

RESPONSE LETTER

+ What is Response Letter?

According to Quible and Others, “Letter of response to inquiries are messages that provide the reader with information about products, services and persons.”

So, a response letter answer letter written in response to the inquiry letter. The response letter should be written as early as possible. A prompt reply suggests that the seller is fully conversant with business etiquette and has a genuine respect for the buyer and his interest.

+ Rules for Drafting Enquiry Reply Letter:

Enquiries must be replied promptly, even if the reply is a negative one. If the reply is favourable, tell the inquirer the good news immediately. If the reply is negative, apply an indirect approach. Drafting a reply letter or quotation letter is not an easy task. Since it is considered as a sales letter, it must be written with due care. A response letter provides the answers or information requested in a letter of inquiry. The objective is to satisfy the reader with an action that fulfils their request.

If you have neither the information requested nor the authority to reply, forward the inquiry on to the correct person. If you are the correct person, be prompt with your reply. Address every question courteously, even those that do not seem relevant.

Take into account that your reader may lack your expertise. Keep your response on point and avoid going beyond the scope of the reader's request.

When responding to a forwarded letter, inform your reader in your opening paragraph that you are the correct contact person for all future communications. In your closing paragraph, express your willingness to be of further assistance.

The following rules should be taken into consideration while drafting a reply or quotation letter.

- Refer to the date and reference number of the letter.
- Thank the party for his letter and show appreciation for his interest in your company, its products or service.
- Sincerely answer all the questions in the letter of inquiry.
- Add relevant information in the form of a short description of goods, prices, advantages, favourable terms etc.
- Mention the mode and terms of payment, place and time of delivery, method of transport, charges on account of sales tax, freight and insurance and packing and forwarding charges.
- State the time for which the offer is valid if time is an important factor.

- State whether the price list, catalogue, sample etc. are enclosed or they are being sent separately.
- Use some sales talk to stimulate the interest of the buyer.
- Show your willingness to serve or help the customer in the future.
- Close the reply letter with warm a friendly wording.

Tips:

Identify Your Reader:

A response letter should be addressed to a person from whom a request or inquiry has been received. That person's name will be found in the complimentary close of a previous inquiry letter and should be placed in the inside heading and the salutation of your response. It should also be included on the top line of your envelope.

Remember that people do business with people first, businesses second. When you address your reader by name, you recognize their importance and value as an individual human being.

Establish Your Objective:

The objective of a response letter is to satisfy the reader with an answer or action that fulfills the request of an inquiry. The answer either informs the reader of the respondent's ability to provide information or of a willingness to act on their behalf in some other way.

Your answers should be specific and brief. If you are replying to multiple questions you might consider placing your answers in a bulleted list. Items on a list highlight the components of your response, like snapshots in a photo album.

Determine Your Scope:

The scope of a response letter is contained in the information you provide for the specific purpose of helping the reader grasp your objective. You may safely assume that your reader is a busy person, so getting to the point is important. Your goal is to have the reader make a decision quickly and respond in a timely manner. Information that is not related to your objective should be left out.

Consider your targeted reader. Make it your business to know something about that person. What is their title or position? Are they the president of the company or the shipping clerk? Do they have what you want? Can they do what you ask?

Give them the relevant background information needed in order to make an informed decision. Let the reader know who you are and something about your motive. If you are to receive some benefit, it may help to explain for what purpose the benefit will be used. If the reader is to receive some benefit, it may help to offer an incentive to respond.

Put yourself in the reader's shoes and ask yourself what and how much background information is needed in order to take the action you are requesting. Would you already know everything you need to know, or would you need a little more? While you are in their shoes you might also ask yourself how much persuasion you would need in order to be moved to act.

This will help you determine whether you have supplied too much information, or not enough. It will also help you determine what information needs to be qualified or amplified for the reader's benefit.

Organize Your Letter:

Organizing your response letter will establish a logical order in which to present your information. You have already begun this task by establishing an objective and determining your scope. Refer back to them. Together they include much of the content that will become the body of your letter.

A simple outline will get you organized. Begin by creating a list of points that your letter will address and put them in the sequential order that will best help your reader comprehend your response. These points will become the backbone of your draft; your outline will become a checklist.

Draft Your Letter:

Working from an outline is the simplest way to draft a response letter. You have already organized yourself by creating a list. Refer back to it and turn each fragment into a full and complete sentence expressing a single thought or idea.

In order that your thoughts and ideas are conveyed in a cohesive manner, write in as natural a sounding voice as possible. Try writing your draft quickly and then read it out loud. Concentrate on communicating your objective to your reader. Make sure that the scope of your letter contains all the relevant information included in your organizational list.

Keep in mind that you are writing a rough draft. For the moment you can ignore spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure. Those are technical details that you will pay attention to in the final step when you review and revise your work.

Close Your Letter:

A response letter should close in a professional manner. Once your last paragraph is written, sign off between a complimentary close such as "Sincerely," or "Thank you," and your printed name.

If you are writing in conjunction with an official duty, place your title below the printed name. Additional information such as dictation remarks, notification of attachments, enclosures and copies sent to other individuals should be placed beneath the title line.

Review and Revise Your Response Letter:

Reviewing and revising your response letter is the final step in the writing process. You will check your draft in this step, making sure that your objective is clear and your scope is concise. Put yourself in the reader's shoes as you examine the rough draft. Ask yourself, as the recipient, whether you are able to comprehend the request quickly and if enough information has been included to enable a timely response.

Look for the obvious errors first. Check for spelling, sentence structure and grammar mistakes. Remember that a passive voice is not as commanding as an active one. You want your letter to be strong, so write with an active voice.

The important thing to keep in mind is the overall cohesiveness of the whole unit. Look for accuracy, clarity and a sense of completeness. Ask yourself if the transitions between paragraphs are working and if your point of view, tone and style are consistent throughout the text.

Examine your word choices carefully. Ambiguous words lead to confusion. Jargon and abstract terms may not be understood at all and affectations, cliches and trite language serve no real purpose and will obscure your objective. You want to help your reader understand exactly what it is that you want, so remove all that is not helpful.

And finally, if you have not written an opening or a conclusion now is the time. The introduction needs to lead into the body of your letter with a firm statement about the subject of your response and enough supporting information to keep the reader reading. Your closing remarks need to reiterate your objective with a question that calls for an action.

SAMPLE LETTER OF RESPONSE

[Insert date]

[Name] Mr. Gene Smith, RS
[Title] Public Health Sanitarian II
[Address] 240 Parsons Avenue
[Address] Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Report Number:
Investigation Number:

Dear [Name] Mr. Smith:

This letter is in response to your communication dated [insert date of letter] alleging violations of the Ohio Smoke Free Workplace Law. The anonymous complainant alleged the following violation: [insert type of violation].

I wanted to inform you that I reviewed this complaint thoroughly. Given that the complaint does not disclose the name of the individual smoking in the prohibited area, it is very difficult for us to follow up with her/him directly.

Please know that the [insert unit name] is in full compliance with the requirement to display nonsmoking signs. Attached for your review are photos of the various signs at entrances and exits where the signs are displayed.

Also attached for your review is a communication sent to all faculty, staff, and students at [insert unit name] reminding them of the following requirements:

- Tobacco use, including smoking, is prohibited anywhere on campus effective January 1, 2014.
- State law prohibits smoking inside buildings.
- State law requires that smoke not enter buildings from the outside.
- Smoking is prohibited under outside overhangs (e.g. covered loading docks, covered porches or entryways, etc.) and within 25 feet of all doors, windows that open, and air intakes.
- Faculty, staff, students, and visitors/vendors/contractors must discontinue smoking when asked to do so in locations where smoking is prohibited by state law.

I verified that ashtrays are not available in any location where smoking is prohibited by state law including loading docks, entrances, or inside buildings.

These steps were taken by the unit as required by law. I hope that this communication is responsive to the questions raised by your office. Please contact me if you have further concerns regarding this matter. I can be reached at [insert area code and phone number].

Sincerely,

Unit leader or HRP
Unit name
The Ohio State University

C: File
