Inc.

BC 36

Revision 8.1

Work Certified™ 1.2016

HOW TO WRITE A BUSINESS MEMO

Business memos are interoffice correspondence sent between employees in a company to communicate ideas, decisions, requests or announcements. A business memo helps members of an organization communicate without the need for time-consuming meetings. Memos solve problems by presenting new information or persuading readers to take action. Examples of this are introducing corporate policy changes or asking the reader(s) to change a current work procedure. The goal in writing a memo is the same as with other correspondence: effectively communicate the purpose to the reader(s).

The Business Memo Style Guide

1. Header Section

The required elements of a business memo:

MEMORANDUM

Date:

To: Name or column of names of those people to whom memorandum is being sent.
(using rank from most senior down)

From: Writer's name. Title, if any, listed directly below name.

Re: or Subject: Subject line may be emphasized by underlining, bold font or all capital letters.

2. Opening Section

Begin your memo by stating briefly the subject matter of the memo. Perhaps a shipment has not arrived, a scheduled meeting has been canceled, or a new employee is starting tomorrow. After stating the subject, indicate the purpose clearly: Are you announcing a meeting, welcoming a new employee, or asking for input on adopting a new policy about lunch hour length?

3. Discussion Section

In this section, details are presented regarding the solution or actions that will be taken or instituted regarding the subject of the memo. Don't ramble on, but do give enough information for decision makers to take action as needed. Describe the task or assignment with details that support the issue stated in the opening paragraph (subject).

4. Closing Section

After the reader has absorbed all of your information, close with a courteous ending that states what action the reader is to take.

To further clarify your meaning, keep these formatting ideas in mind:

Numbered and bulleted lists make information easy to scan. Font sizes, underlining, bolding, and italicizing make headings and important information stand out. Some companies may have very strict format for business memos that each employee is supposed to follow. Some even have it stated in their internal manuals.

BUSINESS MEMO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/25/08
TO: All Staff
FROM: Ginger Spencer, Supervisor of Operations
RE: Memo Writing Format

In order to make interoffice communications easier, please adhere to the following guidelines for writing effective memos:

- Clearly state the purpose of the memo in the subject line and in the first paragraph.
- Keep language simple and polite.
- Use bullets if a lot of information is presented.
- Proofread before sending.
- Address the memo to the person(s) who will take action on the subject.

Please put this format into practice immediately. We appreciate your assistance in developing clear communications. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL WRITING TIPS



TITLES FOR ADDRESSING SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT PERSONS

President of the United States

Address: First name and surname, President of the United States
Salutation: Dear Mr./Madam President:
Closing: Yours sincerely,

Ambassador

Address: His/Her Excellency (First name and surname), Ambassador of (Country)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador:
Closing: Yours sincerely,

U.S. Senator

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), United States Senator
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Senator (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

U.S. Congressman

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), United States Congressman
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Representative (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

Governor

Address: The Honorable Governor of (State)
Salutation: Sir/Madam: or Dear Governor (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

State Senator

Address: (Name of State) House Senator, The Honorable (First name and surname)
Salutation: Dear Senator (Surname):
Closing: Yours sincerely,

Mayor - United States

Address: The Honorable (First name and surname), Mayor of (City)
Salutation: Dear Mayor (Surname):
Closing: Sincerely yours,

COMPETENCY
WRITING A BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

Savings 4 All, Inc.
2397 Double Street
Seattle, WA 23458
978-761-0009

December 10, 2007

Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.
2020 Doubleday Circle
Doubleton, FL 25983

Subject: Purchase Order # 518093-10
Twelve-Foot Curtain Rods – Model # AB-1789345

Dear Customer Service Department:

The order you sent me was incorrect. I ordered ten, twelve-foot curtain rods and you sent me twelve, ten-foot curtain rods. This is the second time you have made this same mistake.

I have been purchasing products from your company for the last five years. My average annual purchases are about \$50,000 for this year. I would hope by now that I would have a designated service representative that I can deal with on a regular basis rather than dealing with a new one every time I have a problem. Having my own service representative should eliminate these errors.

Further, I need you to send me immediately the curtain rods I ordered. I have customers waiting for delivery of their twelve-foot curtain rods and I will expect them by the end of the week. Please respond to my request promptly with a confirmation of the delivery date and the name of my assigned service representative.

Sincerely,

Joseph Mason

Joseph Mason,
Vice President

COMPETENCY

WRITING A BUSINESS/CUSTOMER LETTER

When researching this account, you determine that an incorrectly filled out order form by the client caused the problems. However, Savings 4 All, Inc., order twelve-foot curtain rods twice a week and has never ordered ten-foot curtain rods.

Your supervisor decides to take the following steps to solve this problem and wants you to write the customer a letter indicating the below:

1. Assigns you as the service representative for Savings 4 All, Inc.
2. Informs you that one of your duties will be to review Savings 4 All, Inc. order forms and call them if you believe they contain errors.
3. Asks you to ship the ten, twelve-foot curtain rods overnight at Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.'s expense.
4. Allow Savings 4 All, Inc., to keep the twelve, ten-foot curtain rods at no charge.
5. Requests that you write a business letter to Mr. Joseph Mason of Savings 4 All, Inc., informing of the solution to his problem and introducing yourself as his new customer service representative. Do not blame the customer for the error and be sure to thank him for conducting business with Curtain Call Custom Designs, Inc.

COMPETENCY

WRITING A BUSINESS MEMORANDUM

As a Training Instructor at the Red Leaf Career Center, you are constantly improving courses offered to your clients. You have just reviewed the book, *Job Savvy (5th Edition)* by LaVerne L. Ludden, Ed. D. In telling your supervisor about the book and its potential to improve staff employability skills, he asks that you submit your findings in a memorandum so that he can forward your proposal to his supervisor for review.

He is also requesting that you choose the three chapters in the book that you determine to be most useful, and describe the information contained in those chapters including specific page references.

Use the business memo style guide to write this assignment. The memo should be written to Edward Williams, Director of Training and Development. Red Leaf Career Center.