

***English Corner***



Dr. Mable Chan is a lecturer at the Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She was awarded the Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching in the 2005/06 academic year and has vast experience teaching academic and business English to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Her new book , which is about business

English,「職時上is位：now名人available英語全面on睇」the market. In this column

she advocates using simple and concise English for

business writing.

We often receive sales letters from different organizations selling products and services (e.g. magazine subscriptions, sample sales, discounts and privileges). In this issue we look at a framework for writing and analyzing sales letters. The same framework will be used to discuss job application letters in the next issue, as the communicative purposes and functions of these are similar to sales letters.

**Bhatia’s model (1993)**

The following table lists the different steps (“moves”) in preparing sales correspondence. Examples of each move are given on the right.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Moves** | **Examples** |
| **1.** | **Establishing credentials** | (a) The Department of English of The Hong |
|  | (establish credentials and cater | Kong Polytechnic University plays a |
|  | for the needs of the customers) | pioneering role in offering postgraduate |
|  |  |  | programmes focusing on professional |
|  |  |  | communication. |
|  |  |  | (b) Have you ever thought about travelling |
|  |  |  | around the world without worrying |
|  |  |  | about where to live? |
| **2.** | **Introducing the offer** |  |
|  |  | Offering the product or | We are pleased to introduce… |
|  |  | service |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Essential details of the offer | SJ II (a cosmetic product) has all the |
|  |  |  | features you would expect of other brand |
|  |  |  | names three or four times the price: no |
|  |  |  | artificial preserves; lasting whitening effect; |
|  |  |  | and it comes in a wide range of beautiful |
|  |  |  | packaging. |
|  |  | Indicating value of the offer | The training programme covers speaking |
|  |  | (echo move 1 and highlight | skills, negotiation skills and writing skills… |
|  |  | how the product / service | The programme is significant and flexible. It |
|  |  | meets the needs of the | can be tailor-made to fit your workplace |
|  |  | customers) | needs. |



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **3.** | **Offering incentives** | If you come to our showroom with this |
|  |  |  | letter, you will get a free gift and a 20% |
|  |  |  | discount coupon. |
| **4.** | **Enclosing documents** | Complete the attached order form and |
|  |  |  | send it to us in two days to enjoy the |
|  |  |  | benefits!! |
| **5.** | **Soliciting response** | If you need more information about the |
|  |  |  | product, please call us at 2123 4567. We |
|  |  |  | would be glad to visit your company to |
|  |  |  | demonstrate how to use the product if |
|  |  |  | requested. |
| **6.** | **Using pressure tactics** | Places are limited, and a number of your |
|  |  |  | colleagues have already indicated their |
|  |  |  | interest in the training programme. Act |
|  |  |  | fast!! |
| **7.** | **Ending politely** |  |
|  |  | Situational closing (closing | Hope you will find the product useful. With |
|  |  | related to the context of | XX, no worries! |
|  |  | the letter) |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Relational closing (closing | We hope you will continue to support us |
|  |  | to maintain goodwill) | and we look forward to being of service to |
|  |  |  | you again. |

**A sample**

**Mable Chan Business English Company Limited**

30 Nathan Road

Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong

Tel: 2123 4567 Fax: 2765 4321

30 May 20—

Dear Customer

**Enjoy our COST-SAVING “Flexi-Study Plan”**

How often has your English writing let your boss down? Have you lost the chance of being promoted? Can’t communicate with foreign clients? Want to impress your boss with your effective English competence? **(Move 1: Establish credentials by**

**catering for the needs of the customers (i.e. the need to improve English for workplace needs))**

By choosing our innovative **“Flexi-Study Plan”**, you can take whichever English courses you like in a year at an incredibly **LOW** price (a maximum quota of 12 courses). You will be able to choose your own combination of courses, teachers and course fee. All English courses, **ACCREDITED BY THE HONG KONG** **GOVERNMENT and THE BRITISH NATIONAL COUNCIL**, are famous for their

world-class quality and effectiveness: they are tailor-made for your needs,



presented by well-qualified university professors, and are flexible. **(Move 2:**

**Introduce the product (i.e. Flexi-study plan) and explain why it is appealing)**

What’s more, the unused quota can also be carried forward to the next year. To see more about the **“Flexi-Study Plan”,** course fee and details of the English courses, please refer to the attached leaflet. **(Move 4: Enclose a leaflet for** **further information)**

How can you resist this only chance of polishing your English to improve your chances of promotion and recognition? Fill in the attached registration form on or before 30 June 20— for registration. SEND NO MONEY NOW. Experience our most flexible and value-added English courses tailor-made for YOU and your FUTURE!! **(Move 3 and 6: Offer incentives by emphasizing that no money** **should be sent, and use pressure tactics by specifying a deadline)**

Call our 24-hr customer hotline at 2123 4567 for further queries and questions. Thank you. **(Move 5: Solicit response and close politely)**

Yours sincerely

[signature]

Mable Chan (Dr)

Director

**Encl.**

Quiz:

1. Name the language features of a sales letter.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. List examples of imperatives used in the sample letter above.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Key:**

1. Use of personal pronouns (e.g. you, we), imperative forms (e.g. Act now!),

interrogative questions (e.g. Do you agree?), colloquial expressions/spoken English (e.g. can’t), unusual punctuation (e.g. exclamation marks), etc.

1. SEND NO MONEY NOW, Call our 24-hr customer hotline….

**Reference**