

# LETTERS OF INQUIRY (ENQUIRY)

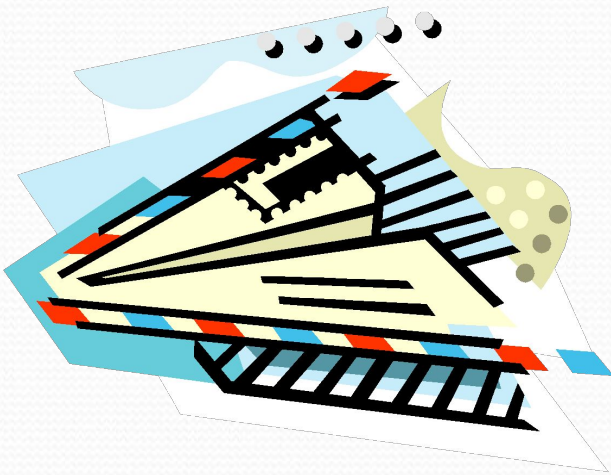


Letters of enquiry describe what the writer wants and why. The more unusual the request, the more convincing the reason needs to be.

The purpose of this form is to obtain information from the reader. If the reader is expecting the letter, the writer's task is easy.

If the reader is not expecting your letter, then it is more difficult. In this case, following these four guidelines will be helpful:

- ✘ State your purpose
- ✘ List your questions or requested action
- ✘ Offer something in return to encourage action
- ✘ Follow up with a thank you note, e-mail, or phone call to the person who helped you with your request



It is important to recognize that a well-written letter of inquiry is crucial to securing funding for your project.

The letter of inquiry should be **brief**—no more than three pages—and must be a **succinct** but thorough presentation of the need or problem you have identified, the proposed solution, and your organization's qualifications for implementing that solution.

The letter of inquiry should be addressed to the appropriate contact person at a foundation or to its CEO and should be sent by regular mail.

This type of letter is often written to suppliers you have not done business with before. Such a letter often asks for a brochure, catalogue or price list. It is sometimes considered useful to give some details of your business, and also where or how you heard of the supplier's name and address.

You should always address your letter “**Dear Sirs**”, “**Dear Sir or Madam**” – in this way you are writing to a company. If you address it to an individual, it may mean delay if the person is away or ill.

A.Q.Electronics Ltd.  
Calle Estoril 1701  
Barselona

Ref: JR/ct

Standart Office Furniture Ltd.  
Cantley Rd.  
London, SW4 9HX  
Great Britain

12 Oct., 1998

Dear Sirs,

We have read an article in "Office News" about your range of visible record system filing cabinets. We are interested in introducing a modern filing system in our main office. We also wish to install an electronic system for the storage and retrieval of data.

Please send us price list and catalogues of your manual and electronic data processing systems, quoting your price f.o.b. London if possible. We are particularly interested in type TW37, so we would be grateful if you would enclose more detailed information about this particular model.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,  
J. Rodriguez,  
Office Manager



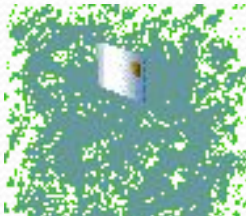
Letters of  
Inquiry generally  
are 2-3 pages;  
oftentimes, the  
foundation will  
indicate a page  
limit.

Do not go  
over that limit!



## Subject Heading

**This should inform the reader that this is an enquiry or request**



**EXAMPLE**

- **Enquiry about Textbooks**
- **Request for Brochure**
- **Query about Website**
- **Question regarding Product Components**

## First Paragraph

**This should tell the reader what you want**

The introduction serves as the executive summary for the letter of inquiry and includes the name of your organization, the amount needed or requested, and a description of the project. The qualifications of project staff, a brief description of evaluative methodology, and a timetable are also included here



## First Paragraph

**EXAMPLE**

Please send me...

Could you please send me...

(for things that the organization offers to send)

I would be grateful if you could tell me...

(for things that are not normally offered)

I am writing to enquire whether...

I would be grateful if you could...

(to see if something is possible)

I would especially like to know...

Could you send me more details...

( + a more detailed request)

Could you also...

I would also like to know...

Could you tell me whether...

( + an additional enquiry or request)



## Second Paragraph

This paragraph tells the reader why you are contacting his or her organization, and gives further details of the enquiry

**There are two reasons why you may contact an organization:**

- you have contacted this organization before, and want to again.
- you have not contacted this organization before, but you have heard about them. You should describe from where, such as from an advert or a recommendation



## Second Paragraph

**EXAMPLE**

I saw your advert in the HK Daily on Wednesday, 13 June 2007.

Your company was recommended to me by Ms. Elsie Wong of Far Eastern Logistics.

With reference to your advertisement (ad) in...

Regarding your advertisement (ad) in ...



## Final Paragraph

This paragraph should contain a polite expression and/or an expression of thanks to the reader. The degree of politeness (and therefore the length), depends on how unusual or difficult your request is.

Possible language includes:

- ✘ Thanks. (For a very informal and normal enquiry or request)
- ✘ I look forward to hearing from you.
- ✘ I am looking forward to hearing from you.
- ✘ Thank you for your assistance.
- ✘ Thank you very much for your kind assistance.
- ✘ I appreciate that this is an unusual request, but I would be very grateful for any help you could provide. I look forward to hearing from you.



**If you think the reader might have further questions, you can suggest that he or she contact you.**



**Better Widget Makers, Inc.**

5555 Widget Avenue  
Silver City, CO 80456

September 26, 2003

Mr. Russ Hamilton  
Vice President, Sales and Marketing  
Golden Bread Company  
123 Loaf Street  
Silver City, CO 80451

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

Construction on the new employee cafeteria at Better Widget Makers, Inc. is nearing completion and I am looking for a supplier capable of fulfilling our weekly bakery needs.

Do you have an information packet that would help me project the cost of doing business with your company? We will need daily deliveries of pastries, pies, dinner rolls and sandwich bread. Our facility operates 24/7, Monday through Friday, with a flextime workforce of 1,500 employees. To complete my operational budget I will need the following information:

- Wholesale price sheets
- Quantity cost breaks
- Annual contract discounts
- Delivery and or any other service charges.

To submit my proposal to the finance committee at their October 20th meeting I will need to receive your information by the 10th. I will also need to meet with you after reviewing the requested materials. Please call me for an appointment at your earliest convenience. My personal extension is 216-8080, # 29.

In keeping with long-standing policy we would like to place this contract locally. I look forward to working with you and am hopeful that the Golden Bread Company can fulfill our needs.

Sincerely,

Ida Mae Knott  
Purchasing Agent





# How to Reply to Enquiries

## Acknowledging receipt of an enquiry/request

Thank you for your letter of ... regarding / concerning / in connection with ...

I refer to your enquiry about / relating to...

I have received your letter of... requesting information about ...

We would like to thank you for enquiring about ...

## Explaining action taken as a consequence of the enquiry

I have (reviewed our available stock) ...

We held a meeting on 21 January to discuss possible solutions.

I have checked/looked into/investigated (the possible approaches) ...



**Making suggestions / justifying  
recommendations / pointing  
out pros and cons / hedging**

The best choice would be ... since ...

I highly recommend ... as / due to the fact  
that ...

...would probably be more suitable  
because...

... seems to suit you better although ...

Perhaps you should choose ... even  
though...

I suggest that you (should) choose ...

I recommend this item since ...

In view of the fact that ..., I would strongly  
recommend ... as ...





**Apologizing and rejecting proposals**

**Stipulating action requested or to be taken**

While I appreciate your firm's need for this information, I regret that ...

It will not be possible to ... for legal reasons. We are bound to ...

Your proposal is of interest to us, and we have had consultations about it.

However, we feel that it will not be in our interests to ... for reasons of (privacy).

We are concerned that ...

We shall arrange for ... by ...at the latest.

I shall see to it that ...

Our company will arrange for ...



Establishing goodwill and  
suggesting contact



I hope this suggestion/information will be useful to you.

I hope this information will prove useful to you.

I hope that this information will help you to make decisions on your order.

I look forward to hearing from you.

I look forward to receiving your confirmation of ...

I look forward to doing business with your company in the future ...

Please feel free to contact me again if you have any further queries on ...

Do contact me on 27615432 if you need further information.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 27615432 if I can be of further assistance.

Everlong Batteries  
171, Choi Hung Road  
Hung Hom, Hong Kong  
Tel/Fax 2235 2449

18 Jun 2007

Mr J Wong  
Purchasing Officer  
Fortune Goods  
317 Orchard Road  
Singapore

Dear Mr Wong

Enquiry about Batteries

Thank you for your letter of Thursday, 14 June 2007 regarding making copies of the sample battery you sent us.

I have investigated the situation and found that your specifications are exactly the same as the design of a proprietary camera battery manufactured by a large Japanese electronics company.

We feel that it would not be in our interests to supply this type of battery.

However, I would like to thank you for considering our company as your supplier.

I look forward to doing business with your company in the future

Yours sincerely

**David Choi**

David Choi  
Distributions Manager

Notice these sentences in which the writer thanks his correspondent for an inquiry: Pay attention that we “inquire” about general information, and “request” an object or a statement.







# notice

## the following terms of delivery frequently used in business letters:

**F.o.b.** – free on board – means that the seller bears responsibility for the goods until they are delivered to the port and placed on board the ship, which will further deliver them to the port of destination. Accordingly, the price, which the buyer pays, doesn't include transportation and insurance in transit.

**C.i.f.** – cost, insurance, freight – means that the seller bears responsibility for the goods during all the way to the port of destination – charters the vessel, organizes loading and insurance payments – everything up to the final point; all these payments are, of course, included into the price paid buy the buyer.

**Ex-works** – free from the factory – means that the seller bears no responsibility for the goods after they leave factory gates.

**c.a.f.** – cost and freight paid

**f.a.s.** – free along side boat

**They are all enumerated in a document called “Incoterms” which is issued every several years.**



# ADDITION

**Unless otherwise indicated by the foundation, the contents will generally follow this format:**

## 1 Opening Paragraph

- ◇ This serves as your summary statement.
- ◇ It should be able to stand-alone. If the reviewer reads nothing else they should know what you want to do from reading this paragraph. Make it clear what you want the reader to do (ie: consider funding the project)
- ◇ Answer the following: who wants to do what? how much is being requested? is this a portion of a larger project cost? over what period of time is money being requested?
- ◇ Example: “The School of Nursing at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMass) seeks support for developing an innovative undergraduate and graduate curriculum in psychiatric mental health nursing that will prepare expert nurse clinicians in the delivery of mental health services to at-risk adolescents in the community setting. We are requesting \$87,000 over a two year period.”
- ◇ You also may want to say if you are responding to an RFP (Request for Proposals) or make the connection between the foundation’s interest and your project.
- ◇ Keep this paragraph short! You will have time later for explaining your rationale for why you want to do the project, your methodology, or for establishing your credibility.

# ADDITION

## 2 Statement of Need (1-2 paragraphs)

- ◇ This section answers the “why” of the project.
- ◇ Explain what issue you are addressing.
- ◇ Explain why you have chosen to respond to this set of issues in the way that you have.
- ◇ State briefly why this matters in the area in which you will be working.
- ◇ Note who benefits. Make sure you can indicate the public good achieved.

## 3 Project Activity (this will be the bulk of the letter)

- ◇ This section answers the “what” and “how” of the project.
- ◇ Give a general overview of the activities involved. Give more detailed information to the degree that space allows
- ◇ Highlight why your approach is novel and deserving of the special attention that funding connotes.
- ◇ Indicate if there will be collaboration with other organizations and what their roles will be. Be specific about who does what.



# ADDITION

## 4 Outcomes (1-2 paragraphs; you can put this before or after the discussion of activities)

- ◇ State the specific outcomes you hope to achieve.
- ◇ Indicate how evaluation is part of the project – how will you know you've achieved these outcomes?

## 5 Credentials (1-2 paragraphs)

- ◇ Demonstrate why your institution or your staff is best equipped to carry out this activity.
- ◇ Put any historic background about the institution here.
- ◇ Brag with substance. Indicate awards, rankings, and tangible measures that set you apart from your peers.



# ADDITION

## 6 Budget (1-2 paragraphs)

- ◆ State what the total project cost will be and how much of that you would be requesting from the foundation. Indicate broad categories of activities to be funded.
- ◆ Include other sources of funding, both cash and in-kind. Especially indicate what your institution will contribute. Do not overlook the value of all in-kind contributions, including those of your collaborators.

## 7 Closing (1 paragraph)

- ◆ Offer to give any additional information the foundation might need.
- ◆ Give a contact name and contact information for foundation follow-up.
- ◆ Express appreciation for the reader's attention or the opportunity to submit if it is in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP).
- ◆ Specifically indicate you are interested in discussing the project and will "contact their office" by a certain date (allowing time for them to receive and read the letter).

## 8

- ◆ Generally it is best to have the highest ranking person available sign the letter even if they are not identified as the "contact" person. This indicates institutional support

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**Better Widget Makers, Inc.**

5555 Widget Avenue  
Silver City, CO 80456

September 26, 2003

Mr. Russ Hamilton  
Vice President, Sales and Marketing  
Golden Bread Company  
123 Loaf Street  
Silver City, CO 80451

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

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Do you have an information packet that would help me project the cost of doing business with your company? We will need daily deliveries of pastries, pies, dinner rolls and sandwich bread. Our facility operates 24/7, Monday through Friday, with a flextime workforce of 1,500 employees. To complete my operational budget I will need the following information:

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