

Checklist for the Business Letters

A. All Letters Should--

1. Follow correct business letter form. See the model on page 18.
2. Abbreviate only names of states and then use standard form. See page 19.
3. Be free of errors. Errors undermine your credibility.
4. Be free of stilted business "jargon," such as "enclosed please find," "as per your request," etc. See pages 20-22.
5. Be concise, not wordy and repetitious.
6. Use "you viewpoint." See pages 20-22.
7. Be completely original--don't copy or lean on words or sentence structure of any of the sample letters in the packet.
8. If you don't use the cases in the packet, be sure to get the situation(s) you are substituting okayed. Be sure to use real facts if you use your own situation.
9. Don't change facts in the cases to make the letters easier to write, such as offering a bigger incentive to the reader in the persuasive request.

B. The Claim Letter Should--

1. Get to the point in the beginning.
2. Completely describe the product or situation the letter concerns.
3. Clearly explain the problem with the product or situation.
4. Make clear what you are asking the reader to do--replace the product, repair it, give you a refund, etc.
5. Give the reader all the information needed to do what you are asking.
6. For requests for a replacement or repair, the letter should give

a date by which you need it, if appropriate.

7. The letter should be polite.

C) The Disappointing Letter Should--

1. Open with a "buffer" that is on the subject of the letter, paves the way for your explanation, and is positive but does not give the impression you will do what the reader is asking.

It should never begin with the negative information.

2. Carefully explain why you must take an action that may not please the reader, such as not granting a request.

3. Show you have given the reader's request or situation careful consideration.

4. Word the "bad news" as positively as possible and avoid negative language like "cannot," "won't," "unfortunately," "we regret to inform you," etc.

It should state what you can do and not what you cannot do--for example, "We make refunds only on products returned unused" instead of "We do not make refunds on products that have been used."

5. If possible, offer an alternative to what the reader wants-- a "consolation prize."

If possible, hook the disappointing news to a benefit--for example, "In the interest of the children's safety, we feel it is best to postpone your kindergarten class's field trip to our dairy."

6. End positively, not with a negative tone or negative information.

D) The Persuasive Request Should--

1. Begin with an opening that is related to the subject of the letter and, ideally, will get the reader's attention. The letter should not open with the request.

2. Provide specific, detailed information about the organization, cause, project, etc. that the letter concerns--facts, figures, examples, a story if appropriate. Specific information is persuasive.

3. Make clear exactly what you are asking the reader to do--make a donation, give time, etc.

If you are asking for a donation, be specific about how the money will be used.

If you are asking the reader to volunteer, explain exactly what you are asking him/her to do, how much time it will take, etc.

4. Give the reader all the information he/she needs to do what you are asking.

5. Make it as easy as possible for the reader to do what you are asking.

6. Offer the reader a benefit of some kind in return for doing what you are asking.

7. Close on a positive note, with an additional motivator, not with the request or a flat statement like an offer to answer questions.

8. The persuasive request should not be a sales letter or an invitation to join a group.

BUSINESS LETTERS
Full Block Letter Format

2200 Moska Road
Ortega, IN 52101

May 22, 2015

(Leave one blank line.)

Mr. Nathaniel R. Meece

General Manager

Pendleton & Associates

3260 Eighth Avenue

Seattle, WA 98122

(Leave one blank line.)

Dear Mr. Meece:

(Leave one blank line.)

Writer's address and date. Single space.

Reader's name, title and address. Single space.

Salutation followed by a colon

(Single space within paragraphs.)

(Leave one blank line.)

(Leave one blank line.)

Sincerely, _____ Complimentary close

(Leave 3 blank lines.) _____ Writer signs here

Hamilton Wolvercott _____ Typed name of the writer

(Leave one blank line.)

cc: Carlotta Dupres _____ Names of anyone else who will receive copies of the letter

In the body of the letter, single space within paragraphs and leave one blank line between paragraphs. Do not indent the first lines of paragraphs. Start them right at the left margin.

SAMPLE CLAIM LETTER



Wolfestone Corporation
110 Tansy Drive
Bartholomew, Ohio 61984
January 22, 1999

Mr. Paul Stanley
Customer Service Representative
White Lightning Fire Extinguishers
291 Caldwell Drive
Dark Oaks, Louisiana 46952

Dear Mr. Stanley:

Identify the
transaction.

Yesterday, we received a shipment of 19 White Lightning fire extinguishers (Invoice No. 213R) from your company. After examining the shipment, we discovered that 12 of the 19 fire extinguishers are badly damaged.

Clearly explain the
problem.

The delivery boxes seem to have been dropped. Twelve of the extinguishers are deeply dented and acid has leaked from them, corroding their chrome finish. The units cannot be used.

Explain what the
reader wants.

To comply with safety regulations, we must have replacement extinguishers at our plant by Tuesday, so please get 12 new units to us by then. Also, please tell me what I should do with the damaged items. We would be happy to return them to you.

Courteous
closing

We have been doing business with your company for seven years and have been extremely pleased with the products and service provided to us. I am sure you will replace the extinguishers with your usual efficiency. If you have any questions, please call me at 502-781-9167.

Sincerely,

Katherine St. Claire

Katherine St. Claire

EXAMPLE--EFFECTIVE DISAPPOINTING MESSAGE LETTER

Tact and strategy mark this refusal, in which an office manager turns down an author's request. The author has asked for model letters that can be used as examples in a correspondence guidebook. Complying with her request would require this company's staff to examine 30,000 letters!

Wolfestone Corporation
1212 Bear Creek Drive
Bartholomew, Ohio
December 12, 1998

Professor Faye Torby
College of Business
Duprez University
Bartholomew, Ohio 46952

Dear Professor Torby:

Your book Writing Business Letters Made Easy, which you described in your December 1 letter, will provide valuable help to business executives.

As you mentioned, the success of your book depends on your obtaining a variety of well-written business letters to use as illustrations. Selecting excellent examples will require someone with expertise in evaluating business writing, and examining the more than 30,000 letters in our files will be very time consuming. For these reasons, I'm sure you will understand why you would need to review the letters yourself. We will be glad to make our files available to you and your assistants, give you working space, and cooperate with you in any way we can.

If you would like to use our files, please call me at 333-4444. We look forward to using your book.

Sincerely,

Pete Hastings
Pete Hastings,
Office Manager

On-subject beginning--
ties in with request

sets up explanation

You-viewpoint
explanation

Refusal logically flows
from explanation
Note positive
wording of refusal

Goodwill close--
on the subject and pleasant

SAMPLE PERSUASIVE REQUEST WITH GOOD PERSUASIVE DETAILS

Rider Hall, Room 9D
Duprez University
Bartholomew, Ohio 46952
October 30, 1998

Mayor Timothy Buffer
City Hall
1212 Garden Circle
Bartholomew, Ohio 46952

Dear Mayor Buffer:

Tonight, most of us will go home to a warm dinner and a comfortable bed. However, there are other people in our community who are not so lucky.

We who live in smaller towns often think homelessness is a problem only in large cities. The fact is that the Welfare Department estimates there are 650 homeless people here in Bartholomew. They live under bridges, in abandoned cars, and in empty buildings with no heat or running water. Some of them are children. Many of these people were once productive citizens who lost their jobs through no fault of their own and in turn lost their homes. This is where Shantytown comes in.

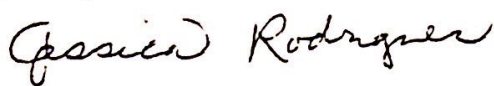
On November 20, about 100 students, faculty, and administrators from Duprez University, along with a dozen volunteers from Habitat for Humanity, will build a "Shantytown" out of cardboard boxes and spend the night living as the homeless live. We will eat out of cans warmed over open barrel fires and sleep in the boxes. Each person participating will take pledges. Donations collected this way will be given to Habitat for Humanity.

Habitat for Humanity is a national non-profit organization that builds homes for the less fortunate. In the past three years, the Bartholomew chapter has built 20 homes for families in our community. The families themselves are required to put in many hours of labor helping to build their houses. Since funds for Habitat for Humanity depend on volunteers like you and me, it is vital that all of us help.

Mayor Buffer, what we ask of you is you! We are asking you to move to Shantytown for the night of November 20. Of course, you would not be asked to get pledges. The positive impact your presence would provide would last well beyond this one night. If people in Bartholomew see their mayor taking part in Shantytown, they will realize that there must be a real problem with homelessness in our town.

As you can see, your coming to Shantytown could provide one of the first steps to ending homelessness in our city. Please confirm your reservation at Shantytown by calling 452-COLD. If you would like more information, please contact me at the above number. Thank you for your concern for Habitat for Humanity, our community, and the homeless that will have a warm shelter because others helped.

Sincerely,



Jessica Rodriguez
Duprez University Shantytown Coordinator

CLAIM LETTER

5519 Thomas Court
Bowling Green, KY 42101
September 19, 1998

Buick Motor Division
Ms. Kaye Kirby
Customer Assistance Center
902 East Hamilton Avenue
Flint, MI 48550

Dear Ms. Kirby:

On February 13, 1998, I purchased a 1998 Buick Regal GranSport from Arlington Motors, Inc. in Bowling Green, KY. The car is a four door with a V-6 engine. The model number is F54 and the vehicle identification number is 2G4WF54L6N1455346. A full warranty remains on the car until February 2000.

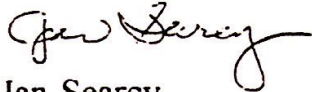
I first used the air conditioner in my car in June. At this time, I used my car only to go to work and back and to run errands in town. The car was not operated for more than thirty minutes at a time. Toward the end of June, I noticed that my back floorboards were slightly damp. I thought the dampness might be from the humidity. However, in July I traveled to Virginia (a twelve hour drive) and when I stopped for the night and unpacked the car, I noticed the floorboards were saturated. The water was standing approximately one inch high. I was on a military assignment and had no alternative but to vacuum the water out and let the car sit for the next ten days. I had the same problem on the way home.

I took the car to Arlington Motors, Inc. on July 30 as soon as I returned from Virginia. They examined the car and decided that the evaporator tube had clogged, causing the water to drain onto the back floorboards. On August 1, I took the car in for servicing. They kept my car for the day and assured me they had removed the clogging debris. The repairs and labor were covered under warranty.

However, I do not feel they adequately fixed my car because I drove it to Illinois two weeks later and I had the same problem: the water was standing on my floorboards. On August 29 I once again took my car to Arlington for service. At this time I asked that the carpet be replaced because it had stained from the water and it smelled very musty. They refused to change the carpet and replied that baking soda would minimize the smell and that they were sorry about the stains.

The car seems to be repaired now, but I feel that my carpet should be replaced. The car is a 1998 and cost \$23,000. For this price, I should not have to put up with a stained carpet and a musty smell. The problem was a defect of the car and was in no way my fault. For these two reasons, I would like you to consider my request and act promptly. I would prefer that another Buick dealership fulfill the request because Arlington Motors, Inc. does not seem to care about customer service. I would like for this matter to be resolved within the next two weeks. You can reach me during the day at (502) 781-7281 ext. 482 or at home at (502) 781-7458 if you need any further explanations or information. If I do not hear from you, I will call you next week.

Sincerely,



Jan Searcy

DISAPPOINTING MESSAGE

Comet Carpet Cleaners
720 Flute Road
Simpsonville, SC 90277
January 17, 1999

Mr. Randolph Bunner
421 Primrose Lane
Simpsonville, SC 90277

Dear Mr. Bunner:

You are right to expect the highest quality service from Comet carpet cleaning products. All our cleaners come with two-year warranties covering any malfunction except those caused by accidents or misuse.

Good customer service is important to us, so we carefully examined the Model P-4 cleaner you returned to us last week. Our technician found several deposits of water buildup inside the machine, showing that it had been submerged.

If the cleaner remains on the small roll-about platform sold with it, shampoo subs or water cannot enter the unit. We believe the platform on your machine has been removed and, as a result, water and suds have entered the unit. In all ads for Comet products and on the metal plate attached to the side of each cleaner, there is a clear warning that the machine cannot be submerged.

Although this unit is beyond repair, to show our appreciation for the years you have been our customer we will take the cleaner as a trade on a new Model P-4, counting it as one-third of the purchase price. The regular price of a new cleaner is \$199, but you would pay only \$133. You will be glad to know that this new model is permanently attached to a small, roll-about platform.

To receive your new machine by next day delivery, please return the enclosed postcard.

Sincerely,

Victoria D. Fred

Victoria Fred
Service Manager

SAMPLE PERSUASIVE REQUEST

The Salvation Army
401 West Main Street
Bowling Green, KY 42101
August 24, 1998

Dr. Renee Findley
3000 Highland Drive
Bowling Green, KY 42104

Dear Dr. Findley:

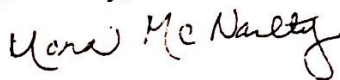
Every day there are people right here in Bowling Green without electricity, adequate clothing, or safe shelter. The Salvation Army works to provide them with these and other necessities, but we need your help.

Established in the United States in 1880, the Salvation Army is a non-profit international religious and charitable organization. Its mission is to promote the spiritual, moral and physical well-being of all individuals in need, regardless of their race, sex, or religion. The assistance and programs available in Bowling Green through the Salvation Army include free clothing and food, emergency temporary shelter, assistance with rent, utilities and prescription medication, a senior citizens club, Alcoholics Anonymous, and employment counseling. These and other Salvation Army services are described in detail in the enclosed pamphlet.

With a donation to the Salvation Army, you can know that people less fortunate than you are able to have warmth, food, and shelter this winter. Ninety percent of the money you donate stays in Bowling Green, supporting the various programs. The other ten percent helps operate the Salvation Army's national headquarters.

The motto of the Salvation Army is "Sharing is Caring." If you care, won't you please share by sending a check in the enclosed envelope? A donation of any amount would be appreciated and helpful to the Salvation Army and your community. You will make a difference in the lives of others who need you.

Sincerely,



Mona McNaulty
Salvation Army volunteer