

January 2009

Dear Friend,

## **How important are words to your business?**

If you're a secretary or a businessman, you work with words on paper all day long.

But even if you're working on cars or driving a forklift, words are more important to your success than you might think. For example, have you ever written a letter of complaint, asking for a refund? Or how about a cover letter for a resume, for that job you really want?

## **This issue addresses a subject many people forget about these days: writing letters the old-fashioned way.**

Yes, despite the growing popularity of communicating via the Internet, we still need to know how to write a letter that delivers the results we want. And sending a letter via "snail mail" is sometimes the only way to do that.

Although there are many different types of letters, I've described only three here, along with a resource to help you with all types of letters.

## **Why Write Letters? Isn't Email Good Enough?**

*by Chris Wilson*

I admit, it IS hard to sit down and write a letter these days. I'd much rather just sit down and dash off a quick e-mail to keep in touch with people. But there's something about getting a letter in the mail, especially when it's handwritten, that makes a connection with people that e-mail messages aren't able to do.

As a business owner, it's not practical for you to be sending handwritten notes to your customers. So how do you establish that "personal touch" without seeming unprofessional? You write letters.

Letters aren't just for your customers, though. They can be for prospective employers (cover letters). They can be for top-level executives of companies you do business with (complaint letters). Or they can be for potential donors to your favorite charity (fundraising letters).

Listed below are three types of letters you may need to write someday (if you haven't already), and a few tips on each:

**Complaint** - The first thing to remember when writing a letter of complaint is that most companies are eager to solve any disputes with customers quickly. Follow the steps listed below to increase your chances of getting good results with your letter:

- Be brief. Keep your letter to one page, if possible.
- Include enough details to back up your claim.
- Send only photocopies of receipts and other documents.
- Don't threaten.

If the first letter does not get the response you were hoping for, you can follow it up with a stronger one (yet still respectful). If you still haven't received a response after the second or third letter, send one to the president or CEO of the company. This should only be a last resort, however.

**Thank You** - This type of letter can be sent in a wide variety of situations, ranging from thanking someone for their contribution to showing interest in a new position. The most important tips for this type of letter are:

- Write the thank-you as soon as possible after the event.
- Address the letter to a specific person, if possible.
- Include details about the event.
- Proofread carefully.

Don't think of thank-you letters as "optional." Statistics show that the chances of a job candidate being seriously considered for a new position drops by almost half if they don't follow up the interview with a thank-you note.

**Sales** - More than any other type of letter, this is the one you'll need to master if you want to be truly successful in your business. Listed below are the ingredients that should be in every sales letter:

- Strong headline.
- Benefits of your product. Why prospective customers should buy from you instead of someone else.
- Compelling offer.
- Sense of urgency.
- No-risk guarantee.
- Postscript (P.S.). This is where you can re-state the benefits of your product or service.
- Use real stamps on the envelope, and labels that express urgency.

## RESOURCES

[\*Everyday Letters for Busy People: Hundreds of Samples You Can Adapt at a Moment's Notice\*](#) (by Debra Hart May and Regina McAloney) is a book that will serve as a valuable resource the next time you need to write a difficult letter. Matters of etiquette, proper formats, and figuring out whether you really need to send a letter in the first place (versus an e-mail message) are just a few of the topics covered.

Even if you manage to find the perfect template to help you craft an effective letter, don't forget to add your own "voice" to the words you write. Customers are still people . . . they want to know you care.

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If you need help drafting powerful and effective sales letters, I can help. I offer a variety of other writing services as well, both online and print. Check out my services at [www.worddesign.biz/services.html](http://www.worddesign.biz/services.html).

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Word Design

[www.worddesign.biz](http://www.worddesign.biz)