

Business Communication Guide by Country

Canada

Business Attire:

- Business attire is conservative for both men and women. Traditional cuts of suits are preferred.

Meeting Etiquette:

- Conducting business in Canada is similar to the U.S., but etiquette is extremely important.
- Firm handshake when arriving and leaving.
- Men wait for women to extend their hand for a handshake.
- Use a person's title. Otherwise, use Mr. Mrs. Or Ms.
- Arrive on time for a meeting even if others are late. Time is more relaxed in French areas.
- People are introduced according to rank, not gender.
- Be humble and don't oversell your services. This could get you into legal trouble.
- Be approachable and accessible. Honor your commitments.

General Tips:

- Gifts are not given often, but they are given to close a business deal, contract, or project. Gifts for the office, liquor, or nice wine are common.
- Wait for the host to start a conversation about business after dinner. Business is typically not discussed at dinner.
- Canadians have their own distinct culture and find being considered the same as Americans offensive.

Business Communication:

- Use color to emphasize words in business letters.

Date July 1, 2012

Sender's Address
 GP & ASSOCIATES
 2653 SW Channing Avenue, Suite 400
 Denver, CO 80244
 gparker@gpaaccounting.com
 www.gpaaccounting.com

Inside Address
 Mr. Ta Turlington
 ACTION ITEMS
 2400 Crestview Parkway
 Denver, CO 80444

Salutation
 Dear Mr. Turlington:

Body Text
 I understand from our mutual acquaintance, Chad Johnson, that you are looking to retain an accounting firm to assist you in the sale of your business. I would welcome the opportunity to show you how GP & Associates was able to help Chad successfully sell his business earlier this year.

As you'll see on our Web site, my associates and I have extensive experience in financial accounting, internal audits, and tax compliance. For the past several years, we have specialized in business valuation and transition services for sellers. We enjoy working closely with clients throughout the sale process to ensure a smooth transition. As our clients can attest, our various pre-sale price improvement strategies can significantly optimize a business's sale price.

Should you be thinking of purchasing another business, please note that we also offer business acquisition services. For your reference, I have enclosed additional information describing GP & Associates' full range of services.

To set up an appointment to discuss your specific needs, please contact me at 303-459-0027. I know how busy you are, so I will give you a call on Tuesday to follow up if I haven't heard from you.

Closing "Call to Action"
 Best regards,

Signature Block
 Greg Parker

Enclosures Carbon Copy
 Enclosures
 CC:

Business Letter Template Fields:

Date: Use month, day, year format, e.g., March 3, 2012 or 3 March 2012

Sender's Address: It is a good idea to include sender's email and url, if available. Don't include this information if it's already incorporated into the letterhead design. This will allow customers to find your small business more quickly.

Inside Address: Use full name. Mr./Ms. is optional

Salutation: Be sure to use a colon at the end of the name, not a comma as in personal letters

Body Text: State why you are writing. Establish any connection/mutual relationship up front. Outline the solution, providing proof in the way of examples and expert opinions. Group related information into paragraphs

Closing "Call to Action": State what the reader needs to do and what you will do to follow up

Signature Block: Sign your letter in blue or black ink

Enclosures: Use if you have an enclosure

Carbon Copy: Use if you are sending a copy to additional person(s)

Use a professional tone.

Save casual, chatty language for email - your printed business letter should be friendly but more professional. As Scott Ober suggests in his book *Contemporary Business Communication*, "The business writer should strive for an overall tone that is confident, courteous, and sincere; that uses emphasis and subordination appropriately; that contains nondiscriminatory language; that stresses the "you" attitude; and that is written at an appropriate level of difficulty." That said, be sure to sound like yourself - you don't want your letter to read as if a machine wrote it.

Write clearly.

State your point early in your letter. To avoid any miscommunications, use straightforward, concise language. Skip the industry jargon and instead choose lively, active words to hold your reader's attention.

Resources:

www.cyborlink.com/besite/canada.htm

<https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/canadian-business-culture>

<https://xerox.ca/office/small-business/tips/buisness-letter/enca.html>

China

Style Considerations:

- from Purdue OWL <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/676/01/>
- North American business-letter norms transfer to Chinese contexts, with subtle differences.
- Less “cold calling” precedent in China vs. US (strangers still communicate, but via common acquaintance or some lead-in that positions the letter-writer in relation to the addressee (ideally communicating knowledge of the audience))

Example

-My long-time colleague, Mr. Li Jianguo, has often mentioned the quality of your company's electronics repairs.

-Your firm is growing, so of course you would be interested in finding out how to access new overseas markets.

- In business correspondence, only use titles and family names (not given names by themselves, or full name {this would be interpreted as strange or even rude, to say Mr. Aaron Qiu—just use Mr. Qiu})
- Use language to convey deference, respectful leadership, or equality of status

Example

-Three kinds of relationships: superior to subordinate (“xiaxing”), subordinate to superior (“shangxing”), and equal to equal (“pingxing”).

-“xiaxing” (ex., a memo announcing layoffs) and “shangxing” (ex., a human resources report to a supervisor) apply to internal communication.

-“pingxing” applies to external communication between equal representatives of two different companies.

Chinese Business Letter example

Greeting: Company's name or person you know, using colon

Hello Mr. Qiu (use title and family name):

First line asks how they are doing (inquire after their person, essentially?)

Explain our products in detail to the addressee

Explain how the product will be popular or successful for them

Provide contact information and ask if they have questions

Company stamp near signature

Signature line at bottom

Egypt

Egyptian Business Communication (left aligned)

المصرية التجارية الاتصالات (right aligned)

Introduction:

When writing documents for an Egyptian audience it is important to acknowledge the effects of the larger Arabic/Middle Eastern culture within Egypt. Many of the principles and cultural norms surrounding business in Arab culture will be applicable here. Arabic is read from right to left (as illustrated above), and it is common to see both English and Arabic in business communications as approximately 35% of its residents are speakers of English. As a former British colony it is helpful to note that when English is used in business contexts it will prefer the United Kingdom form of English when spoken and especially when written.

Interesting Facts:

(The following information is pulled from: <https://www.todaytranslations.com/doing-business-in-egypt>)

The official name of Egypt is Arab Republic of Egypt. * The official language is Arabic. * The capital and also the largest city is Cairo. * The population is estimated to 84 million.

Business Mentality:

- Your documents should include two dates: the Gregorian (Western) and the Hijrah (Arabic) date.
- Business will not proceed until your counterpart decides that they like you. The social side of the deal goes hand in hand with the work-related one.
- The pace of business is slower in Egypt than in the European working culture, so expecting immediate results is not wise.
- A typical business day is usually from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm in the summer and 9:00 am to 1:00 pm with an extra 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the winter
- No business is conducted on Friday - the Muslim holy day. Most people do not work on Thursdays either.
- Before setting a meeting, check that it is not Ramadan. Working hours for business and government offices are shortened during that period.

Greetings:

- It is wise to wait to see how your counterpart will greet you, since there are many different greeting styles.
- When addressing your Egyptian counterparts for the first time, you should use their title followed by their surname until invited to do otherwise. Titles are a sign of stature and are

viewed with pride; therefore, it is important to use them. If an Egyptian does not have a title, a courtesy title such as "Mr", "Mrs", or "Miss" is appropriate.

The art of conversation:

- It is advisable to have an Egyptian representative to explain the major points of your business in Arabic. Many educated Egyptians speak multiple languages, but they appreciate brevity and, therefore, would prefer Arabic.
- Do not be surprised if, at some point, voices are raised; it is not an argument, but just the way Egyptians discuss matters.
- Welcome topics of conversation include Egyptian achievements - both ancient and modern, the positive reputation of Egyptian leaders, Egyptian cotton, sports.
- Try to avoid enquiring about the female members of their family. Do not bring up Israel as a topic of conversation.

Business meetings and meals:

- Visitors are expected to follow Egyptian discretion standards (most of the body remains covered), but wearing traditional clothing may be considered offensive.
- Business cards should be printed in English on one side and Arabic on the other side. ● Presents are welcome, but never give or receive with the left hand.
- Do not "clean" your plate. It is polite to leave a small portion of food - it means you have had enough.
- Don't add salt to food, it is considered offensive.

France

French business culture thrives on formality. The list below includes important rules of conduct to keep in mind when writing for a French audience.

Business Writing:

- Salutations- Always address others using the appropriate formal salutations. Example: Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle.
- The golden rule- Always use “vous” rather than “tu”
- Content-The opening of a French business letter is one of the most important components of the document. It sets the tone of the letter and provides credibility. Similarly, the “meat,” of the letter is crucial. The body of the letter should be concise, to the point, and polite.
- Signing off- When signing off, use the same salutation that began the letter. Use a formal phrase such as, “Dans l’attente de votre réponse.”
- Document appearance-It is extremely important to be mindful of a letter’s arrangement. Consider the following image:



Business Practices:

Business etiquette in France is an integral part of the business interaction. It relies on politeness and formality. The list below includes important rules of conduct when interacting with French businesspeople.

- Always address people using the appropriate titles “monsieur,” and “madame.”
- Only use a first name when asked to.
- Use light, quick handshakes.
- Wear quality business attire.
- Use direct eye contact with colleagues.

- Do NOT discuss personal matters when engaged in business discussions.
- Do NOT be impatient.
- Do NOT be offended by rigorous debate. It is completely normal in French business culture.
- Provide a business card at the beginning of an engagement that includes French text as well as English text.
- Be aware of French dining etiquette. Many business meetings take place during lunch and dinner.

French Business Letter Example:

The following template is provided by Thoughtco.com:

New York, le 10 novembre 2012

Monsieur Georges UNTEL

Entreprise fictive

46, rue Jenesaisquoi

12345 UNEVILLE

Sonpays

*Monsieur Untel [**salutation**],*

*J'ai l'honneur de vous informer [**open letter**] que j'ai bien reçu votre lettre du 6 novembre 2000 [**confirm receipt**]. C'est avec plaisir [**express pleasure**] que j'accepte le poste de traductrice de votre site web que vous m'offrez [**accept/refuse offer**].*

*Je regrette vivement de ne pas pouvoir commencer immédiatement [**express regret**]. Je serais disponible à partir du 20 novembre [**availability/contact info**]. J'espère que vous voudrez bien me faire savoir si cette date vous conviendra [**make request**].*

*En vous remerciant de la confiance que vous me témoignez [**pre-close**], je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur Untel, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée [**close**].*

Laura K. Lawless

mon adresse, mon numéro de téléphone et cetera

Germany

Etiquette:

- Titles/surnames used in lieu of any other form of address
- Timeliness is essential for any business or personal dealing, being late is considered extremely rude
- Meetings generally start right away
- Communication is usually blunt and direct, straight to business
- Humor is not appreciated in most business meetings
- Business is conducted formally. There is little small chat especially about non-business topics.

Business Communication:

- Letters are addressed “up the chain of command” – the highest authority figure within the office you are addressing
- Printed materials are normally provided in both English and German
- Written letters are preferred to maintain a record of decisions and discussion
- Persons are usually addressed using their full names and business title
- Many Germans answer phones using their last name

Behavior:

- Style of dress is usually extremely formal, casual dress is frowned upon
- Gift giving is not part of business etiquette
- Contact from employers outside of work and after regular hours, is frowned upon

Great Britain

Typical Great Britain letter style

Source: <https://www.dailywritingtips.com/how-to-format-a-uk-business-letter/>

	123 Old Road Newtown London SW1 3AA
	21 st July 2008
Mr. Bob Jones Widgets Inc. 98 Anywhere Street Cambridge CB3 1GH	
Dear Mr. Jones,	
REQUEST FOR JOB APPLICATION PACK	
I am writing to ask for a job application pack for the role advertised on your website. Please find my address details above.	
Thank you for your time.	
Yours faithfully,	
<i>Tom Smith</i>	
Tom Smith	

Basic Contact/ Conduct:

- Introduction (in person): handshakes and salutations such as “good morning”, “good afternoon”, etc. are considered appropriate and correct.
- Preliminary meeting; business setting (in person): Use surnames following the title for example: Mr (for men), Mrs (for women) and Miss or Ms (for unmarried women). Formality is key.
- Language cues (in person): pet names like “love”, “pet”, “mate”, etc. are common and do not normally signal a deeper meaning.
- Cultural attitudes: More formal interaction is considered the cultural norm. More isolated culture, diplomatic as opposed to direct. Directness may be misinterpreted as confrontational.
- Use of Humour: Humour used to lighten up a tense situation. Does not imply incompetence or lack of seriousness. Self-deprecating as opposed to self-promoting. Self-promoting less likely to be taken seriously and/or appreciated.

Personal Titles:

- In written correspondence: “Written correspondence tends also to start with a formal address “Dear Sirs” (if you don’t know the names) and signing with “Yours faithfully”. If you do know the names, the form is “Dear Mr/Mrs X” and ending with “Yours sincerely”. Particularly in email exchange if it is a follow up reply, the need to use “Dear etc.” is not as important and some might simply write the main body of the message and end with “Best wishes” or “Kind regards”. With the increasing use of social media the use of “Dear” and names on networks such as Twitter are not necessary.” -<http://businessculture.org/northern-europe/uk-business-culture/business-communication/>

Business Conduct:

- Contracts (written): An agreement is not final/ complete until a written contract has been signed and notarized. Terms and conditions must also be included and all parties must be in agreement at the time the contract is signed.
- Business values: Honesty, trust, self-control, and creativity are their major cultural assets, while individualism, and professionalism are also valued.

Meeting Etiquette:

- Organization: Advanced preparation discouraged. Often follow a loosely defined agenda. Important issues that arise will not be ignored for lack of inclusion on agenda.
- The meeting is viewed as more of an open forum for debate of issues.

British vs. American English Conventions:

- Collective nouns: wording differs significantly. British grammar and American grammar differ.
American: the team is good British: the team are good

Italy

Common Greetings:

- Firm handshake (In a group, shake every individual's hand.)
- The use of professional titles is common and appreciated

Expectations:

- Punctuality is not a big concern. Be prepared for delays (and be patient)
- Italian is the official language, though many business people can communicate in English

Business Culture:

- Gift giving is not common. Unless there is a sense of friendship or familiarity, gifts are not usually exchanged. If you are close with the person, then small inexpensive gifts may be given.
- Dress formally (At the very least, dress professionally when conducting business and meeting someone for the first time.) Appearance is an important consideration in Italy.
- The exchange of business cards is common, and you should always be prepared to hand yours out.

Topics to Avoid:

- World War II
- The mafia
- Religion

Style of Business Communication:

- Discussion of personal information is customary. Expect questions about you, your family, your interests, etc. This does not necessarily mean that your business has earned their trust, however.
- Prefer face-to-face interaction
- It is common to express open disagreements in the workplace.

Formal vs. Informal:

- Italians are very tactile. They often gesture with their hands in formal settings as well as informal ones.
- Very little personal space left between two people. If you move away or keep your distance, it could be interpreted as rude.

Common Business Practices:

- It is important to establish a rapport before getting to the core of the business. Business is more relationship-oriented.
- Interruptions are more acceptable in meetings because they are trying to reach a conclusion quickly.

Other Things to Know:

- Bribery and corruption, though outlawed, are still perceived as problems in government and business. Be aware of what that might look like when conducting business.
- 17 is considered a “doomed number” . It is the equivalent of “13” in American culture—best to avoid it in general dealings with Italian people.

Japan

A Japanese business letter follows a simple, standard structure each time. It first begins with a greeting, similar to our “dear ____.” The greeting begins with “拝啓 (haitei)” or “謹啓 (kinkei),” both which could be roughly translated to “dear sirs” in the polite form of Japanese called “敬語 (keigo).” The greeting line will continue on with a comment about the season, the reader’s health, or the prosperity of their business.

Here are some greeting line examples from the site Tofugu.

(<https://www.tofugu.com/japanese/how-to-write-letters-in-japanese/>)

SPRING:

JAPANESE

はる ひ きょう
春の日うらかな 今日このごろ...

ENGLISH

In this time of beautiful spring days...

JAPANESE

にほん
日本はあたたかくなっているころでしょう...

ENGLISH

I guess it must be getting warmer in Japan...

AUGUST:

JAPANESE

きび ざんしょ つづ
厳しい残暑が続いておりますが...

ENGLISH

The oppressive heat continues to linger...

Example 1: A Letter Preserving the Traditional Style
(translation)

AZ409
April 7, 1981

Showa Machine Works Ltd.
Attention of Sales Department

5-1 Moriyama Maguro
Moriyamaku, Nagoya 463
Asumi Trading Co., Ltd.

President: Nobuaki Iwai

Allow us to open
with all reverence to you:

The season for cherry blossoms is here with us and everybody is beginning to feel refreshed. We sincerely congratulate you on becoming more prosperous in your business.

We have an inquiry from a foreign customer and shall be very happy to have your best price and technical literature for the item mentioned below:

Wire Drawing Machine
6 units for Taiwan

Specifications:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Finished sizes: | 0.04 mm to 0.10 mm |
| 2. Spooler: | Single |
| 3. Speed: | Min. 1500 meters/min. |
| 4. Type of spooler: | Expanding arbor |
| 5. Capstan: | Must be covered with ceramic |
| 6. Dimension of spool: | |
| Flange diam. | 215mm |
| Barrel diam. | 163mm |
| Bore diam. | 97mm |
| Traverse | 200mm |

The above are all the information available for this inquiry. We ask you to recommend a machine that can meet these specifications.

We shall be very pleased if you will study the inquiry and let us have your reply as soon as possible. We solicit your favor.

Let us close with
great respect to you.

Above, you will find a general format of a Japanese letter from
<http://course.sdu.edu.cn/G2S/eWebEditor/uploadfile/20131201162906020.pdf>

Letter Format:

- Letters and emails should be organized so that the important information is visually separated from the niceties, which is why the greeting is isolated to its own line.
- Write a message introducing yourself and isolate to its own line. Then, create a new paragraph to convey the main message. Every individual message should be addressed in its own paragraph.
- Japanese people and Japanese language, in general, are quite concise. They value the ability to “read the air” and will not say more than necessary to get the point across.
- Finally, you will end with a closing greeting. From Tofugu, here are a few examples of closing comments, which are similar to our formats in English.

MAKING A REQUEST

JAPANESE

どうかよろしくお ねが いた 願い 致します。

ENGLISH

Kindly look after this matter for me.

GIVE MY REGARDS

JAPANESE

おくさま よろ ねが 奥様に 宜しくお 願います

ENGLISH

Please give my regards to your wife.

GOOD HEALTH

JAPANESE

さむ おり からだ たいせつ お寒さの折からお 体をお大切に

ENGLISH

Please take care of yourself since it's cold.

Mexico

Mexican Business Letters:

- Short and to the point; it is discouraged to exceed one page. Printing should be on one side only
- Logo is typically in the center
- Headings differ depending on context and relationship between writer and receiver
- Introduction usually has a cliché phrase making some reference to the letter you're sending/have previously received
- Body begins with the most important points "meat" and leaves lesser points for end
- Employs the 5C's—Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete, and Courteous
- Closings are typically longer than English letters and may or may not include flowery language
- Signature is usually on the left but it may appear in the middle or even on the right. It is accompanied by company title and legible name (if signature is unreadable). Two hard returns between close and signature, unlike the three hard returns in American letter writing
- Writing style is mostly formal

Source: <http://www.englishspanishlink.com/learn-spanish/letters-emails/letter-format.htm#intro>

General tips for doing business in Mexico:

- Trust is more important than professional experience
- Most of the conversation revolves around general topics; the main point isn't discussed until the end
- Time is not money; money is for enjoying life. Mexico has more patience in business practices
- It is customary to be late by 15 to 30 minutes, if not more
- Dress is formal for business meetings, unless it is very hot
- Business greeting is handshake, regardless of gender
- Language seeks agreement, ending in "no" usually: You agree, no?
- They don't tell you how problems will be solved; just "it will be solved"
- Word of mouth is valuable
- What works in the US doesn't always work in Mexico.

Source: <http://www.mexgrocer.com/business-in-mexico.html>

Tienda Flamenca S.A.

C/ Portaceli, 32 - 6ºD

41018 SEVILLA

Tel: 954 009 456

E-Mail: tiendaflamenca@yahoo.es

X

10 de mayo de 20..

s / ref.: 010/MG

A la atención del Sr. Pedro García

Telas S.A.

Avda. de la Constitución s/n

28010 MADRID

Muy señor mío:

Introduction...

Body of letter...

Close...

Signature

adj. lista de precios