SAMPLE BUSINESS LETTER

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October 28, 2006
Mr. Ryan P. McCarthy
786 Elliott Street
Seattle, WA 91277-3022

Dear Mr. McCarthy:

This is an example of the Full Block Letter style, one of the most popular styles in business use today. The primary reason the Full Block style is so popular is its clean, efficient look. Typists favor this style, too, because it's easy to prepare and simple to compose.

Each element in this letter style begins at the left-hand margin. That includes the date, the inside address, the salutation, each body paragraph, the complimentary close, and the signature block. There is no need to use additional keystrokes to center the date or to move the complimentary close and signature block to the other side of the page.

Please note that this letter style uses full punctuation, including the colon following the salutation, and the comma following the complimentary close. The open, or ragged, right-hand margin gives the letter a slightly informal appearance, yet requires no additional work on the typist's part.

This is the most common variation of business letter format in use today. Some writers prefer other styles, especially if the letter extends beyond one page, because it's easy to tell where a paragraph begins if it's indented. In the Full Block Letter style, none of the paragraphs are indented. The letter is composed with a single space between lines within each paragraph, and two spaces between paragraphs.

The vast majority of business correspondence in North America features the one-page letter. There are two reasons for this: First, most business letters are focused on just one subject and most writers can say what they must in three or four paragraphs. Second, the Full Block Letter style doesn't use indented paragraphs.

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There is another reason for the popularity of the one-page letter, and it's cultural. Most North American business writers come directly to the point in the first — or at the very least — second paragraph. European, Asian, and Latin American business writers will spend more time developing personal relationships, inquiring about the health and well-being of the readers, but most U.S. and Canadian writers prefer to put their main point up front and say what they mean, using fewer words.

If you choose to write a multipage later, the Full Block Letter style can easily accommodate that. You must simply be sure to enter a page heading in the upper left-hand corner of each succeeding page. That page heading should contain the name of the letter recipient, the page number, and the date of the letter.

Remember, if you write a two-page letter, the second page must contain at least two lines of text. Most writers prefer to include at least a full paragraph. The final paragraph of the letter is followed by a complimentary close, a signature block and — if circumstances require — a copy line or an enclosure line, indicating that either others have received a copy of the letter or that the envelope contains other documents.

Sincerely,

Paul Magers
General Manager

Enclosures

cc: Doug Hemphill