

# CHAPTER 7

## SALES LETTER

### Outline

1. Characteristics and Organization of Sales Letters
2. Characteristics and Organization of Sales Advertisements
3. Grammar Review: Infinitives

### Main Ideas

1. Sales letters are letters that aim to persuade the reader to act in certain ways i.e. to donate to charities, to subscribe to magazines, and to buy products or services. Sales letters must attract attention, create interest, convince the reader, and generate calls for direct favorable action. The language used in sales letters is vivid, clear, direct, and meaningful.

2. Sales advertisements also aim at persuading the reader to act as the ad writer intends. Instead of writing in a letter form, you may write in an advertisement form to run on television, on radio or in the newspaper. The language in sales advertisements is clear, direct, and concise.

3. Infinitives are useful elements of grammar that enhance an effective business writing style.

## **Objectives**

### **Students are able to:**

1. Write sales letters correctly and completely.
2. Write follow-up sales letters correctly and effectively.
3. Use infinitives correctly in writing business correspondence.

There are many ways to persuade customers to buy your products or services, to donate money or other items for charity, or to follow your suggestion or act in certain ways. Such methods are to run an advertisement on television, on radio, or in printed materials, to contact personally by direct sale, or to send sales letters. All of these methods aim to accomplish the same purpose, that is, to convince prospective customers to act as you would like them to.

However, when you consider the fees for these different methods, you will see that using mass media, i.e. television, radio, and printed materials, adds greatly to the cost. This has to be weighed against their effectiveness due to their wide audience and ability to reach potential customers over great distances. Personal contact consumes a lot of time. The alternative for a less costly but more effective approach, comes down to sending sales letters.

The occasions on which to write sales letters varies. You write sales letters to present your new products, to invite magazine subscriptions, to donate to charity, etc. A good sales letter writer must master high competence in English writing skills

because writing sales letters involves clear, vivid, and persuasive language. Remember that the purpose of these letters is to persuade your readers to see, think, and act in the way you would like them to.

## **1. Characteristics and Organization of Sales Letters**

Sales letters need more expertise to write because most readers consider them junk mail. It is up to each writer to employ strategies to attract the reader's attention and hold his or her interest, so that he or she continues to read your letter thoroughly, and finally acts in the way you want. There are three important parts of a sales letter that you need to practice in order to write them effectively. These parts are:

### **1.1 The opening**

The opening of a sales letter is the most important part because most readers know, from the beginning, the purpose of such a letter. They tend to glance through a sales letter without much attention. Therefore, you need to begin your letter attractively, strikingly, or interestingly. Some methods of beginning a sales letter are as follows:

### **1.1.1 The opening with a question**

The questions you raise at the beginning of your sales letter may interest the reader and hold his or her attention to the end. Such appealing questions may include the following:

- Whose life is it that you are caring for?
- Have you ever been concerned with your health, beauty and psychological condition?
- Would you ignore this amount?
- Are you a wife who both works outside and takes care of the housework?
- Do you feel awkward when asked to make a speech?
- Have you ever imagined spending a peaceful vacation on the topmost part of the hills?

### **1.1.2 The opening with a factual statement**

Thought-provoking factual statements that concern the reader's well-being, living standard and the like, may get your reader to look carefully through your sales letter. Such factual statements may read like these:

- Our new type of air-conditioner is proved to save 25 percent of your electricity bill.
- Save more and earn more for as little as 100 baht a day from our bakery courses.

- 2 kilos lost within 3 days, just follow our diet.

### **1.1.3 The opening with a special campaign**

Psychologically, most people like to enjoy special privileges, such as discounts, free gifts, rebates, and the like. The opening with such special offers may attract the reader's attention to follow your campaign. Examples of some exciting and challenging offers are as follows:

- Special 10% discount for every 6 cans purchased.
- We give 10% discount for every item until September 31, 1997 only.
- Now we are in the promotional period, so we offer 30% discount for the first 50 guests who visit us.
- Buy Goldentone today and a specially designed carry-all set of skin care will be yours free.
- A 6-piece gift set will be yours with any purchase over \$15.
- A special 2-year warranty is being offered now.
- Take a \$10 rebate off when you buy any model of "Easy Shower."
- Buy one "Smile" razor today and get one free.

#### **1.1.4 The opening with good qualities of products or benefits of the service**

Mentioning the good points of products or service will definitely appeal to customers because these will directly benefit them. In other words, they are reader-slanted letters which usually get more attention from the readers. Some examples of such openings are as follows:

- Our jumbo size microwave can make your big family happy with fast meals any time they desire.
- Rely on our service of housing construction and you will never regret building a permanent, peaceful home.
- The most silent, spacious, colorful and safe refrigerator you will ever find.
- You will enjoy 52 issues of Outdoor Sports with a one year free membership of 10 national parks, if you subscribe today. The offer ends October 31, 1997.

Other attractive ways of getting the reader's attention may include colorful pictures, catchy words or expressions, and distinctive fonts. However, do not elaborate the facts. Elaboration creates the feeling of insincerity and a sense of propaganda.

## **1.2 Body**

The body is as important as the opening. After becoming interested in your opening, the reader will read the following paragraphs attentively. Therefore, you need to write strategically to hold your reader's attention throughout the whole letter. In the body, you may try to persuade the reader by describing the quality of your products, their convenience and effectiveness, and the benefits that the reader will be entitled to, after purchasing, subscribing to, or participating in, such products or programs. If you are selling consumer products, emphasize their value according to reliable academic standards. If you are selling a service, illustrate the benefits or advantages to the reader, after getting the service.

The golden rule is to put an emphasis on the benefits and advantages. Some sentences that can be used in the body are as follows:

### **An offer for a free trial period:**

- Order our shape-up diet and use it for two weeks. If your waist doesn't get slimmer, return it at our cost. There is certainly no obligation in buying it.

**An offer of a warranty:**

- This new model of microwave oven has been tested and approved by the Board of Commercial Products. Buy one now and receive a 5-year warranty which includes repair and replacement of this product.

**An offer of a free sample:**

- If you have ever had any problem concerning the filing system, here are the files we are proud of. To assist you on your busy days, we offer 5 free samples of our product for your convenience. Should you find them helpful, order from us. We are offering a special discount on the large number of files you need.

**A referral to a proven statistics:**

- Our air-conditioners are more durable, quieter and cooler, than 20% of other models.

**An endorsement from well-known persons or celebrities:**

- After we launched our new phase of the Atrium Office Building, Mr. Thomas Hicks, the Vice President for Planning and Development of



Alpine Real Estate Inc. bought two units and commented that the environment is excellent for business since it is in the center of town.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

Although the beginning and body of a sales letter play important roles in attracting the reader's attention and persuading the reader to try the product or service, the conclusion is the part that asks the reader to act. It is always best to make it clear in the conclusion what the reader needs to do. Time constraint may be a good policy. You must ask the reader to act now; otherwise, the campaign ends and the special offer will not be effective, and the like.

#### **The following are some examples for writing a conclusion:**

- On a trial basis, please fill in the form below and mail it back to us. The postage stamp is already paid for. The last day for this program is 31 March 1997.
  
- This special offer is effective till 13 April 1997. Fill in the attached form, indicate your size and color choice and return it to us. You will be billed later. The delivery cost is free.
  
- Send your order today and be the envy of your neighbors with our newly designed microwave oven.

- Please let us know your favorite color of our latest washing machine and it will be delivered to your home the next day with 10% discount for the cash buyer.

Keep in mind that your conclusion should state the benefits the reader will receive after acting in the way he or she is persuaded to. Do not annoy the reader by stating the loss he or she will experience because of not acting in the way you want him or her to do. The following are some concluding statements that you should avoid:

- If you don't order today, you will regret it later on.
- Such opportunities as we are offering do not come often. Why delay?
- You will certainly regret not subscribing to this magazine.

**Some examples of sales letters are as follows:**

A.

**Fountain of Youth Health Club**  
**4517 South Lane, Rochester**  
**New York 14603**

18 June 19. .

Ladies,

Have you ever been concerned with your health, beauty and psychological condition? We are quite certain that every woman naturally desires to be healthy, attractive and happy. Why don't you allow your resolution to come true? Come and see us at Fountain of Youth Health Club. We have all the essentials for you to reach your goal.

At Fountain of Youth Health Club, we have a large number of highly qualified, efficient, skillful personnel from various well-known physical education colleges to help, train and serve you. We are absolutely confident that you would be satisfied with our service and become more beautiful, healthier, and happier after you have come to visit us:

From 1 March to 1 May 1997, Fountain of Youth Health Club is offering a 50% discount to all customers who come for our service. Call 217-7114 ext. 149 for appointments.

We are looking forward to serving you soon.

Cordially yours,

*Sarah Smith*

Sarah Smith

Director

B.

**Suffolk Electric Appliances Co. Ltd.**

**Tom Brook Street**

**Norwich NR4 7TJ**

Dear Madam,

Have you ever felt annoyed with wasting time cooking for your big family? If yes, we are proud to present our newest and most convenient electric grinder to help you relax and enjoy cooking. No more time spent on grinding things like peppers, chili, nuts, etc., for so long with sweat and toil. Your husband and children's favorite dishes can easily be prepared. The enclosed pamphlet also shows different models and colors for you to choose from. Check the boxes on the form below to indicate your choice and mail it back to us. If you desire to pay now, send us a check or money order; otherwise, we will bill you later. In case you need a demonstration, please tell us the time that would be convenient.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

*Samuel Richardson*

Samuel Richardson

Sales Manager

**Activity 1A**

**You are Danny Jackson, Sales Manager of Life Long Insurance Inc., 1278 St. Benedict Square, Detroit, Michigan 48207. Write a sales letter to prospective customers inviting them to join a “College Education for Your Children” program.**

**Activity 1B**

**You are Jimmy Johnson, Sales Manager of World Business Magazine, 1482 West Park Street, Chicago, Illinois 60612. Write a sales letter persuading your reader to subscribe to your magazine.**

**2. Characteristics and Organization of Sales Advertisements**

To reach the masses, many companies are willing to allot the budget for advertisements. These ads may run on television, on radio, in newspapers, magazines, and the like. Writing sales advertisements is different from writing sales letters because the former require more expertise in English writing style. It is

important that you carefully select the words that best represent your idea and that will persuade your reader in the way you intend. While sales letters approach a narrower targeted market group, sales advertisements reach a wider one. Colorful pictures and graphic designs play an important role in writing a sales advertisement. The language must be concise, direct, clear and meaningful.

**The following are some examples of sales advertisements:**

**A.**

HE who drinks, gets drunk

HE who gets drunk, falls asleep

HE who falls asleep, does not SIN

HE who doesn't sin, goes to HEAVEN

SO, Let's drink SINLESS beer

AND GO TO HEAVEN

\* Special 10% discount for every 6 cans purchased

Available at local stores in your area!

**B.**

HELLO !!

**Birthday ?**

**Anniversary?**

**A small party?**

Food and fun-filled activities are available

For You !

Come visit us at “**HELLO**” Restaurant

19/69 Russell Square, Denton, TX 76201

Tel. 314-1499

**\*\* “Ladies Night” every Wednesday !!**

**C.**

Whose life is it you are caring for?

In the mid of stormy night .....

Driving among crazy motorists in busy streets .....

Would you let it happen? ..... The **LOSS** of your loved ones .....

**PREVENTIVE TIRE ... Series 5**

**IS YOUR CHOICE !!**

Some companies follow their sales goals through by writing follow up sales letters to further convince their prospective customers to take action as they have planned. Only when you are handling a large deal or expensive merchandise is it worthwhile to write follow-up sales letters. In some cases, follow-up sales letters are in a series of five to ten letters. These letters vary with different appeals. However, they are short and go direct to the point. They also show a natural development in each consecutive letter.

**Here is an example of a follow-up sales letter:**

We note that you have not yet taken advantage of receiving our three free gifts when you allow us to demonstrate our latest color printers for your office. May we remind you that this special offer only comes once a year and the campaign period will end on 31 July 1997. Act now and your office will be one of the most modernized. Your paperwork will be of more quality and these printers will save you a lot of time.

To succeed in writing sales letters, you need to master a high level of English writing skill. Keep a good English-English dictionary at hand. A thesaurus is also recommended. Remember that even a native speaker needs the professional help of dictionaries and thesaurus in his or her argumentative and persuasive writing. Try to write concisely and directly to the point. In other words, carefully select your words



so that they will serve your purpose of calling for your reader's action of buying your products or services.

**Activity 2A**

**Write a sales advertisement for a travel agency. Invite your reader to a beach resort.**

**Activity 2B**

**Write a sales advertisement for a Trust. Invite your reader to deposit in this Trust.**

**3. Grammar Review: Infinitives**

Infinitives are useful in writing business correspondence. Review the function of infinitives and do the following exercises. The knowledge of infinitives will help you write business correspondence effectively and correctly.

**Activity 3 A**

**Using the words in the parentheses, complete the following sentences with the correct form of the infinitive. Add an object before the infinitive when necessary.**

1. The guard (help) ..... (find) ..... the missing file.

2. Mr. Jones agreed (move) ..... his office.
3. Mrs. Brooks allowed (use) ..... her warehouse.
4. The hall clock doesn't work. It needs (repair) .....
5. He has failed, even after several attempts, (set) ..... a new company.
6. The manager has decided that it is too late (change) ..... the commuter's agreement.
7. Louisa is very happy (choose) ..... by the committee to be a delegate at that conference.
8. My professor has been encouraging me (apply) ..... for that position.
9. Linda has been very careful (touch, not) ..... the wet paint in her new office.
10. Do you have time this afternoon (go) ..... with me to the factory?

### **Activity 3 B**

**Complete the sentences with infinitive phrases.**

1. We are delighted .....

2. She is not expected .....
3. The manager is very careful .....
4. Don is determined .....
5. My manager asked me .....
6. It is always a pleasure .....
7. It might be a good idea .....
8. The president believes that it must be interesting .....
9. Mrs. Nicoles says that it is not easy .....
10. It was difficult for me .....

*College assignments and writing you do on the job are inevitably directed to others—an audience whose attitudes toward you and your subject can vary from sympathetic, to hostile, to indifferent. Getting a grasp of that audience and of your entire writing situation can help you make accurate decisions about how to approach your subject and your audience—how much to tell them about the subject, how you want them to perceive your attitude toward the subject, how you want them to perceive your attitude toward them, and how you want them to perceive you.*

*Richard C. Gebhardt and Dawn Rodrigues*

*Writing: Processes and Intentions, 130.*