

What is inquiry letter



A letter of inquiry is a request for information that the writer believes the reader to provide. Regardless of its subject, the objective is to get the reader to respond with action that satisfies the inquiry. The action taken can benefit either the writer or the reader, and sometimes that being the cause, the scope of the letter of inquiry must include enough information that help the reader determine how best to respond. In the sample inquiry letter that follows, there is a benefit to both the writer and reader. In it the writer ask for some information and assistance. She also provide incentive encouraging the reader to act.

Some Guidelines in Writing a Letter of Inquiry

Identifying Your Reader An inquiry letter should be addressed to the person who is most likely to respond in a positive and helpful manner. If you are unsure of who that might be, try making a few phone calls to identify a contact person. That person's name should also appear in the outside or envelope address.

Establishing Your Objective The objective of an inquiry letter is to make a request. It will either ask the reader to provide something beneficial to the writer, or take advantage of something the writer has to offer.

Your inquiry should be specific and brief. If you are asking more than one question, you might consider highlighting them in a bulleted list. In the body of the sample inquiry letter, the writer states her objective by asking the reader for help in compiling information. She then outlines the scope of her needs in a bulleted list immediately following her request.

Determining Your Scope The scope of an inquiry letter should provide enough information for the reader to grasp your objective, make an informed decision, and respond in a timely manner. Consider your reader and get to the point.

Do they have what you want? Can they do what you ask for? Think about what your reader will need to know in order for his/her to make a decision and send you a response. Put yourself in the reader's shoes and ask yourself what and how much background information are needed in order to take the action you are requesting. Do you already know everything you need to know, or do you need a little more? While you are in his/her shoes, you might also ask yourself how much persuasion you need to be qualified or 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. 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. In the body of the sample inquiry letter, the writer supplies relevant logistical information that the reader will need in order to respond quickly and effectively. You want to help your reader understand exactly what it is that you want, so remove all that is not relevant and helpful. Outline

A simple list is an informal ordering of the main points you intend to include in your inquiry letter. Like a grocery list, it serves largely as a reminder. The items can be expressed in words, phrases, or complete sentences. In drafting her inquiry letter, Ms. Ella Mae Samson, the purchasing agent for Barako Coffe Makers, Inc. , outlines the main points or details she needs to ask the Vice President for Sales and Marketing of Tinapay ATBP Inc. this simple list of phrases and notes guided her in her letter-writing task. Ms. Ella Mae Samson's Inquiry Letter Outline.

1. Contact person- Mr. Dennis Ignacio- VP for Sales & Marketing- Get address.
2. New cafeteria almost complete- Need food vendors.
3. Bakery goods to be outsourced- Need wholesale contract soon.
4. Dangle carrot- Buying locally is company policy.
5. Building pro forma- Supply better bakery goods- Internal logistics- Ask for help.
6. List of info needed- Price sheets- Cost breaks- Annual discounts- Others.
7. Mention deadline At the end of the sample inquiry letter, the writer reiterates her request for help, establishes a timeline in which she likes the help to be offered, asks for a meeting, and strongly reinforces the benefit to the reader.

Parts of Inquiry letter

1. Heading. In most businesses, the heading is the letterhead printed on the stationery. When letterhead paper is not used, however, street address, city and country and zip code are typed on the top lines immediately above the date. The heading parts thus contain the information that the reader needs to answer the letter and to file the letter for office reference.
2. Date. The date may be typed left, right or centered depending on the letter style used. On letterhead paper, only the date is entered at least two spaces below the last line of the printed heading. The dateline style accepted in business does not abbreviate or use a number to indicate the month, for example: November 25, 1984, not Nov. 25, 1984 or 11/25/84.

3. Inside address. The inside address consists of the name and title of the addressee, the company name, the street address, and the city and country.

4. Salutation. The salutation, a form of common courtesy extended in business, is typed double space below the inside address, or the attention line may be used.

The degree of formality used in salutation depends on how well the writer knows the reader. For example, Sir for a man, and Madam for a woman are formal salutations. When the firm is made up of both men and women, Gentlemen (not Dear Sirs) is appropriate. If the firm consists only of women, the correct salutation is Mesdames or Ladies.

5. Body. The body is the message. The body of the letter is single-spaced with double spacing between paragraphs except in very short letters when the body is double-spaced.

6. Complimentary close. The complimentary close says " Good-bye. It is typed two or three spaces below the last line of the body of the letter and about midway between the left and right hand margins. Only the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized. It is usually followed by a comma, but companies using open punctuation sometimes prefer to omit the comma. The most frequently used complimentary close is Very truly yours, Sincerely or Sincerely yours, and Cordially or Cordially yours.

7. Signature block. The signature block consists of the writer's name, his business title (if he has one) and his company.