LESSON 23

INQUIRY/REQUEST

Outline:

Persuasive Requests
Replies to Inquiries

o Give the Exact Information Requested

o Express Appreciation for the Inquiry

o Sell Your Organization or Product

o End with a Positive Closing
Replies to Persuasive Requests

o Start with a Cheerful “Yes”

o Confirm Details of the Request and Acceptance

o Offer to Do More than Requested

Refusal to Inquiries / Requests

o Start With a Friendly Buffer Paragraph

o Tell the Reader Why You Cannot Say Yes

o Avoid a Negative Refusal

o Give Encouragement And, When You Can, Give Help Model Letters

Letters of Recommendations

Writing appreciation Letters

Writing Letters of Congratulation

Writing Announcement, Invitation, and Welcome Letters Writing Get-Well Wishes and Sympathy Letters

Refusal to Inquiries / Requests

When you must say no, use the indirect plan and deliver the bad news gently and tactfully. Strive to convey courtesy and thoughtfulness through your letter. A gracious refusal is much like a persuasive request - you are asking your reader to accept your decision as the only fair answer under the circumstances.

Approach the letter as an opportunity to “talk it over”

Give your reader whatever encouragement you can. Don’t say a plain “No” like, “I must decline this invitation or this order or refuse this request,” you will probably write negatively. But you will probably write constructively if you think. “What can I do to encourage this person even though I have to say no?”

Remember that a “no” letter has two purposes:

1. To say no

2. To keep the goodwill of the reader

To accomplish both purposes, consider the suggestions listed below:

1. Start with a Friendly Buffer Paragraph

When you receive a letter that begins, “It is my unpleasant duty to inform you that…” or “I’m
sorry to tell you that we cannot grant your request…” in such situations don’t you immediately
close your mind to whatever else the writer may say? You think that the writer is not interested in
helping you in building goodwill or in keeping your friendship. The writer seems concerned only
with saying no and getting an unpleasant task completed. But suppose the letter begins this way:

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Your proposal for a joint meeting of the faculty and Future Business Leaders of Pakistan (FLP) is exciting.

Aren’t you more likely to read the rest of the message with an open mind?

2. Tell the Reader Why You Cannot Say Yes

In your explanation, imply that you would rather say yes than no. And try to compliment the reader in some way.

3. Avoid a Negative Refusal

Give explanation of your refusal in the beginning. A blunt “No” should be avoided. If your letter
does good job of explaining, the reader will realize that you cannot do what he or she has asked -
the “No” is inferred. If you must state your refusal (to be sure your reader knows you are not
granting the request), avoid emphasizing it or putting it in negative terms. Sometimes limiting
expressions, such as only or exclusively, may substitute for negatives such as regret, apologies,
cannot, and so on. Notice how this actual business letter gives the negative and almost avoids the
positive points:

Dear Sir,

We are very sorry that your portrait has been damaged. This rarely happens to Malik photos.
 I regret to inform that we cannot hold negatives for a long period of time, because we lack sufficient storage space; therefore, we will not be able to reprint your portrait. I am, however, processing a refund in the amount of Rs. 500/-, which you should receive within the next six weeks.

Please accept our apologies for this problem, as we greatly value your patronage. With kindest personal regards

Yours sincerely,

Now study the following letter. It shows interest in the reader and tries to keep the business while refusing the request.

Dear Mr. Babar,

We were happy to hear that your family was very pleased with your portraits. And we are sorry that one was damaged. Because our storage space is limited; however, all negatives are destroyed ten days after an order has been filled.

A refund in the amount of Rs. 500/- is being processed and you will receive it soon. Please do let us know if there is anything else we can do for you.

Yours sincerely,

4. Give Encouragement Aand, When You Can, Give Help

Sometimes you can take the sting out of a “No” with a helpful suggestion. For example, a department store representative, in declining an order for an article not carried by the store, may tell the customer where he or she can make the purchase. The reservations manager of a hotel, not able to make the reservations requested, suggested:

If you can conveniently defer your arrival in Murree until May 15, we shall be glad to reserve a double room for you and your wife. If you must be here on May 10, you might write for help to the Greater New Hotel Murree at 105 the Mall, Murree.

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Model Letters

(1)

Gentlemen,

Please send me two copies of your free catalogue, “Prime gifts” which was advertised in the
March issue of Ad Vision International. I plan to keep a copy and send the other to my friend.

Thank you

Yours very truly,

(2)

(The situation is same)

Gentlemen,

I am impressed by your advertisement in the March issue of Ad Vision International
concerning your free brochure, “Prime Gifts.” This seems like the answer to the most popular
question, “What shall we give our outstanding employees when we want to reward them?”

I’d like six copies one for myself and one for each of our general managers in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Islamabad.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Reply to the above Letter

(3)

Dear Mr. Gul,

In a courier service, I am sending you six copies of our catalog, “Prime Gifts”. I am very pleased that you want to circulate it.

The catalog explains everything but I do want to say that for quantities of 20 or more gifts we offer an attractive discount.

Please let me know if I can be of help in other ways.

Yours cordially,

Letters of Recommendations

When facts are mainly favorable or neutral, follow these guidelines:

1. Main Idea

State the applicant’s full name and what his or her relationship is to you as an employee,
customer, friend, etc. Mention dates, length of time, and type of job, credit, to whatever is
relevant.

Add an expression of pleasure to your letter.

2. Explanation

Answer all questions, direct or understood.

Support your statements of evaluation (excellent, outstanding, etc.) with specific facts about performance record.

For a job applicant:

a) Tell specific job duties that applicant performed.

b) Discuss those duties relevant to the position for which the applicant is a
 candidate, if known.

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c) Mention, when desirable, work habits that show personality characteristics.

3. Ending

Include, if possible, a friendly statement of your personal opinion about the applicant’s probable fitness for the position or for credit, etc.

Be sure to correlate your opinion with documented facts.

Writing Appreciation Letters

Just as you can find many occasions for writing personal thank-you messages, you will also find many opportunities for writing thank-you letters to build goodwill of your organization.
 Letters of appreciation are often sent to:

• A new customer for a first order.

• An established customer for a particularly large order.

• The payment of an overdue bill.

• The last installment of a special-account purchase.

• An individual or an organization that responds to a special appeal or completes a
 good job.

• Someone in your own organization who makes a suggestion that proves
 worthwhile or who does something extra.

Occasionally (it should happen much more often!) such letters are also sent to:

• Customers who order regularly and pay their bills on time.

• Employees who continually do their work well.

• Individuals and organizations that cooperate on everyday jobs but get little
 attention.

• Other opportunities for sending thank-you messages include special occasions,
 special services, and extra responsibilities.

• Consider the following example; it is a thank you letter to a guest speaker. Dear Raheel,

Thank you for the time and effort you put into your presentation for the Association of Charted Accountants meeting yesterday. I felt your talk was very well received by the members of the association.

I appreciate your willingness to make this public appearance as a representative of Community College. You handled the topic very well, and your professional approach was an example:

Sincerely,

Here is another thank-you letter to the old customers:

Dear Customers,

As the New Year begins, Rehman stores thanks you for your friendship and for the business you have given us during the past year.

The expansion of our store will be completed in a few weeks. We can then offer you the variety of household items in the city.

During the coming year we will do our best to serve you in every possible way. We hope that the New Year will be a happy and successful year for you.

Cordially,

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Writing Letters of Congratulation

A message of congratulation or commendation is much like a message of appreciation:

• Each recognizes and expresses interest in a worthwhile achievement.

• A letter of appreciation says ‘thank you” and implies “well done”.

• When your friends celebrate special events or receive honors, you want to
 congratulate them. In the same way, business people use congratulatory letters on

such occasions as anniversaries, graduations, births, marriages, new businesses or homes, promotions, elections, retirements, and various awards and rewards. These letters convey a pleasant message and keep a favorable image of you and your organization in the recipient’s mind.

For instance, this brief congratulatory note was sent to an executive who recently became president of the company:

Dear Shahid,

Congratulations on your recent promotion to president of Community Bank. It is well
deserved.

I am sure that the business will grow and prosper under your capable leadership.

Yours sincerely,

Study Another Example:

Dear Mrs. Rafi,

Congratulations on being named to the Governor’s task Force to Study Equal Opportunities in Business, Industry, and Government. I was very pleased to read that you have been chosen as one of the ten executives for this task force.

If anyone at Ahmed Textile can help you and the other members of the task force, please let me know. We will be delighted to be of service

Yours sincerely,

Writing Letters that Announce, Invite, or Welcome

Announcements and Invitations

Goodwill announcements and invitations include:

Announcements of a new business, a new location, or an expansion or reorganization of
facilities.

These usually include an invitation to visit.

Announcements of the appointment of a new official or a new representative of the organization.

Announcements of a new service or policy, often inviting the reader to use it, for instance, when a store announces that it will be open an extra evening each week.
A bank announces a new direct deposit plan.

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Welcome Letters

Welcoming letters are written for many occasions. These messages may be morale builders. Usually they have a definite sales flavor, as:

• New members of a club.

• New customers.

• New subscribers.

• New charge account customers.

• New dealers.

These messages discuss organization services and products and invite readers to call or visit, but they avoid specific sales promotion.

Notice the friendly tone and service attitude of this letter from a bank president to new customer:

Writing Get-Well Wishes and Sympathy Letters

When a personal friend or a business acquaintance is ill, a letter from you is welcome. If the illness is not serious and recovery is expected, you can send a humorous get-well card or a
cheerful, happy letter. If the illness is serious or the person is getting over a major operation, then send a more subdued letter. That person will not be in a mood for jokes!

Be optimistic when you write to someone who is ill. Mention once at the beginning of the letter how sorry you are that the person is ill. From then on talk about a return to normal life, as the writer of the following letter did:

Dear Mr. Naeem,

I am sorry to hear that you’re in the hospital and hope that with rest and care you’ll be up and about again soon.

Meanwhile, if there’s anything I can do for you, just give me a call. I wish you a speedy recovery and quick return to the office.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Mr. Ali,

The management of PDS School is interested in leasing 2 economy vans to provide

transportation facility to their students within the Lahore City area. We were referred to your

company by Bright Associates and would like to inquire about the terms of your leasing contracts as well as monthly leasing rates.

Please send detailed information concerning mileage limits, maintenance requirements, and corporate discounts to the mailing address above. If possible, we would prefer to receive the above information electronically at our e-mail address listed above, as this would speed up our information-collecting and decision-making process.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

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Study the following:

Dear Ms. Ahmed,

We are in the process of setting up a new office in Lahore and would like to compare prices from the local office furniture companies.

We will need 12 desks and 24 chairs, six metal filing cabinets, a 4.5’ x 6’ dry erase board, and a conference table that seats ten. The conference table and ten of the chairs should be of high quality wood. As the office is opening on September 6, we would need the furniture delivered by the 2nd. We are looking to spend no more than Rs. 100,000.00.

If you would like to offer a quote or discuss our needs in more detail, please call me. We hope to have all our quotes by next Monday.

Sincerely,

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