
14.4 Essential Qualities of a Good Business Letter

A letter should serve the purpose for which it is written. If a businessman writes a letter to the supplier for purchase of goods, the letter should contain all the relevant information relating to the product, mode of payment, packaging, transportation of goods, etc. clearly and specifically. Otherwise, there will be confusion that may cause delay in getting the goods. Again the quality of paper used in the letter, its size, colour etc. also need special attention, because it creates a positive impression in the mind of the receiver. We may classify the qualities of a good business letter as:

- a. Inner Qualities; and
 - b. Outer Qualities
- a) **Inner Qualities** - The inner qualities of a good business letter refer to the quality of language, its presentation, etc. These facilitate quick processing of the request and that leads to prompt action. Let us discuss the various inner qualities of a good business letter.
- (i) **Simplicity** - Simple and easy language should be used for writing business letters. Difficult words should be strictly avoided, as one cannot expect the reader to refer to the dictionary every time while reading letter.
 - (ii) **Clarity** - The language should be clear, so that the receiver will understand the
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message immediately, easily and correctly. Ambiguous language creates confusion. The letter will serve the purpose if the receiver understands it in the same manner in which it is intended by the sender.

- (iii) **Accuracy** - The statements written in the letter should be accurate to, the best of the sender's knowledge. Accuracy demands that there are no errors in the usage of language - in grammar, spellings, punctuations etc. An accurate letter is always appreciated.
 - (iv) **Completeness** - A complete letter is one that provides all necessary information to the users. For example, while sending an order we should mention the desirable features of the goods, i.e., their quality, shape, colour, design, quantity, date of delivery, mode of transportation, etc.
 - (v) **Relevance** - The letter should contain only essential information. Irrelevant information should not be mentioned while sending any business correspondence.
 - (vi) **Courtesy** - Courtesy wins the heart of the reader. In business letters, courtesy can be shown/expressed by using words like please, thank you, etc.
 - (vii) **Neatness** - A neat letter is always impressive. A letter either handwritten or typed, should be neat and attractive in appearance. Overwriting and cuttings should be avoided.
- b) Outer Qualities** - The outer qualities of a good business letter refers to the appearance of the letter. It includes the quality of paper used, colour of the paper, size of the paper etc. Good quality paper gives a favourable impression in the mind of the reader. It also helps in documenting the letters properly. Let us discuss the various outer qualities of a good business letter.
- (i) **Quality of paper** - The paper used should be in accordance with the economic status of the firm. Now-a-days the cost of the paper is very high. Therefore, good paper should be used for original copy and ordinary paper may be used for duplicate copy.
 - (ii) **Colour of the Paper** - It is better to use different colours for different types of letters, so that the receiver will identify the letters quickly and prompt action can be taken.
 - (iii) **Size of the paper** - Standard size paper (A4) should be used while writing business letters. The size of the paper should be in accordance with the envelopes available in the market.
 - (iv) **Folding of letter** - The letter should be folded properly and uniformly. Care should be taken to give minimum folds to the letter so that it will fit the size of the envelope. If window envelope is used then folding should be done in such a way that the address of the receiver is clearly visible through the transparent part of the envelope.
 - (v) **Envelope** - The size and quality of the envelope also need special attention. The size of the letter should fit the size of the letters. The business firms use different types of envelopes i.e., ordinary envelope, window envelope, laminated envelope

etc. In window envelope there is no need to write the address of the receiver separately on the envelope. It is clearly visible through the transparent part on the face of the envelope, which may be called as window. In laminated envelope a thin plastic sheet or cloth is pasted on the inner side that gives extra protection to letters from being damaged during transit.
