
INQUIRY LETTERS

Letters Of Inquiry

Everyday business transaction consist of writing inquiry letters that request information or seek clarifications. We may need to write inquiry letters to individuals, firms, organisations, or institutions because we need some information. A letter of inquiry should be organised into three parts:

Inquiry letters maintain a courteous tone, mention and explain the request clearly, and close with a goodwill expression.

Opening The latter should open with a clear statement that tells the reader why the letter is being written. It is important to make the purpose of the letter clear in the very first paragraph. Questions or information needed should be listed in a clear and specific way.

Body The body gives details that explain the request. The writer may tell the reader what he/she is working on, and why he/she needs the requested information. He/She may also provide necessary details that the reader needs to know in order to respond to the inquiry. If the request involves more than one question they should be listed.

Closing The letter should be closed with a goodwill expression seeking an action-oriented response, and specifying the action that the reader should take.

Fig. 20.8 an enquiry letter

NATIONAL TOURS AND TRAVELS PVT LTD
M-15/6, South Extension, New Delhi-110 049
www.nationaltours.com

May 18, 2004

Ms Savitha Kumar
Training Manager
Sarna Corporate Training Pvt Ltd
D-28/15, Ring Road, Delhi-110 052

Dear Ms Kumar:

Please provide information regarding training courses for field staff involved in aggressive selling of tour packages.

We presently have 24 sales trainees who need intensive training in sales and marketing skills. Kindly send us the following information to enable us to choose the right course for them:

1. List of the courses best suitable for our sales staff
2. Duration of each course
3. Course content
4. Fee structure

We would be glad if you could send us the information before May 25. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sd/-
P R Mehta
General Manager

Fig. 20.8 Letter of Inquiry

Replies To Inquiry Letters

Two kinds of replies may be written to letters of inquiry, that is, letters giving the information asked for and letters of regret.

Letters Complying with Requests A direct approach should be used in such letters. A positive response to an inquiry may be organized into three parts as shown in Fig. 20.9:

- Opening** Purpose of the letter.
- Body** The requested information and other relevant details.
- Closing** A goodwill expression.

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Opening → (Mention the purpose of the letter, telling the reader that the requested information is being provided.

Body → (Give the requested information and other relevant details that the reader may be interested in.

Close → (Close the letter with a goodwill expression.

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Fig. 20.9 Positive Response To Inquiry

Now read the following sample letter in Fig. 20.10:

REVA COMPUTERS
 Dealers in HP
 Ajmer Road, Jaipur-302006

May 8, 2004

Rakesh Mathur
 Purchase Manager
 Avy Trading Corporation
 Court Lane, Civil Lines, Delhi

Dear Mr. Mathur,

As you requested, we are sending you detailed information about the HP ScanJet 3200C model, and our business terms, in the enclosed booklet.

We are the main dealers of HP scanners in North India and would be privileged to do business with reputed companies like yours. You could also visit our [website www.revacomputer.com](http://www.revacomputer.com) to receive more information about our company and a list of our customers.

We hope that the enclosed information will help you make your decision. Just send us an e-mail if you need any other information. We look forward to receiving a purchase order from you.

Sincerely,
 Sd/-
 Mr. Ravi Malhotra
 Sales Manager

Fig. 20.10 Positive Response to Inquiry

Letters not Complying with Requests An indirect plan should be used in such letters. Fig. 20.11 illustrates the three parts:

- Opening:** Buffer statement
- Body:** Explanation
- Closing:** Goodwill expression.

Opening → A negative response letter should be opened with a buffer statement, which could be an expression of appreciation, a compliment, agreement, or understanding. The buffer statement will prepare the reader to receive the message without ill feeling.

Body → The reason for not being able to give the information asked for should be explained.

Closing → The letter should be closed with a goodwill expression.

Fig. 20.11 Negative Response to Inquiry

A sample negative response letter is presented in Fig. 20.12:

SF Consultants
 906/845, Excel
 Nariman Point Mumbai-400 021

Dalamal Tower
 May 10, 2004
 Ms Lily Thomas
 26-B, Rana Pratap Marg
 Lucknow

Dear Ms Thomas

We appreciate your efforts to improve the professional knowledge and skills of your sales staff, and would be privileged to arrange training courses for reputed companies like yours.

We receive a large number of requests from big companies to organise training programmes for their sales staff. However, we conduct only ten sales training courses in a year. We have already finalised the list of the companies for whom we are going to conduct the courses during 2004-2005. Therefore, we are not in a position to give you the course details, and other related information for this year.

We thank you for your interest in our organisation and its training packages. If you wish, we would be glad to include your name in the list of companies for 2005-2006 training year.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,
 Sd/-
 S. Asfar Iqbal
 Training Manager

Fig. 20.12 Negative Response to a Letter of Inquiry

Progress Check 3

Rewrite the following inquiry letter by making the needed changes in its organisation:

<p>June 16, 2004 The Manager (Sales) Lexus Motors Ltd. 209, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata-700 017</p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>I am a interested in buying the new Indica V2 from your company. However, I would like to take car a loan from HDFC bank through your company.</p> <p>We look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>Please send me more information about car loans. Please refer to your advertisement in the June 14 issue of <i>The Times of India</i> about the new Indica V2.</p> <p>Sincerely, Sd/- Vikrant Vishal</p>	<p>251, Park Street Kolkata-700 016</p>
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LETTERS PLACING ORDERS

A letter placing an order is a straight forward written message that orders supplies, services, or merchandise. To order items by letter, the direct pattern may be used, as shown in Fig. 20.13.

Letters placing orders clearly mention items/ services, quantity/ number, price, insurance instructions, payment method, and delivery schedule.

Opening	→	The letter should be begun in order language making it clear that it is a supply/purchase order.
Body	→	The order items should be listed and specific data such as detailed description of the item/ items, catalogue reference, quantity/number, price, insurance instructions, clear address, and such other information that might be necessary to execute the supply order should be included.
Closing	→	The time-period for the delivery of the item/items must be mentioned and mode of payment must be stated. The letter should be closed with an expression of appreciation and goodwill.

Fig. 20.13 Placing an Order

A sample order letter is given Fig. 20.14:

AVT TRADING CORPORATION

Court Lane, Civil Lines, Delhi

May 23, 2004

Mr Ravi Malhotra
Sales Manager
Reva Computers
Ajmer Road, Jaipur-302006

Dear Mr Malhotra,

Please send the following items on the business terms agreed upon:

Catalogue No	Item Description	Quantity
128	HP Pavilion T2501 Desktop	05
236	HP ScanJet 3200C	05

We would be grateful if you could send the items duly insured. The insurance charges may be included in the bill.

We would appreciate receiving the items by June 15, 2004. As desired, we would make the payment by crossed bank draft.

Sincerely,

Sd/-
Rakesh Mathur
Purchase Manager

Fig. 20.14 Order Letter

INSTRUCTION LETTERS

A letter of instruction is a simple routine letter that consists of directions for the reader. A letter of instruction should be organised, as shown in Fig. 20.15, into three parts:

- Opening:** Purpose and instruction/instructions
- Body:** Details
- Closing:** Focus on action and a courteous close

Instruction letters specify the instructions with specific details, and focus on the required action.

Opening	→	The letter should be opened with a clear statement of purpose followed by the instruction/instructions. If the letter includes several instructions, they could be numbered or the sequence of actions can be logically connected in instructions by using sequence words, that is, First, Second, Then, Next, After that, Later, Finally, and so on.
Body	→	The reader should be given necessary details regarding what action he/she should take.
Closing	→	Focusing on the required action, the letter should be closed with a courteous conclusion.

Fig. 20.15 Letter Giving Instructions

A sample instruction letter is given in Fig. 20.16:

<p>April 21, 2004</p> <p>Mr Girjashankar Chief Manager, State Bank of India ISM Branch, Dhanbad</p> <p>Dear Mr. Girjashankar:</p> <p>I am writing to inform you that I have lost my cheque book number 233601. Please issue me a new cheque book. Also, stop any payment against any cheque bearing the number 233601 to 233650.</p> <p>I have signed the cheque requisition slip and handed over the same to my office peon. I am sending him to collect the cheque book. I would be obliged if you could give him the cheque book.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>A K Mishra Dept of Mining Engineering Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad</p>
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Fig. 20.16 Letter of Instruction

LETTERS URGING ACTION

Letters urging action are persuasive messages that urge the readers to do what the writer wants. Motivating someone to do what we want is not simple. It needs a tactful beginning, a reasonable approach and a well-presented argument. A tactful beginning can gain the reader's attention while a reasonable approach is required to convince the audience that a request/project/proposal is worthy. A well-presented argument is essential to motivate the reader to act. A letter urging action may be organised, as shown in Figure 20.17, into

Letters urging action open with an attention-catching statements, spellout what needs to be done, and motivate the reader to act.

three parts:

Opening: Gains the reader's attention

Body: Details that build the reader's interest and reduces resistance

Closing: Motivates action

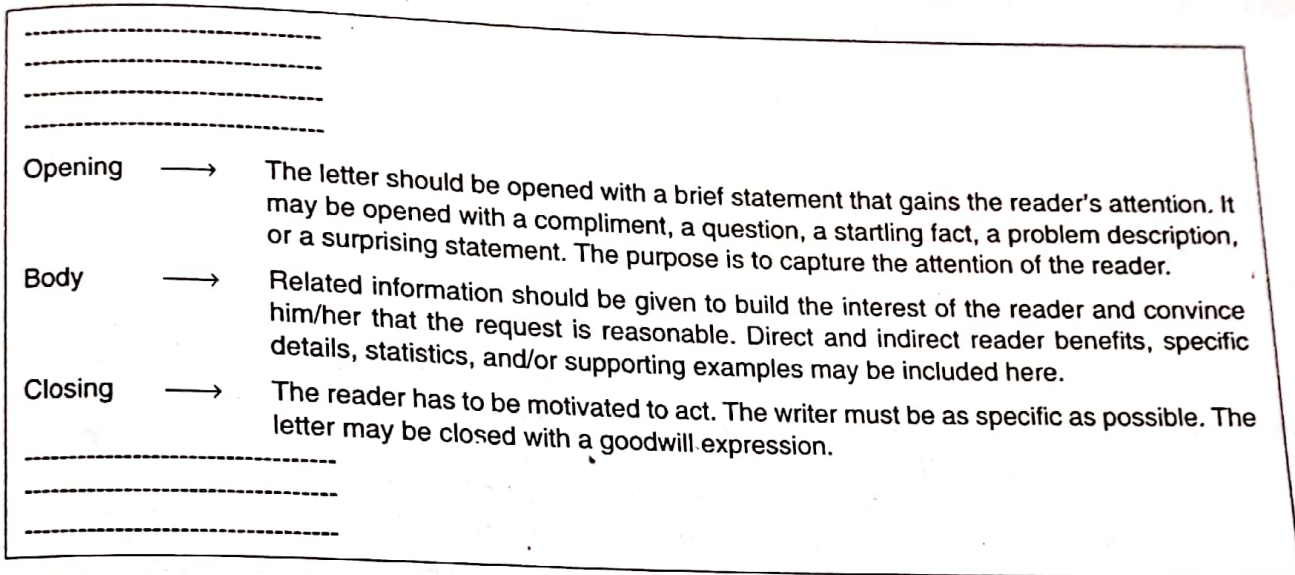


Fig. 20.17 A Letter Urging Action

The letter in Fig. 20.18 illustrates how the writer urges the audience to act:

SMART COUNSELLING SERVICES
C-26, Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016

April 16, 2004
S K Chatterjee
HR Consultant
Allen Management Consultants, Noida

Dear Mr Chatterjee

Our organisation admires your consultancy's expertise in conducting training programmes in marketing management.

The success of your training programme in Export Management has revolutionised the very idea of corporate training. We are now, organising our XIIIth Training Programme on 'Export Marketing' from 24th – 28th May, 2004, at our office. I have been asked by the members of the Training Organising Committee to invite you to give a talk on "New Trends in Export Marketing". By sharing your experiences with a big audience of enthusiastic marketing professionals, you can provide a new dimension to the whole programme.

We will offer you a standard honorarium of Rs 5000 and the normal travelling expenses by air or train (AC I).

I am sending you the list of participants and other programme details. I am sure your presence will make the programme a great success. Please call me at 9835222281 by April 30 to give your approval so that we can make necessary arrangements.

Sincerely,
V S Sood
General Manager

Fig. 20.18 A Letter Urging Action

Progress Check 4

Analyse the following order letter, and revise it making it more direct and effective:

July 4, 2004

The Sales Manager
PCS Industries Ltd
113, Park Street
Flat 2C, Poddar Point,
Kolkata-16

Dear Sir,

We are opening a new branch of our company on July 10, 2004, and we would need six PCs for this branch. I was lucky to see your company's advertisement in the Times of India and was really impressed by your company's long IT experience, large service network, and effective after sales service. We are interested in your Orilion Silver Magic PC model. This model has a Pentium 4 and Processor 2.0 GHs with 43.1 centimetre colour monitor, 128 MB DDR RAM, and 40 GB HDD with 7200 RPM. The catalogue number of this product is PC/21. It costs Rs 23,400. However, there is an extra charge of Rs 2500 for freight, delivery and installation. As mentioned above we are interested in six PCs. We would also pay the extra charge for freight, delivery, and installation. The total amount for six PCs will be Rs 1,55,400. So, we are sending you a crossed cheque for Rs 1,55,400 drawn on State Bank of India.

Please send us the above mentioned item as soon as possible.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

P K Chakarvarthy

COMPLAINT AND ADJUSTMENT LETTERS

Complaint Letters

A complaint letter is an expression of dissatisfaction. The writer complains about something that went wrong, that is, a defective product, bad service, misbehaviour, mistaken billing, guarantee/warranty problems, and so on. As anger can spoil a business message, complaint letters should not vent anger. They should be logical and persuasive based on solid facts and not on personal opinions or emotions.

As the basic objective of every complaint letter is to motivate change, persuasive language has to be used. The key elements in a complaint letter are (1) mentioning the purpose of the letter, (2) explaining what happened, (3) convincing the reader that your complaint is genuine, and (4) motivating the reader to act. A letter of complaint may be organised into three parts, as shown in Figure 20.21.

Complaint letters open with a clear problem statement, support the complaint with data, and close with an expression of goodwill.

Opening → The letter should be opened with a direct statement, which makes it clear that the writer is complaining to the reader about something.

Body → A direct, factual and plain explanation should be given along with relevant information supported by appropriate documents that convinces the reader that the complain is genuine and the claim is legitimate. The tone of the letter should be polite but firm and not apologetic.

Closing → The writer should request the reader to take appropriate action and close the letter with an expression of goodwill.

Fig. 20.19 Complaint Letter

The letter of complaint in Fig. 20.20 illustrates the organisation of ideas:

July 5, 2004

The General Manager
 Dhanbad Telecom District
 Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd
 Dhanbad

Dear Sir,

I would like to point out a billing error in my May and July telephone bills.

According to the May bill (see copy attached), I had to pay an arrear of Rs. 4391/-for January and March bills. As these bills were already paid in April 2004, I pointed out the error to the Accounts officer (TR), Dhanbad, and he assured me that the error would be corrected.

However, in my July bill (copy attached), the same arrear has appeared again. Moreover, my telephone number 2203821 has been disconnected because your computer claims that I have not paid the telephone bills for more than three months.

Please correct this error and instruct the concerned department to reconnect my telephone without any reconnection charge. I have enclosed the receipts for all the bills paid by me since April 2004. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dulal Chakarvarthy
 14, Luby Circular Road
 Dhanbad-826004

Fig. 20.20 Complaint Letter

Adjustment letters open with an appreciation of the problem, explain the situation, promise positive action, and close with a statement of goodwill.

Adjustment Letters

An adjustment letter is an attempt to satisfy an aggrieved customer, who has the potential to damage the goodwill of the company in the market. In order to save the reputation of the company, the letter writer has to express clear understanding

of the problem conveyed by the customer and offer reasonable solutions. The key elements in an adjustment letter are (1) appreciation and understanding, (2) apology and explanation, (3) investigation and action, and (4) expression of goodwill. An adjustment letter may be organized into three parts, as shown in Fig. 20.21.

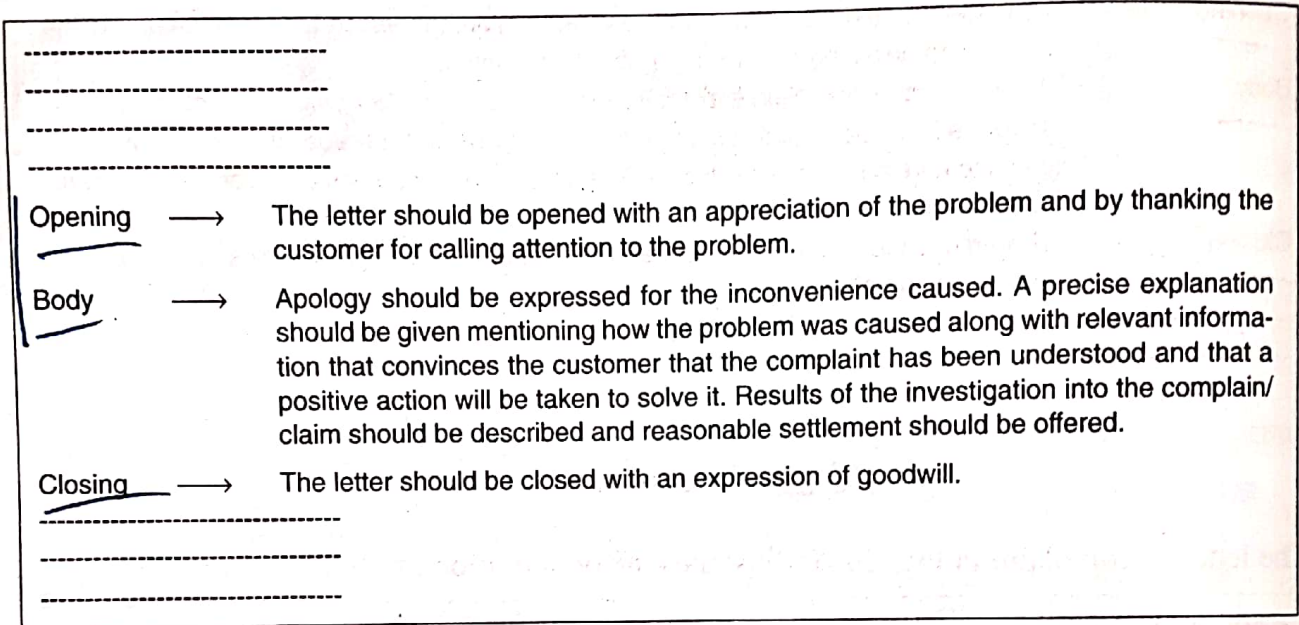


Fig. 20.21 Adjustment Letter

The following sample letter of complaint in Fig. 20.22 illustrates the organisation of ideas:

BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LTD.
Dhanbad Telecom District

July 12, 2004

Mr Dulal Chakarvarthy
14, Luby Circular Road
Dhanbad-826004

Dear Mr Chakarvarthy,

Thank you for your letter dated July 5 pointing out a billing error on your May and July telephone bills.

We are sorry for the inconvenience caused to you. I discussed the problem with our Accounts Officer, who informed me that our computer did not show your payment because you made the payment manually. As the list of manual payments reached the accounts department after the July bills had been finalised, your telephone was disconnected.

The errors have been corrected and you will receive the corrected bills within a week. In the meantime, your telephone line has been reconnected, and you do not have to pay any reconnection charge.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

General Manager
Dhanbad Telecom District
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd
Dhanbad

Fig. 20.22 Adjustmnt Letter

EXERCISES

1. The following statements taken from business letters are wordy, indirect, imprecise, vague or discourteous. Rewrite them so as to make them more effective.
 - (a) It is with great pleasure that we acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter, which you sent on 20/6/2004 and we received on 06/06/2004.
 - (b) We would like to make it very clear to you that our company has already done all it could to repair your PC and that we shall not be able to entertain any further communication in this regard from you, or from anyone on your behalf.
 - (c) It is strange that you took four months to write to us about a billing error on your credit card statements. In view of this delay on your part it would not be possible for us to entertain your request of correcting the error within a week. You took four months to point out the error and we will take at least one month to correct the error.
 - (d) I am sorry to tell you that I have had nothing but trouble with both my new Maruti Alto and your firm since I bought my new car from your firm in February 2004.
 - (e) I am directed to advise you that your arrangements for your journey to Singapore and back have been made. So, I would like to advise you that you should not at all feel anxious about this matter. You should just relax.
 - (f) We sincerely hope you will be good enough to permit us to inform you that we are not in a position to execute your order because we have yet not received your cheque as promised by you in our last meeting. Remember we will not send you your items unless we get the payment in full.
 - (g) This is to lodge a strong protest against the indifference of your company to my complaints about the defects in the air conditioner bought from your agency. At this point, I have just about given up on repairing the AC, and I am tired of writing to you. Unless you take prompt action to correct the AC's defects or refund the purchase price in full, I will be forced to go to the consumer's court.
 - (h) In response to your letter dated May 4, 2004, we are pleased to inform you that consequent to the receipt of your cheque for Rs. 51,990/- we are sending you your HP Pavilion t530i Desktop. As promised, we are also sending you several free gifts, which include a HP Digital Camera P5435, a Britannica Encyclopedia 2004 DVD, and Photo lab software.
 - (i) I am forced to write against the indifference of your bank to customer complaints. I would like to point out an error in my January bank statement that was supposed to be corrected but was not despite several reminders to your office.
 - (j) We are constrained to inform you that we would not be able to give you any discount this year. Although you have made an attempt to make out a case for claiming 20 per cent special discount on all supplies during this year, we are not convinced about what you say in support of your claim.
2. Read the following statements about different types of letters and tick Yes or No against each statement:
 - (a) An inquiry letter is a straightforward written message that asks someone for information.
Yes/No
 - (b) Letters placing order may not specify items or services, quantities, dates, prices, and payment method.
Yes/No