

CHAPTER SIX

PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

The Basis of Correspondence

Correspondence is a technical term used for the official or business letters that someone sends or receives. The major reason behind business correspondence is communication. Just as communication is vital to individual and social life, so is it to the life of a business. For efficient transaction of modern business in an organisation, there should be adequate communication within and outside the organisation.

There is no doubt that the success or failure of modern businesses depends largely on the effectiveness of correspondence. While effective correspondence can improve the performance and output of an organisation, ineffectual correspondence can also impede the progress and expansion of an organisation. It is therefore important for any business person to master the skills of writing effective business correspondence. While personal correspondences could be written haphazardly, business correspondences must follow standard formats for them to be effective. Like every form of written document, business correspondence must necessarily pass through the standard writing stages, namely, the planning stage, assembling of information, writing an outline, writing the first draft, editing the first draft and writing the final draft.

Functions of Business Correspondence

There are several functions of correspondence in an organisation. Correspondence can serve the following purposes:

Information

Generally every form of correspondence is used for the dissemination of information within and outside an organisation. Because an organisation is made up of several departments, communication therefore becomes a tool for coordinating the activities of various departments within an organisation. Communication can be used within an organisation for informative purposes such as letter of appointment, letter of admission, matriculation or graduation list, staff manual, survey plan, price list, business proposal, etc. Outside an organisation, correspondence can be used to make an enquiry or respond to an enquiry; it can also be a letter of application, etc.

Persuasion

Apart from providing information, correspondence can be used within and outside an organisation as a tool of persuasion. In other words, business organisations may use correspondence to persuade people to embrace or accept a new product or idea. This is often done by the public relations department of an organisation and advertising industries. Some government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also use correspondence as a tool for persuasion. For example, they may use correspondence to persuade people to embrace modern farming or birth control methods or to persuade them to cultivate a hygienic and healthy lifestyle. In some cultures which frown at girl-child education, government agencies and NGOs have tried to use different kinds of correspondences to persuade people to send their female wards to school rather than give them out in marriage at a tender age.

Interaction and Integration

Correspondence has also been used over the years as a tool of interaction and integration within and outside an organisation. For example, many large organisations have an effective feedback system which is used to communicate the feelings of the staff to the management within an organisation. This feedback helps the management a lot in decision making.

Sometimes, the feedback system could be extended to members of the public in form of questionnaires. After such interactions with both the staff or members of the public, the management is able to make effective decisions that will improve the status and output of the organisation.

Again, correspondence can also be used to induct new members of staff in an organisation for the purpose of integration. This is often done in form of in-house training or orientation. During this process, the newly employed members of staff are acquainted with the rules and regulations of the organisation.

Regulation

Another important function of correspondence in an organisation is to communicate the rules and regulations of an organisation to both members of that organisation and the general public. This form of business correspondence is usually documented in the constitution, terms of condition and articles of association. Sometimes, these rules and regulations are communicated in the form of a warning such as “Keep Off, Danger Zone”, “Out of Bounds”, “Staff Only”, etc. “NO LOITTERING, NO NOISE”

Relaxation and Entertainment

Apart from using correspondence in the strict sense as mentioned above, correspondence can also be used in an organisation for the purpose of relaxation and entertainment. Because of the stress that usually characterises business environments, modern business organisations have used correspondence as a tool for relieving stress after a period of hectic business activities. For example, many organisations often organise annual end-of-year events where popular comedians and musicians are invited to treat members of staff of that organisation with light-hearted jokes and music in order to make them feel relaxed.

Types of Business Correspondence

The Letter

The letter is the oldest and commonest form of business communication. Generally, there are three types of letters: formal, semi-formal and informal. Among the three types of letters, formal letters are often used in business correspondence. Formal letters are official and non interpersonal letters. Unlike the semi-formal and informal letters, there is no noticeable intimacy in formal letters. It is a letter that addresses official issues. Examples of formal letters include Letter of Application, Letter of Complaint, Letter of Apology, Letter of Condolence, Letter of Invitation, Letter of Request, etc.

A Memorandum (Memo)

A memorandum, or memo for short, is an internal means of communication within an organization or establishment. It is structurally different from a letter. A memo is usually divided into five parts: *the heading, direction, subject, body and the closing.*

Structure of a Memorandum

The Heading: This is the letterhead of the memo pad which carries the name of the organization or department within an organization. A memo has no salutation.

Direction: This shows where the memo comes from and its destination along with the date. The simplest format is:

From: *To:*
.....

Subject: This serves as the title of the memo and it could be written in upper case or by capitalizing the first letters of the content words.

Closing: A memo is often closed with the signature of the sender followed by his/her name and designation. The memo may also contain only the signature and the official designation but not the personal name of the sender.

Samples of Memoranda

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: The Exam Officer **To:** The Dean
10th February, 2009

Subject: FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION

The First Semester Examination will start in the next three weeks. And it is necessary for the Faculty to put necessary structures in place for the success of the exam.

Part of this preparation is that students must submit their course forms two weeks before the exam and their dockets must be issued a week before the exam.

Thanks

(Signature)
Exams Officer

D. F. DAF INONE
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS AND VALUERS

MEMORANDUM

To: Senior Consultant

Date: 25th November, 2009

Subject: Annual Staff Audit

From: CEO

This is to inform all members of staff that there will be an Annual Staff Audit beginning from January 10, 2009. The exercise will last for two weeks. All members of staff are advised to be present at their duty post during this period.

Thank you.

David Dafinone

The Electronic Mail

There is no doubt that science and technology has enhanced business correspondence in recent times. Because of the growing popularity of the Internet and the telephone, business correspondence has extended from the traditional letter writing to include electronic mails and short messaging systems (SMS). As in the letter communication, e-mail as a means of business communication also has a standard which must be mastered by people who are in one form of business or other.

E-mail etiquette is often a commonly overlooked part of the business and professional world despite being an important part of conveying a professional image. E-mails written to friends and family will be less formal and will not need to follow any particular guidelines or rules, but when writing to someone at a professional level, the following guidelines and rules should be taken into account:

- Use a descriptive subject line, avoid leaving it blank or putting an irrelevant or general subject.
- Address the recipient by name to add a personal touch to your letter.
- **DONOTUSEALLCAPS!**
- Avoid over using punctuation marks!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Avoid using abbreviations, such as IMHO (in my humble opinion) or TTYL (talk to you later), not everyone is familiar with them.
- Skip a line when starting a new paragraph and avoid using tabs to signify a new paragraph, different e-mail programs read tabs in different ways.
- Avoid using HTML in your e-mails, not everyone can view it and it takes away from the professional image of the letter.
- If you are sending an attachment, make note of it and describe what the attachment is for in the body, some people are very wary of attachments due to the threat of computer viruses.
- Keep your emails as concise as possible without leaving out any important information.
- Keep usage of quoted text to a minimum.
- Always leave a signature line, don't assume the person already knows who you are.

- Do not keep on sending the same message to the same person over and over again, if they don't respond after a few days, send them an e-mail enquiring if they received your first e-mail.
- Use the spell-checker, proofread and revise your letter after it's done.
- Use threads, if you get a message from someone and you are going to respond, don't send a new message, simply hit the reply option on your e-mail, this keeps the original subject line with "Re:" in front of it.
- If you are sending out an e-mail to a large private list, don't use CC: (carbon copy) use BCC: (blind carbon copy) to protect the addresses of the recipients.
- Remember most e-mails are never completely private; there is always a chance of someone else besides the intended recipient reading it, so avoid writing any personal attacks which are unprofessional, to begin with.
- When reading e-mails, treat them as if they were private messages (unless you know you are allowed to share it with others).
- When you receive a message, reply to it as soon as you have time to.

The Short Messaging Service (SMS)

Like the e-mail messages, short message service or SMS has gradually become one of the means of business communication. SMS is often sent in form of a text message to an individual or organisation via the telephone line. An SMS message can also be sent from the Internet to a mobile phone. Almost the same social etiquette which is applicable to the E-mail message is also applicable to the SMS, but there are two important things to note while sending an SMS as a means of business correspondence.

The first is that the language should be formal. Avoid ridiculous abbreviating codes such as "2" for "to", "4" for "for", "b4" for "before", "c u" for "see you", etc. These abbreviations do not only make your letter look childish but also reduces the seriousness of the message.

Except for the purpose of communicating general information, avoid the so-called bulk messages which are often too impersonal. Try by all means to address your recipient personally. Many people feel insulted when they discover that the same message they have received was also sent to many other people.

Components of Modern Business Letter

Every modern business letter must have the following components:

1. **The Letterhead:** This is a specially designed paper with the name, logo, contact addresses and telephone numbers of the company printed at the top of the paper. Most modern business correspondence is typed on the company's letterhead which also serves as the address of the writer. A letterhead portrays the image of the company and makes the letter more professional and authentic.
2. **The Date:** Put the date on which the letter is written in the format Month-Day-Year i.e. August 30, 2009 (American) or 30th August, 2009 (British). Skip a line between the date and the inside address (some people skip 3 or 4 lines after the date).
3. **The Reference:** Since many letters get to an organisation on a daily basis, it is advisable to include a reference in order to be able to retrieve letters from a filing system when the need arises. The reference is normally the initials of the person who dictates the letter and the person who types it. It may also include the subject of the letter in abbreviated form and the file number, e.g. SY/JJ/SE/05.
4. **The Inside Address:** This refers to the address of the person you are writing to along with the name of the recipient, their title and company name. If you are not sure who the letter should be addressed to, leave it blank, but try to put in a title, i.e. "Director of Human Resources". Skip a line between the date and the salutation. Remember that your address is not needed if the letter is printed on paper with the company letterhead already on it. The return address of the sender of the letter so the recipient can easily find out where to send a reply to. Skip a line between your address and the date.
5. **Special Markings or Attention Line:** The special markings or attention line is not usually needed except when you want to address the letter to a particular member of the organisation. This should be typed in capital letters and placed above the inside address, e.g.

FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR. ADEBAYO BAKO
PERSONNEL MANAGER
BAKO COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED
2 IWO ROAD
IBADAN
OYO STATE

6. **The Salutation:** This is a polite way of opening a business letter. Some common examples are Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name:, Dear Director of Department Name: or To Whom It May Concern: if recipient's name is unknown. Since "To Whom it May Concern" sounds so indifferent, it is better to know the gender of the recipient before hand. Even if you do not know the gender of the recipient, you may use Dear Sir or Dear Madam instead of combining Dear Sir/Madam. Note that there is a colon or a comma after the salutation. Skip a line between the salutation and the subject line or body.
7. **The Subject Heading:** It is important that your letter has a heading. This makes it easier for the recipient to find out what the letter is about. If your letter does not have a subject heading, it may end up in a trash can. If you are replying to a letter, you may start with "RE:" before the subject, e.g. RE: Your Order. Skip a line between the subject line and the body.
8. **Introductory Paragraph:** The introductory paragraph is the window to your message. You must take time to write it properly. After reading the introductory paragraph, your reader should be able to know the subject of your letter. Avoid such childish and personal expression such as "I am happy to write you this letter". After the opening sentence, you should mention your training if the correspondence is a letter of employment, e.g. *I am a graduate of English from the University of Lagos*. Put your experience if any. If you are replying to a letter, you may start by acknowledging that you have received the letter.
9. **The Body:** The body is where you write the content of the letter. The paragraphs should be single spaced with a skipped line

between each paragraph. Skip a line between the end of the body and the closing. Make sure that your message is clear and straight to the point. Avoid flowery language and clichés. There should also be a logical flow of your thought in the letter. In other words, there should be elements of coherence in your letter. Remember that the shorter your letter the better since most people do not have time to read long-winded letters.

10. **The Conclusion:** If the introductory paragraph is the entrance to your letter, the concluding paragraph is definitely the exit from your letter. For this reason, extra care must be taken to write an effective conclusion. The content of your conclusion could be the summary of your message, a reiteration of the important point or an action that needs to be taken. If the letter is an application letter, the conclusion should show the optimism of the applicant and a readiness to attend an interview if need be, e.g. *I will be grateful if my application is given favourable consideration and I look forward to attending an oral interview if you so wish.*
11. **The Complimentary Close:** Let the reader know that you have finished your letter; usually end with “Yours sincerely”, “Sincerely yours” or “Yours faithfully”. Note that there is a comma after the end of the closing and only the first word in the closing is capitalized. Skip 3-4 lines between the closing and the printed name, so that there is room for the signature.
12. **Signature/Designation:** The signature serves as an endorsement of the letter. In some cases, the designation or department of the writer is indicated beneath the name and “Miss or Mrs.” is added if the writer is a woman, e.g.

Yours sincerely,

Nwosu Ukamaka (Mrs.)
Sales Manager

13. **Notes and Enclosures:** If the letter contains other document other than the letter itself your letter will include the word "Enclosure." If there is more than one you would type, "Enclosures (#)" with the # being the number of other documents enclosed that doesn't include the letter itself. Enclosures are usually written in abbreviations 'Enc' or 'Encs' immediately after the signature block.

Styles of Business Letter

There are four basic styles of business letters: the slanted, block, semi-block and the indented styles. Among all these styles, the block style is the most popular and easiest style.

Slanted Style of a Letter of Employment

23, Capitol Road,
Agege.
30th November, 2009.

The General Manager,
Cadbury Nigeria Limited,
Ikeja.

Dear Sir,

Application for the Post of a Sales Manager

I am interested in applying for the sales manager position recently advertised in The Guardian Newspaper. The skills I have developed from my work experience and academic background as a graduate of Business Administration from the University of Lagos support my candidacy for the announced position.

As you can see from my resumé, the internship I had with the Nigerian Bottling Corporation provided an opportunity for me to gain practical experience in account maintenance and cold-calling new accounts. In

addition, I have worked as a waiter for the past four years, learning firsthand how to effectively deal with customers and their demands. I have been formally commended by management several times, being named "Employee of the Month."

I would very much like an opportunity to discuss your specific needs and my overall abilities regarding the announced position. You can reach me on 08080809900. Thank you for considering me for this position. I will be available for an interview any time you wish.

Yours faithfully,

ikKI
Idowu Kola

Block Style of a Letter of Employment

23, Capitol Road,
Agege,
Lagos.

30th November, 2009.

The General Manager,
Procter and Gamble,
Ibadan,
Oyo.

Dear Sir,

Application for the Post of a Sales Manager

I am interested in applying for the sales manager position recently advertised in The Guardian Newspaper. The skills I have developed from my work experience and academic background as a graduate of Business Administration from the University of Lagos support my candidacy for the announced position.

As you can see from my resumé, the internship I had with the Nigerian Bottling Corporation provided an opportunity for me to gain practical experience with in account maintenance and cold-calling new accounts. In addition, I have worked as a waiter for the past four years, learning firsthand how to effectively deal with customers and their demands. I have been formally commended by management several times, being named "Employee of the Month."

I would very much like an opportunity to discuss your specific needs and my overall abilities regarding the announced position. You can reach me on 08080809900. Thank you for considering me for this position. I will be available for an interview any time you wish.

Yours faithfully,

ikKI
Idowu Kola

Semi-block Style of a Letter of Felicitation

BELLVIEW AIRLINES
66, Opebi Road, Ikeja.

November 30th, 2009

Dr. Mavis Jaiyeola,
Chairman, Mavis Group Limited,
56, Campbell Street,
Lagos.

Dear Dr. Mavis,

Letter of Congratulations

Please accept our heartiest congratulations from Bellview Airlines on your recent nomination for the National Award.

I just heard the news today from the national radio that you have been short-listed for the national honour.

I am so proud of you. As you know, I have been a long-time promoter of your work, and in my mind it is about time your contributions to the development of this nation were fully recognized. In fact, I believe that your nomination for the National Award is long overdue.

Once again Dr. Mavis, our sincere congratulations on your nomination. Just being nominated for the prestigious National Award is an honour in itself. I will be keeping my fingers crossed for you until they announce the winner on January 1st.

Sincere best wishes,

[Signature]

Oba Azubuike
Public Affairs Manager

Indented Style of a letter of Condolence

METROPOLITAN HOTELS LIMITED
1, Murtala Muhammed Highway,
P. M. B. 1071,
Calabar.

October 15, 2009.

Mrs. Johnson,
54, Edgerly Road,
Calabar.

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

On behalf of the management and staff of Metropolitan Hotels Limited, I write to express sincere sympathy to you over the loss of your loving son.

I want to say that the loss of Stephen Jnr. also deals a great blow to our company as it does to your family.

As a corporate entity, we shall be very willing to assist you financially and materially any time you need our help.

Once again, accept our heart-felt sympathy.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Eyo Ita
Public Relations Officer

Layout/Punctuation

Addresses and Date: There must be the addresses of the addressee or the writer of the business letter and the address of the recipient. The address of the writer is normally written at the top right-corner of the letter either in block or slant forms. The block style may be used (where the addresses of the addressee and the recipient can be on the same side of the paper, usually the left margin). Make sure that you do not start your address with your name on top. The standard is that the writer's name should come at the end of the letter after the subscription. It is therefore right to start your address thus:

From Kola Idowu
23, Capitol Road,
Agege.
30th November, 2009.

Again, it is wrong to write both the addresses of the writer and that of the recipient on the same line thus:

The General Manager,
Cadbury Nigeria Limited,
Ikeja.

23, Capitol Road,
Agege.
30th November, 2009.

The date of a formal letter should be in words not in figures and should be properly punctuated along with the addresses as in the above. It will be wrong to present the addresses and the date thus:

23, Capitol Road.
Agege.
30112009.

The General Manager.
Cadbury Nigeria Limited,
Ikeja.

Salutation: Salutation follows immediately after the address, e.g. *Dear Sir/Madam*. Remember to use “Madam” but not “Ma” because “ma” is not English. Make sure you do not write the heading of the letter before the Dear Sir or Dear Madam as shown below.

Application for the Post of a Sales Manager

Dear Sir,

The right thing is to write the salutation before the heading, e.g.

Dear Sir,

Application for the Post of a Sales Manager

The Title: The heading or the title follows the salutation. The title could be general or specific, depending on if the letter is solicited or unsolicited. A solicited application letter is a response to a vacancy advertised while an unsolicited application letter is not based on any vacancy advertised. The title could be presented in upper case (capital letters) or capitalization of the first letters of the content words i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs.

Again, the designation and all the content words in the heading must begin with a capital letter. The heading used to be underlined in the past except it is written in upper case but with the aid of the computer which enables the heading to be bold; the underlining method is gradually becoming obsolete.

The Body: After the opening sentence, the writer should mention his/her training if the correspondence is a letter of employment, e.g. *I am a graduate of English from the University of Lagos.* Put your experience, if any.

Conclusion: The conclusion should show the optimism of the applicant, as in: *I will be grateful if my application is given favourable consideration.*

Closing (Subscription): The standard way of closing a formal letter is “Yours faithfully” or “Yours sincerely” followed by signature and name. Make sure that you do not start “faithfully” or “sincerely” with a capital “F” or “S” as shown below:

Yours Faithfully/Sincerely,
ikKI
Idowu Kola

Remember that it is wrong to end a formal letter with the following subscriptions which are reserved for private letters:

Yours ever
Yours affectionately
Your loving one

There are two ways of punctuating a business letter full punctuation and open punctuation. As the name implies, full punctuation means that all punctuation marks are shown while open punctuation means that not all punctuation marks are shown. In the open punctuation style, there are no punctuation marks in the inside address and there are no commas after the salutation or complimentary close. Most modern letters are written in the open punctuation style.

Language

There is no doubt that language plays a very important role in business communications. In other words, language is the tool with which business correspondences are created. The best language to use in business communication is plain language, the type used in conversation. This will make your message natural, courteous and friendly. Although formality or informality in business communication can be overlooked if the message is clear, mechanical accuracy and good grammatical construction cannot be compromised. For this reason, you should be able to construct your sentences correctly.

Again, avoid long words, expressions, sentences and paragraphs. Remember that you are not writing a business correspondence to impress anybody but to communicate serious information. For this reason, flowery language and excessive poetry or oratory should be avoided at all cost. The rule is that you should keep whatever you are writing short and simple. Use short words like *buy*, *try* and *start* instead of *purchase*, *endeavour* and *commence*.

Formality versus Informality

Ordinarily, language could be formal or informal in both spoken and written forms. Informal language is associated with personal or private conversations because it is colloquial in style, while formal language is often associated with public communication, the written form, because it is serious in nature. Although it has traditionally been believed that the language of business communication should be strictly formal, modern trend in business has proved that it is not good for the language of business communication to be too formal, elevated and pompous.

Again, avoid the use of technical language which can only be understood by a few people in that field. Avoid formality and familiarity. Courtesy means showing respect to the feelings of your reader.

Politeness, Courtesy and Civility

Since communication involves transferring your thoughts and ideas to another person, care should be taken to use language tactically to deal with both the person and the situation. Since the sole aim of business is to make profit, it is advisable to use language politely in order to keep your existing customers and to win prospective ones. Politeness in language use is not only a cultural issue but also a social issue. Politeness in language use entails the use of appropriate tone, modal auxiliaries, indirect and tentative questions as well as the use of the word “please”. The tone of your message is very important. Your business communication is effective when you say exactly what you want to say using an appropriate tone.

Although there is standard use of language in most business correspondences, handling letters of complaint needs extra care in the use of language. The maxim that the customer is always right is important when it comes to handling letters of complaint. No matter how angry you are, try to use polite language to pacify your aggrieved customers. This is important because the way you treat a customer will either send a good or bad signal to other potential customers. If you are courteous in the use of language, you can refuse a request without killing the future of the business or ruining a friendship. You don't need to use “thank you” to show courtesy. The entire content of your message should show courtesy. In fact, excessive use of the expression “thank you” could be irritating to many people. “Thank you” has become one of the clichés of business correspondence which need to be jettisoned.

Being courteous implies that

- you reply promptly to all communications. If you cannot answer immediately, you may have to write a brief note and explain why. This will create goodwill between your organisation and your customers
- you understand the point of view of your reader
- you do not cause an offence by replying to an offensive letter in a similar tone even when you feel that you have been misunderstood.

Again, in the case of a letter of complaint or protest written by a subordinate to the boss or management, care must be taken to use language politely not to defame or attack an individual in particular. After all, if you are angry, it means that you are angry at what someone has done or has not done but definitely not at the person. There are cases where some members of staff in an organisation write a letter of protest which in turn earns them letters of dismissal because of their impolite use of language.

According to Taylor (2004), the tone of your message reflects the spirit in which you put your message across. When writing a complaint or replying to one try to convey your message in a way so as not to be rude or offensive. For example, instead of saying “We cannot do anything about your problem”, you may say “Unfortunately we are unable to help you on this occasion”. Remember that it is the tone of your message that gives non-verbal clues such as eye contact, gestures, and inflections to your reader. Try to avoid offensive expressions such as:

- Your failure to reply...
- You did not see...
- It would have been better if you...
- We must insist...
- This is not our fault...

Civility in the use of language entails that you avoid unnecessary long-winded old-fashioned phrases such as “we are in receipt of your letter of 20 September”, “enclosed herewith you will find...” etc. Instead, you should use modern terminologies such as “Thank you for your letter of 20 September” and “I enclose...” Although it was fashionable in the past to use passive sentences in business correspondence, the trend is gradually becoming old-fashioned. Instead of saying “Some engineers will be sent to your house to install your new router”, say “We will send our engineers to your house to install your new router”.

Closely related to civility in language use is the use of long phrases where one word would have been more appropriate. There should be economy of

words in order to make your message more effective. Even if you have the time to write long-winded phrases, your reader may not have the time to read such verbosity. For example, rather than say “we would like to ask you...” you should simply say “please...”

Since the business world is authenticated by facts and figures, you should endeavour to reflect such in your language. You should include all the essential information in your message rather than leave them to your recipient to guess. For example, rather than saying “Our Sales Manager will contact you soon”, you should say “Mr. Bassey Asuquo, our Sales Manager will contact you soon”.

Having mastered the use of appropriate language to communicate your message, you must try to be consistent so that you do not betray your personality and integrity. For example, if you happen to reply to two separate but similar complaints differently, if the two parties come to know it, they will think that you are dubious. Don't write what you will deny tomorrow because spoken words are not as incriminating as written words.

TYPES AND SAMPLES OF BUSINESS LETTER

Application for Employment (Letter of Application)

This is an official letter written by an applicant seeking a job in an organisation. This involves the letter itself and the Curriculum Vitae (CV). Whether the applicant will be employed or not sometimes depends on how effective the application letter is. For this reason, it is important for an applicant to master the format of effective application letter as given below:

Structure of an Application Letter

Addresses: There must be two addresses in all forms of formal letters - the address of the addressee and that of the recipient. The block style may be used (where the addresses of the addressee and the recipient can be on the same side of the paper - usually the left margin.)

Salutation: Salutation follows immediately after the address, e.g. *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam*

The Heading: The title follows the salutation. The title could be general or specific depending on if the letter is solicited or unsolicited. A solicited application letter is a response to a vacancy advertised while an unsolicited application letter is not based on any vacancy advertised. The title could be presented in upper case (capital letters) or capitalization of the first letters of the content words i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs.

After the opening sentence, the applicant should mention his/her training, e.g. *I am a graduate of English from the University of Lagos*. The applicant should also include his or her experience, if any.

Conclusion: The conclusion should show the optimism of the applicant, as in: *I will be grateful if my application is given a favourable consideration*.

Closing: “Yours faithfully” followed by signature and name.

23, Capitol Road,
Agege.
30th November, 2009.

The General Manager,
Cadbury Nigeria Limited,
Ikeja.

Dear Sir,

Application for the Post of a Sales Manager

I am interested in applying for the Sales Manager position as recently advertised in The Guardian Newspaper. The skills I have developed from my work experience and academic background support my candidacy for the announced position.

As you can see from my resumé, the internship I had with NBC Corporation provided an opportunity for me to gain practical experience in account maintenance and cold-calling new accounts. In addition, I have worked as a waiter for the past four years, learning firsthand how to effectively deal with customers and their demands. I have been formally commended by management several times, being named "Employee of the Month."

I would very much like an opportunity to discuss your specific needs and my overall abilities regarding the announced position. You can reach me on 08080809900. Thank you for considering me for this position. I will be available for an interview any time you wish.

Yours faithfully,

ikKI
Idowu Kola

6.5.2 Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A curriculum vitae (CV), also called a *résumé*, is a document that gives information about a prospective employee. A curriculum vitae always accompanies an application letter. There are four important parts of a CV: *personal bio-data, educational background, work experience* and *reference*. CVs are constructed based on what the employee wants and what the employer is looking for.

Structure of a Curriculum Vitae

There are three major formats of writing a curriculum vitae. These are professional and functional format, experienced and combined format and executive and chronological format. No matter which format is adopted, the sections must definitely be part of a typical CV:

The Title: The title of a CV may be the name of the applicant or “Curriculum Vitae” followed by the applicant's name. Some CVs go with the objective to impress on the employer that the applicant is going to be an asset to the organization. If the CV has the applicant's name as the title, it should be followed by the address, phone number and e-mail address of the applicant.

Personal Information: This varies from situation to situation. There are certain pieces of information the applicant may not want to share with the employer and there are certain pieces of information which may not be relevant in seeking a particular job. In fact, in some situations, information like *nationality* may work against the applicant and may mar his/her chances in getting the job.

Educational Background: This is often divided into two: *the institutions attended with dates* and *qualifications obtained with dates*. The information could be numbered top-bottom or bottom-up.

Work Experience: Only work experience which is related to the present job or position which the applicant is seeking should be mentioned. For

example, an experience in interior decoration may not be necessary if the applicant is seeking a job of the bank manager.

References: At least two references or referees should be provided with their genuine contact information. This will give the employer confidence in any case of breach of agreement; there is a third party to settle the case. In some cases, the references may not be stated; it may be given only on the request of the employer.

Sample of a Curriculum Vitae

Professional and Functional Format

IDOWU KOLA

23, Capitol Road, Agege, Lagos

Telephone: 01-712233 (Home); 08095711122 (Mobile)

Email: kolaid@yahoo.com

Professional Profile

I am an enthusiastic and professional Web Designer, who enjoys being part of, as well as leading, a successful and productive team. I am quick to grasp new ideas and concepts, and to develop innovative and creative solutions to problems. I am able to work well on my own initiative and can demonstrate the high levels of motivation required to meet the tightest of deadlines. Even under significant pressure, I possess a strong ability to perform effectively.

Objective

I am now looking to build on my extensive range of technical skills within a suitably challenging role. I am keen to achieve further professional development.

Key Technical Skills

Adobe PhotoShop Macromedia Dream Weaver FireWorks

Adobe Illustrator Macromedia Flash Strata Studio Pro (3D)

Adobe Premiere Macromedia Director FTP Programs

Adobe After Effects Poser Bryce 3D

Adobe Acrobat QTVR Microsoft Excel

Microsoft PowerPoint Equilibrium Media Cleaner Pro

Career Summary

2003-date WebMaster, Graphics Master, Lagos, Nigeria

Working within a major print design company, tasked with developing their fledgling Web Department

Assessing initial set-up requirements and implementing hardware and software solutions accordingly.

Training my team in the use of QuarkXPress, Beyond Press Pro, PhotoShop, Dream Weaver, Media Cleaner Pro, QTVR & Adobe Premier

Coordinating closely with Account Executives, actively soliciting new clients and nurturing existing client accounts, ensuring their needs and requirements were not only accommodated but surpassed.

Winning over many clients from larger companies, due to the extremely high standards of our creative design work

Training clients in subsequent website maintenance, particularly the use of Dream Weaver and its inbuilt FTP facility

Initiating a company-wide changeover to a much faster ISP with enhanced technical support

Clients include major blue chip companies such as the British Land Company and Millennium Diamonds as well as many high profile government departments and agencies

Selected Portfolio

www.website.com www.anotherwebsite.com

www.onewithtext.com www.andanother.com

www.onewithgraphics.com www.flashwebsite.com

www.personalwebsite.com www.onemoreexample.com

Formal Qualifications

National Diploma in Graphic Design & Multimedia

Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos (2000-2003)

Key Modules:

Web Design Visual Communication

Multimedia Print Design

Typography Photography

Following attainment of my School Leaving Certificate, I embarked on a National Diploma in Graphic Design & Multimedia to formalise both my design skills and my creative experience. Via mock client briefs, addressing realistic commercial projects, I studied web design, typography, CAD, the print process, illustration and multimedia applications. The final examination of the Diploma consisted of an exhibition of project work (multimedia, CD-ROM and accompanying web page and associated print materials). A dissertation on an individually selected design topic was also completed and submitted.

I obtained an Upper Credit in Multimedia and Web Design and also won the Multimedia Student of the Year Award and Best Use of a Mac Award.

Personal Details

Date of Birth: 12th September, 1980 **Languages:** Fluent English & Yoruba

Nationality: Nigerian **Health:** Excellent; non-smoker

Interests & Activities

Currently include: Photography, Theatre & Amateur Dramatics, Football & Golf

References are Available on Request

Experienced and Combined Format:**ROSE J. NWOSU****3, Independence Layout, Enugu, Enugu State****Telephone: 42-899 2255****Mobile: 08077111220****Email: rosejn@yahoo.com****PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

I am an enthusiastic and dedicated professional with extensive experience across all areas of retail management. An exceptional leader who is able to develop and motivate others to achieve targets, I can demonstrate a strong ability to manage projects from conception through to successful completion. A proactive individual with a logical approach to challenges, I perform effectively even within a highly pressurised working environment.

OBJECTIVE

I am now looking to progress into a senior management position within the retail sector. I am therefore keen to find a new and suitably challenging role within a market-leading organisation.

CAREER SUMMARY**2000-date Leventis Stores Plc****SENIOR AREA OPERATIONS MANAGER (2007-date)**

Responsible for meeting budgetary and sales targets through motivating and developing staff, consistently achieving and surpassing Key Performance Indicators.

Reporting to the Retail Operations Manager with responsibility for operational and people (320) management within 14 stores

Controlling management accounts with attention to essential criteria for net profit, including sales, shrinkage, wages, write-off, cash control and store expenditure.

Monitoring and controlling store compliance in all areas, including customer care, effective planning, staff training and development, organisation and time management.

Supporting management and staff to help create their own successful and productive team and become effective team leaders.

Maximising every sales opportunity by promoting the highest standards of customer care and recognising potential development and training opportunities

Communicating daily with Customer Support Centre functions - Buying, Retail, Finance & Distribution to ensure effective control and operation of all areas.

Reviewing and evaluating weekly report achievement and producing an end of week spreadsheet.

Supporting and coaching Area Managers to reach their full potential.

Deputising for Retail Operations Manager, responsible for whole region, incorporating 9 Area Managers.

CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER (2005-2007)

Reporting to the Director of service quality, primarily responsible for 16,000 internal customers and all external customers.

Maintaining the Service Quality Customer Service Standards Library for the department.

Developing a CD ROM training programme to be used in all stores, in line with customer service strategy

Managing and developing stores' monthly incentive programme and cost justifying.

Supervising, motivating and developing team reward and recognition programmes.

Handling and swiftly resolving customer complaints in a professional and effective manner.

Creating and introducing in-store customer awareness and feedback forms with most useful results.

SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER RETAIL & SUPPLY CHAIN (2004-2005)

Reporting to the Group Retail Director and charged with integrating One Stop systems to Leventis.

Introducing ambient grocery to the distribution centre, setting up new delivery schedules, training programmes and rolling out into 400 stores.

Designing effective store communication procedures to ensure the smooth running of all operations.

Responsible for seasonal event management for the company.

Investigating and understanding weekly shrinkage issues, producing a user friendly guide, and subsequently testing and rolling-out.

AREA OPERATIONS MANAGER (2003-2004)

STORE MANAGER (2002-2003)

Managing 7 convenience stores and becoming Training Store Manager for the whole region, manager of the Store of Excellence and Area Manager Designate.

Encouraging the highest possible standards of customer service from the team and maintaining the smooth day-to-day operation of the stores.

Maintaining good staff relations through effective communication, leadership, discipline and motivation.

As Training Store Manager for all trainees, achieving the successful induction of 48 new employees.

RELIEF MANAGER (2001-2002)

ASSISTANT STORE MANAGER (2000)

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (University of Nigeria, Nsukka) (1995-1999)

3 A-Levels: Economics, Mathematics & Commerce (1994)

9 GCEs: Including English & Mathematics (1992)

KEY I. T. SKILLS

Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Internet & Email

PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth: 18th January, 1977

Nationality: Nigerian

Health: Excellent; non-smoker

Other: Qualified in First Aid Services

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

Currently include: Netball (playing & coaching), Badminton & Hockey

REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Executive and Chronological Format:

Abubakar Murtar

24, Ironsi Road, Maitama District,

Abuja.

Tel: (09) 234 1234

Email: abumurtar@hotmail.com

PROFILE:

A Senior Quality Assurance Technician with a wide range of experience in the food industry. Able to work on own initiative and as part of a team. Proven leadership skills involving managing, developing and motivating teams to achieve their objectives. First-class analytical, design and problem solving skills. Dedicated to maintaining high quality standards.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS:

Saved the company N500,000 a year by implementing a new quality assurance system.

Increased the acceptance level of finished goods from 96% to 99%.

Achieved a 100% production line by rewriting the company's quality assurance procedures.

Solved major quality assurance problems which temporarily halted production.

CAREER HISTORY:

1999 date, Dangote Group

2002 date, Senior Quality Assurance Technician

Dangote Foods manufacture spaghetti under the brand name Abinci at their Kano factory. Responsibilities and achievements:

Managed all quality assurance in Dangote Foods' Kano factory and reported directly to the Factory Manager.

Managed a team of 6 people; assigning them tasks, and motivating them to meet deadlines.

Demonstrated the quality assurance procedures to customers on factory visits.

Performed Quality Audits at the factory.

1999-2002, Quality Assurance Technician

Created computer applications with the help of a programmer to monitor the factory environment.

Analysed the quality assurance system and made recommendations for improvements. These were incorporated into the current quality assurance system.

Examined equipment in the factory to check that it met the company's standards.

Investigated new equipment installed in the factory to make sure that it would comply with quality assurance procedures.

1995-1999, OBASANJO FARMS LIMITED

1995-1999, Research Technician

Obasanjo Farms manufacture a wide range of grocery products.

Responsibilities:

Formulated new product lines and conducted the relevant laboratory experiments.

Performed a study of the shelf life of various canned foods.

Tested new products to check that they met EEC guidelines for bacteriological content.

Conducted a survey on packaging.

1997 - 1999 Plant Operator

Worked on the production line at the canning factory.

Responsibilities:

Operated the canning machinery producing tinned fruit and vegetables.

Solved and fixed any production line problems with the help of the service engineer.

TRAINING:

Various courses including: Quality Assurance, The SON Quality Approach, Team Leadership I & II, Time Management, Report Writing.

QUALIFICATIONS:

BSc (Hons) 2:2 in Biochemistry at the University of Maiduguri.

3 A-Levels: Maths [C], Biology [B], Chemistry [C]; 6 O' Levels.

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Date of Birth: 24th. February, 1977.

Marital Status: Single.

Driving Licence: Full, clean.

INTERESTS:

Football, Horse racing, physical fitness - gym.

Letter of Enquiry

A letter of enquiry is often written by a member of the public requesting for a job, catalogues and price lists, products or services, visits by representatives or requests for concessions.

Structure of a Letter of Enquiry

The structure of a letter of enquiry is the same as that of an application letter except for the heading. Sometimes, a letterhead of a company could be used to write a letter of enquiry if the correspondence is between two organisations.

Sample of a Letter of Enquiry (An Enquiry for a Job)

39, Park Lane,
Aba,
Abia State.
30th August, 2009.

Mr. Prahu Gupta,
Recruiting Specialist,
Churchgate Group,
12, Afribank Street, Lagos,
Lagos State.

Dear Sir,

Job Enquiry

Recently, while reading through the Directory of Management Consultants, I learnt that The Churchgate Group routinely recruits and hires college graduates. Having lived in Aba for ten years, I am very familiar with your organization and its reputation for being a leader in the management consulting industry and I am certain that my education and experience would complement Churchgate Group's tradition of excellence.

As you can see from my resumé, I recently completed my bachelor's degree in Management at Abia State University, Uturu. While my degree taught me the basics of management theory, my four years of direct management experience have given me the opportunity to apply this knowledge to real-life situations. Furthermore, being actively involved in several campus organizations has helped me develop effective time management, communication and leadership skills. I believe these skills are critical to the success of any manager.

While working toward my bachelor's degree I was employed part-time by Consolidated Breweries Plc. After successfully demonstrating my common sense approach to management consulting, my supervisor requested that I evaluate and revise the company's Total Quality Management consulting

policies. The team assisted me with this project and I developed a TQM consulting program that is currently working extremely well in over 16 Aba area businesses.

I would appreciate a chance to meet with you to learn more about the Churchgate Group. Please contact me on 08033943356 if you have any questions concerning my education/experience or wish to schedule a time to discuss possible career opportunities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[Signature]
Godwin Okorie

An Enquiry for a Catalogue

6, Kodesoh Street,
Ikeja.
30th October, 2009.

The General Manager,
Berger Paints Limited,
P. O. Box, 399, Ikeja.

Dear Sir,

An Enquiry for a Price List

I have a large paint store in Agege and I am interested in the emulsion paint you are advertising in The Punch Newspaper.

Please send me your illustrated catalogue and a price list.

Yours faithfully,

Akiwande Bose

Letter of Complaint

A letter of complaint as the name implies is a formal letter which is addressed to the authorities to express grievances or dissatisfaction. A letter of complaint could also be written to complain about a faulty product or poor performance of an electronic product.

The complaint letter should be written in the business letter format. When writing a complaint letter you want to keep it short and to the point to help ensure that your letter will be read in its entirety. If you write a seven page complaint letter, it is highly unlikely that someone will sit down and read all seven pages.

The complaint letter should be addressed to the customer service/consumer affairs department or the head office if there is no customer service department. The address and contact information of the customer service department should be available on the company's products or website.

In the first paragraph you should identify what the issue is and any relevant information that you believe is important. Be sure to include the following information if it's applicable to the situation: the date/time of the issue, location, name of person on duty, name of product, what the problem was, your account number, model number, price, warranty information and reference number. Be sure to stick with the facts and avoid putting emotions into your letter.

The next paragraph should state what you would like done to resolve the situation. If you received poor service, you could request an apology or a special discount. If a product malfunctioned, you could request that you could exchange the product for a new one or request a refund.

The last paragraph should thank the reader for the time. You can also throw in some compliments about something you liked about their company's product or service.

You should include your telephone number/e-mail address after your printed name so that they can contact you ASAP (As Soon As Possible), if necessary.

Be sure to keep a copy of the letter for yourself and include photocopies of any relevant documents and enclose them with your letter.

Structure

Title: State the reason of the complaint. There is a reason for complaining which must be made very clear.

Salutation: (as in the letter of application)

Body: Since this is a short letter that has a focus which is to register some dissatisfaction, you must go straight to the point. In other words, a letter of complaint must be concise. In the case of a faulty product, let the retailer know what you want them to do - give them a reasonable deadline.

Conclusion: Conclude by expressing your hope that your complaint will be looked into.

Closing: “Yours faithfully” followed by signature and name.

Sample of a Letter of Complaint

23 Isaac John Street, GRA,
P. O. Box, 388,
Ikeja.
Tel: 01-3456789
25th November, 2009.

Sales Manager,
Customer Service,
Collectibles,
Onikan, Lagos

Dear Madam,

I bought a jacket in your shop two weeks ago. It cost 300 naira. I enclose a copy of the receipt.

The sales assistant told me the jacket was waterproof but when I went out walking in the rain I got wet. When I returned to the shop to look for a refund, I was told it was two weeks since I bought the jacket and that the most he could offer me was a credit note or exchange. I do not want another jacket as I do not want the same problem again and there is nothing else in the shop I want either.

I am very unhappy about this. I would like you to arrange a full refund to me. I would appreciate a reply within fourteen days from today.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Margaret Akpan

Example 2 (Block Style)

65 Market Street
New Haven, Enugu
June 30, 2009

Customer Service
Cool Sports, LLC
84 Pound Road, Aba

Dear Madam:

I have recently ordered a new pair of soccer cleats (item #6542951) from your sales representative in Enugu on June 21. I received the order on June 26. Unfortunately, when I opened it I saw that the cleats were used. The cleats had dirt all over them and there was a small tear in front of the part where the left toe would go. My order number is AF26168156.

To resolve the problem, I would like you to credit my account for the amount charged for my cleats. I have already bought a new pair of cleats at my local sporting goods store, so sending another would result in my having two pairs of the same cleats.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I have been a satisfied customer of your company for many years and this is the first time I have encountered a problem. If you need to contact me, you can reach me at 08023234444.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Kenny Taiwo

Letter of Protest

Note that a letter of protest is almost similar to the letter of complaint but the former carries a stronger language than the latter. In some cases, a letter of protest may contain some threats.

Sample of a Letter of Protest

25 Akwanga Road,
P. O. Box, 5413,
Kano.
30th November, 2009.

The General Manager,
Guardian Newspaper Limited,
Rutam House,
Oshodi,
Lagos.

Dear Sir,

I am concerned about the apparent bias in your recent publications when discussing the issues surrounding religious violence, tolerance and national unity.

Having read the recent article on “The Cause of Religious Violence in Nigeria” in your Sunday November 29th issue, please be advised that I will no longer purchase your publication. I will also be writing to the community relations departments of your advertisers informing them that I will no longer be purchasing their goods and services if they continue to advertise in your publication.

Additionally, I will be encouraging various Muslim groups that I belong to and inform them of your article, and I will encourage them to take the same course of action.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Alhaji Zubairu Dantata

Letter of Apology

A letter of apology is often written by a subordinate to the boss to apologise for misconduct, lateness to work or an act of insubordination. An organisation or a company can also write a letter of apology to a customer to apologise for poor performance of a product or substandard product, customer service error, poor quality of service or goods, mistreatment of a customer by a member of staff of a company or inability of the organisation to meet the demand of the client or customer. A letter of apology could be a reply to either a letter of protest or a letter of complaint.

Structure of a Letter of Apology

An apology letter shows that you are sorry and says that you value your relationship with the other party. The sooner an apology letter is written and sent out the better it is for the relationship. Depending on the nature of the letter, it can either be written in the friendly or business letter format.

If this is a personal letter you should start the letter by saying that you are sorry to the recipient. Next, you should admit your fault and take responsibility for your actions. Next, you should volunteer or ask if there is any way that you can help out to resolve the situation. Then you should let the recipient know that you will try to make sure that the situation will not happen again. To close off the letter you should apologize again. When writing a personal apology letter it should come from the heart and be sincere.

If this is a business letter you should start the letter by saying that you are sorry to the recipient. Next you should give an explanation as to what went wrong. Then you should try to rectify the problem. To close off the letter you should apologize again.

Title: State the reason for the apology. There is a reason for complaining and there should also be a reason for apologising which must be made very clear in the heading.

Salutation: (as in the letter of application)

Body: Since this is a short letter that has focus which is to register some heart-felt apology you must go straight to the point. In other words, a letter of apology must be concise just like the letter of complaint. In the case of a faulty or poor quality product, let the customer know what you want to do to compensate them.

Conclusion: Conclude by re-emphasising your apology and assure the customer that such will never happen again. If the apology is made for lateness to work or an act of insubordination, let your boss or the management know exactly what you are going to do so that such actions will not be repeated.

Closing: “Yours faithfully” or “Yours sincerely” followed by signature and name.

Samples of a Letter of Apology

Apology Letter for Customer Service Error

Visafone Communications Limited
4th Floor, Zenon House
2, Ajoye Adeogun Street, Victoria Island
Lagos, Nigeria

25th November, 2009.

Mr. Ebenezer Babatope,
15 Association Avenue,
Ilupeju Estate,
Lagos.

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this letter is to convey my sincere apologies for any inconvenience you may have experienced last month with respect to the

installation of your High Speed Internet Service.

We just got a message immediately after the installation of your router that one of our masts which is located at Ikorodu had been vandalised by some disgruntled elements in that part of Lagos; and since the vandalised mast is responsible for the relay of Internet signal via the satellite, all routers including yours which are directly connected to it cannot access the Internet.

Consequently, I have directed our Installation Engineers to contact you before the week runs out in order to set up a time convenient to you when they could go to your house and reinstall your new router to receive signal from our mast at Epe, although the distance is rather too far, until the mast at Ikorodu is repaired.

Once again, I sincerely apologise for your inability to access the Internet since the installation of your new router. I want to assure you that an additional one month will be added to your subscription in order to compensate you for the period during which you did not have access to the Net.

Thank you for your understanding and keep patronising Visafone because it is still your passport to the world.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Edoho
Sales Director (South)

Apology Letter for Damaged Goods

Zubyven Foods
42 Olu Obasanjo Road, Mile 2 Port Harcourt
+234 84 332997

30th November, 2009.

The General Manager,
Western Shop Limited,
11 Jericho Road,
Ibadan.

Dear Sir,

It was distressing to learn that the chocolate we delivered to your firm last week arrived in bits and pieces. As regard your request, a new lorry of 30 lbs left our factory this morning and is scheduled for afternoon delivery to you on December 1st. Please turn over the damaged goods to the driver at the time of delivery.

I am sorry that this unfortunate incident occurred and I sincerely appreciate your continued patronage.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Douglas
Sales Manager

Example 3 (Block Style)

84 Maloney Street
Lagos Island

November 29, 2009

Mr. Joseph Nwachukwu
31 Creek Road
Apapa

Dear Mr. Nwachukwu:

I apologize for the mix-up of order #: 26429782. We have just implemented a new packaging system that still has a few bugs to be worked out, but we did fix your order and sent it out this morning. For your trouble, we have enclosed a N2500 gift certificate which can be used at any of our stores. Once again I would like to apologize for the mix-up in your order and any inconveniences this may have caused you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ibrahim Yusuf

Customer Service Manager

Letter of Congratulation/Felicitatation

As the name implies, a letter of congratulation congratulates a person or an organization on an achievement, promotion or feat attained. A letter of congratulations or a congratulations letter is used in both personal and business situations. Its primary purpose is to formally congratulate someone on an outstanding achievement.

Structure

Title: This could be simply, "Letter of Congratulation".

Salutation: (as in the letter of application)

Body: Since this is an official letter written to felicitate with an organization or a person who has been promoted, only expressions that show happiness, admiration and warm feelings should be used.

Conclusion: Conclude by reiterating your warm feelings and admiration for the person's achievement or promotion and wish him/her more of such achievement.

Closing: The complimentary close for congratulatory letter is "Yours sincerely".

Sample of a Letter of Congratulation**BELLVIEW AIRLINES**

66, Opebi Road, Ikeja.

November 30th, 2009

Dr. Mavis Jaiyeola,
Chairman, Mavis Group Limited,
56, Campbell Street,
Lagos.

Dear Dr. Mavis,

Letter of Congratulations

Please accept our heartiest congratulations from Bellview Airlines on your recent nomination for the National Award.

I just heard the news today from the national radio that you have been short-listed for the national honour.

I am so proud of you. As you know, I have been a long-time promoter of your work, and in my mind it's about time your contributions to the development of this nation were fully recognized. In fact, I believe that your nomination for the National Award is long overdue.

Once again, Dr. Mavis, our sincere congratulations on your nomination. Just being nominated for the prestigious National Award is an honour in itself. I will be keeping my fingers crossed for you until where they announced on January 1st, and I am positive it will be you. Once again, congratulations.

Sincere best wishes,

[Signature]

Oba Azubuike

Public Affairs Manager

Sample 2

**Obudu Cattle Ranch
P. M. B. 2348, Obudu
CRS**

23rd November, 2009

Aisha Aliyu
65 Amina Crescent
Utako
Abuja

Dear Miss Aliyu:

On behalf of everyone here at Obudu Cattle Ranch, I would like to sincerely congratulate you on your recent graduation from the University of Abuja with your M.sc in Zoology

I must say that I was not surprised to read of your success in the newspaper. During the first of your four years as an employee at the Ranch, I noted how bright you are and how you have a very quick mind for animal husbandry. Combine those attributes with your relentless work ethic and commitment to personal research, and it is obvious that you have a wide-open future ahead of you. I can only hope that your experience working with us contributed in some small way to your success.

On behalf of the management and staff at Obudu Cattle Ranch, I wish you all the best in your future career and life endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Ogong Peters
General Manager

Letter of Condolence/Sympathy

Writing a letter of condolence is one of the most difficult tasks we undertake because it's always hard to know just what to say. Of course, what you say depends on how close you were to the deceased and/or the recipient of the letter.

A condolence letter should be written in a friendly format. Unless you are a close friend or relative, start the letter by introducing yourself. In the next paragraph, offer your sympathy. The third (and final) paragraph is the place to offer assistance (if you are sincere in your desire to help) and to try to say something that genuinely helps the bereaved work through their grief.

What you don't say in a condolence letter is almost more important than what you do say. All the same, even if you only write a line or two, you'll show the family your support. The following are a few tips on writing effective Condolence Letters:

- Keep condolence letters short. The family may have a mountain of cards and letters to read and answer. Don't add to their burden.
- Never say you know how they feel. Simply put, you don't. Even if you have endured a similar situation, grief is a very intimate series of feelings that are unique to each individual. Don't intrude on them. Someone told me that when her son passed away, a well-meaning friend said to her, "At least he didn't leave any children behind." Her well-meaning words rattled the lady to the bone because she would have gladly given her life to hold his son in her arms just one time. Especially in cases where death was a long-suffering ordeal, you may be tempted to write that it was a "blessing" or "relief". Don't. Some words are best left unsaid.
- Do share a fond memory of the departed in the body (second paragraph) of your letter. The passing of a loved one leaves a big hole in our lives. A well-written condolence letter helps fill the hole with friendship and love.

Sample of Letter of Sympathy

32 Idang Street,
Big Qua Town,
Calabar.
15th October, 2009.

Mrs. Johnson,
54 Edgerly Road,
Calabar.

Dear Madam,

A Letter of Condolence

Although we have never met, your son Stephen and I became close friends in Bonny Camp and have corresponded regularly over the past four years. I was dismayed to hear of his passing away and I'm writing to extend my deepest sympathies to you and your family.

Stephen was always full of energy and optimism. During training, Stephen helped me overcome my fear of climbing and rappelling. When the exercises became too tough, it was Stephen who always encouraged the squad to "soldier on". You must be very proud of him. It was no surprise that he made Sergeant before the end of his first hitch.

Stephen once told me it was you who taught him that the best part of life is building good memories. I hope that the memories you built will help you to "soldier on" through this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Eyo Ita

Letter of Order

An order is an intention of the writer to pay for the products or services requested in the letter. Although many large organisations have printed order forms, smaller firms may not have printed forms but instead place orders in the form of a letter.

Structure of an Order Letter

If an order is placed in form of a letter, it takes the same format of a typical official letter with the addresses of the writer and the recipient including the heading. But if an order form is used, the person who places the order only needs to fill in the form with relevant and accurate information. When sending an order by letter, it is important to ensure accuracy and clarity by including the full description of goods required, catalogue numbers, quantities, prices, delivery requirements and agreed terms of payment.

Sample of an Order Letter

BLESSING COMPUTERS

Computer Village

Ikeja

March 28, 2009

Sales Manager

Omatek Computers

Lagos

Dear Sir,

Please send us one (1) box of 3.5 Sony diskettes and (1) 17" red fox monitor, colour black. Terms of payment will be the same as those of our previous orders.

We would appreciate it very much if you could send these items immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Blessing Ndukwe

Manager

Order Letter Written by an Individual

Corporate Wears
Room 5, Oshopey Plaza
Allen Avenue
Ikeja

Gentlemen:

Please send me immediately by parcel post the following goods selected from your January catalogue:

2 Pair of shoes, black satin No. 30 D248, size 5.5 N12,000.00
1 Blanket Cloth, No. 25 B471, Copenhagen blue, size 350 N500.00
Postage N50.00
Total Amount N12,550.00

I enclose a bankdraft for N12,550.00 in payment of this order.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Iyare Osunbor

Letter of Query/Reply to Query

A letter of query is usually written by a superior who represents the management of an organisation to a subordinate requesting explanation in respect of certain actions or conducts which are inimical to the rules and regulations in the Article of Association. It could be that of chronic lateness to work or an act of insubordination or pilfering.

Sample Letter of Query

**Corona Group of Schools
Gbagada Estate
Lagos**

30th November, 2009

Mr. Akin Adesoga
3 Anthony Village Road
Anthony Village
Lagos

Dear Mr. Adesoga,

A Letter of Query

It has been brought to the notice of the management that you always come late to school. Throughout last term you came to school every day immediately after the morning devotion.

You do know that lateness to school by both pupils and teachers is never tolerated by the management of Corona Schools. It is amazing to know that you always come late to school considering the fact that you live at Anthony Village, which is that a few kilometres to Gbagada Estate.

You have twenty four hours to show in writing why disciplinary action should not be taken against you.

[Signature]

Bolatito Joseph (Mrs.)

Head Teacher

A Reply to a Query

3 Anthony Village Road
Anthony Village
Lagos

30th November, 2009

The Head Teacher
Corona Group of Schools
Gbagada Estate
Lagos

Dear Madam,

A Reply to your Query

I thank you for your letter although it came to me as a shock. It is true that I have been coming late to school quite recently despite the fact that I live not too far from the school.

It is not intentional that I come to school late but the situation is beyond my control. My wife just gave birth to our second son and we have no maid. Since she was discharged from the hospital two months ago I have been combining my work with domestic affairs to make sure that my wife is taken care of since the doctor said that she should not engage in any strenuous work for six months because she gave birth through caesarean operation.

Every morning I have to wake up as early as 4 am to prepare food for my wife and prepare our son for school. By the time I get to the Bus Stop, the school bus has already left my neighbourhood and I have to get to school by public transport and the journey is often punctuated by incessant stoppage at every bus stop in an attempt by public transporters to pick up more passengers.

I have just arranged with a private motor cyclist who will take me to school every morning by 7 am and I hope this arrangement will solve the problem of my lateness to school.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Adesoga Akin

Letter of Resignation

Before sitting down and writing a resignation letter, you should be almost 100% certain that you want to leave your current job, if not many complications can arise. The resignation letter should be written in the business letter format and be directed to your supervisor or manager or the head of your establishment.

At a minimum, the letter should state that you are leaving, when you are leaving, and thank them for the time that they have employed you. It is common courtesy to give a prior notice before you leave your job. Your letter of employment should be consulted to confirm the duration of the notice you are expected to give before you can quit your job.

It is important that you keep your letter positive, you want to maintain a good relationship with your employer and co-workers, and they can be potential future references or business associates. If you feel like your reason for leaving is honourable, you can include the reason for leaving in your letter, but if you think your reason for leaving may rub your employer the wrong way, there is no need to put the reason in your letter.

The Structure

The first paragraph of your letter should state that you are leaving and when you are leaving.

The second paragraph should explain your reason for leaving the company. (This paragraph is optional.)

In the third paragraph you can offer to make your resignation go smoothly for the company. For example, you can offer to help train a replacement with the time you still have left. (This paragraph is also optional.)

The last paragraph should thank the employer for the opportunity to work for them, wish them well and/or express interest in maintaining your professional relationship.

Sample of a Resignation Letter

112 Suleja Road,
Minna,

October 21, 2009.

Mr. Nobel Gandhi,
Head of Inventory Control,
Afprint Nigeria Limited,
Morocco Road,
Maitama District,
Abuja.

Dear Sir,

I am formally notifying you that I am quitting my job at Afprint Nigeria Limited. My last day will be on November 22, 2009.

I never imagined that I would have to leave Afprint Nigeria Limited, but due to my wife's work transfer to Owerri, I have made the decision with my wife to move up to Owerri as a family.

If there is anything that I can do to make this transition easier for the company, let me know and I will be more than willing to help out.

I have truly enjoyed my work here and I would like to thank you for the opportunity that you have given me to work here at Afprint Nigeria Limited. I wish the company well.

Sincerely,

Peter James
Inventory Specialist

Letter of Dismissal

As the name implies, a letter of dismissal is written by the management to a member of staff to terminate his/her appointment. Employment termination by the employer normally falls into one of these categories: redundancy, misconduct, or poor performance (which may be due to various reasons, often not the fault of the employee). The central principles (not the process detail) for dealing with all of these situations are broadly similar. Here are the essential rules for proper employment termination doubtful punctuation:

Ensure you understand and apply the correct legal procedure for your situation. The process doesn't necessarily begin with the termination interview or letter, it can be deemed (by a subsequent tribunal, court, review body or process, for example assessing an unfair dismissal or discrimination claim) to have begun as early as when the employee was first recruited into the organization. If employment termination is due to redundancy, check with the relevant government department for employment as to the proper procedures and statutory requirements relating to pay and notice periods, etc. Liaise as necessary with trade unions and other interested bodies to understand all of the facts, options and procedures.

Unfortunately, Nigerian labour laws have been ineffective in these areas; nevertheless central principles provide a basis of best practice for other regions of the world in the absence of specific legislation, for example.

Give reasons for the proposed dismissal to the employee in writing and give the employee a reasonable period during which to consider the facts and his/her response.

Hold a meeting with the employee to explain the reasons and give employee the opportunity to explain his/her position.

After the meeting give the employee the employer's decision in writing (whether to proceed with the dismissal or other action), and invite the employee to make an appeal and attend an appeal meeting.

After the appeal meeting the employer must confirm the appeal decision in writing.

A manager of proper authority must attend the meetings, and the meetings must be at reasonable times and venues; also, the employer must not unreasonably delay any of the stages in this process.

Concentrate on the facts of the situation, and the clear quantifiable measurements to support these facts. Ensure there is clear indisputable evidence for the facts and figures. This requires good record-keeping to be an essential part of the process, and therefore should also be a part of the management practice of the organization.

Be fair and compassionate. Even in situations involving gross misconduct, remember you are dealing with another human-being who has his/her own problems, probably now made all the worse because his/her employment is being terminated. He/she does not need you to start being vindictive, vengeful or spiteful and nor will any subsequent review process look kindly on any aspects of personally directed behaviour in the employer's handling of the situation.

These principles are also a good guide for terminating other forms of supply contracts. Suppliers come in all shapes and sizes and the separation between the rights of full employee and those of certain other contracted workers, agents, distributors, etc., is not as distinct as many people think. Sales agents, for example in Europe especially, have extremely strong rights when it comes to termination of contracts and agreements but not in Africa. Franchisees of all sorts, agency staff, and tenants with tied retail agreements with breweries, are among other worker-supplier groups whose rights have significant implications for 'employers' when terminating contracts and agreements. Always check the law and follow proper process. The consequences for employers and organizations for failing to apply due process when terminating employment or similar contracts are increasingly serious.

As a matter of philosophy, always try to part as friends, not enemies. Nothing is gained by alienating people who already see themselves as victims; negative treatment can prompt them to be vengeful, which does nobody any good at all. Also by keeping employment termination and dismissal letters positive you avoid risk of libel or defamation, which carry potential legal liabilities for the employer, irrespective of the circumstances and process of the dismissal itself.

Sample of a Letter of Dismissal

**Nigerian Bottling Company
Matori Depot
P. M. B. 4098, Oshodi
Lagos**

20th August 2009

Mr. Joseph Agboola
42 Aswani Road
Isolo
Lagos

Dear Mr. Agboola,

Further to our meeting of August 14th I regretfully confirm that your employment with us is terminated with effect from August 31st, 2009.

As stated at our meeting, the reason(s) for terminating your employment with us are as follows:

- Incessant lateness to work;
- Insulting and assaulting the supervisor, which is tantamount to a disrespect to the management and
- Putting company's electrical appliances to personal use.

Despite the fact that you have been given more than three queries in respect of these offences, you have not turned a new leaf in any way. The last straw that broke the camel's back was when you assaulted the Factory Manager in the presence of the Branch Manager.

As stipulated in our Article of Association, you are to return all pieces of equipment and your official car, and submit all expense claims, and any other property which belongs to the company to the Personnel Manager before you can receive your pay-off on the 1st of September, 2009, which is the day you are to leave the office and the premises of the Nigerian Bottling Company.

We sincerely thank you for your past efforts in standing by the company during the last industrial action embarked by the Nigerian Labour Congress. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Akin Alabi

General Manager

Letter of Appointment

A letter of appointment is usually sent by an employer to a successful employee who has just attended an interview in an organisation. The structure of the letter is the same as that of a letter of dismissal but the language is friendlier than that of letter of termination of an appointment.

Sample of a Letter of Appointment

**Unilever Nigeria Plc
I, Billings Way, Oregun
Lagos**

30th November, 2009

Mr. Michael Oku,
11 Church Street, Agege,
Lagos.

Dear Mr. Oku,

Following your interview with the Recruiting Manager, I am pleased to offer you the position of an Operational Manager commencing on Tuesday, December 1st, 2009.

Please confirm in writing that you accept this appointment with the terms stated and that you can commence your duties on Wednesday, December 2, 2009.

We look forward to welcoming you to our staff and hope you will be very happy in your work here.

Sincerely yours,

Tony Richards
General Manager

Letter of Posting or Transfer

As the name implies, a letter of posting or transfer is written by the management of an organisation to an employee whom the management intends to change his/her duty post either with or without the consent of the person concerned. In the case whereby the organisation wants to transfer an employee without his/her consent, maybe because his/her skills are needed in another location, the reason(s) for such transfer should be stated clearly and the language should be convincing enough to make him/her accept the transfer in good faith.

Sample of a Letter of Transfer

**PZ Nigeria Plc
Ilupeju
Lagos**

30th November, 2009

Mrs. Abosede Akintola,
112 Clegg Street, Surulere,
Lagos.

Dear Mrs. Akintola,

Thank you for your effort in helping the PZ family to establish another branch in Aba, Abia State. It takes talented and visionary people like you to form a team.

As you are aware, the new factory in Aba needs an experienced person who does not only have the necessary knowledge of factory management but also understands the terrain of the Eastern business environment.

After a brainstorming debate with the top management staff of the company, we have concluded that you are the right person to head our new branch in

Aba. Although your input is still very much needed in Lagos, we believe that it is more needed in our new branch.

This letter doubly serves as your promotion to a Branch Manager and transfer to our Aba branch. We regret any inconvenience this transfer may cause you knowing full well that you are a married woman.

You are to resume at Aba branch on February 1st 2010 when the new branch will be formally commissioned. Thanks for your understanding.

Sincerely yours,

Zach Cardington

Personnel Manager

Letter of Request

A letter of request is usually sent by an organisation as a reply to either a quotation or an order. As the name implies, the letter often requests additional information or clarification on the quotation or order. The format of this letter is the same as that of an order except for the content.

Sample of a Letter of Request

OMARS CREATION
2 Mende Street, Maryland
LAGOS

1st December, 2009

The Marketing Manager,
Royal Spinners Limited,
Apapa-Oshodi Expressway,
Oshodi,
Lagos.

Dear Sirs, .

We have received both your quotation of 20th November and the samples of MEN'S SUITINGS, and thank you for these.

While appreciating the good quality of your suitings we find the prices of these materials rather too high for the market we wish to supply. We have also to point out that the very good suitings are not available in Dubai from several European manufacturers, and all of these are at prices from 10% to 15% below yours.

We should like to place our order with you, but must ask you to consider whether you can make us a more favourable offer. As our order would be worth N500, 000 you may think it worthwhile to make a concession.

Yours faithfully,

Akintunde Ojo
Senior Supplies Officer

Letter of Supply

Letter of supply is usually sent by the manufacturers after the ordered goods have been sent to the buyer. Sometimes the invoice can also serve as a letter of supply. It is better to send your customers a letter of supply even if you have already enclosed all the invoices with the goods. The letter will give you ample opportunity to thank your customer for their order and assure them of more cordial transactions in future. The letter of supply should be written on the company's letterhead as shown below:

FABRIC LEADERS LIMITED

**56 Otukpo Road,
P. O. Box 2345, Makurdi,
Benue**

23rd November, 2009

Mr. Osunbor
Corporate Wears
Room 5, Oshopey Plaza
Allen Avenue, Ikeja
Lagos

Dear Mr. Osunbor:

A Letter of Supply

Thank you for your order dated November 20th. In your letter, you asked us to send you immediately by parcel post the following goods selected from our October catalogue:

2 Pair of shoes, black satin No. 30 D248, size 5.5 N12,000.00
1 Blanket Cloth, No. 25 B471, Copenhagen blue, size 350 N500.00
Postage N50.00. Total Amount N12,550.00

You also enclosed money order for N12, 550 in payment of this order. We are pleased to inform you that the goods left our depot early this morning as you ordered and will be delivered to you within 18 hours.

Please send us a reply immediately the goods have been delivered to you so that we will be very sure that they met your expectation. We look forward to doing more transactions with you. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Jang Pam
Sales Manager

Practice Questions

1. Discuss the functions of business correspondence in an organisation.
2. Discuss any three types of business correspondence.
3. Compare and contrast an E-mail correspondence and a Short Messaging Service (SMS).
4. Highlight the various components of modern business letter.
5. With adequate examples, discuss the block, indented and semi block styles of a business letter.
6. What is the difference between the full and open punctuation style of business correspondence?
7. Discuss the role of language in business correspondence.
8. Compare and contrast a memo with a letter of application.
9. Write a letter to the Manager of an electronic store complaining of the poor performance of a radio set you just bought from the shop.

Recommended Reading

- Hackett, Penny (1983). *Job Finding: A Step by Step Guide*, London: John Murray Publishers.
- Ogbulogo, C. (2004). *Business Communication in Practice*, Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.
- King, F. W. and Cree, D. A. (1962). *Modern English Business Letters*, London: Longmans.
- Taylor, S. (2004). *Model Business Letters, E-mails & Other Business Documents*, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.