

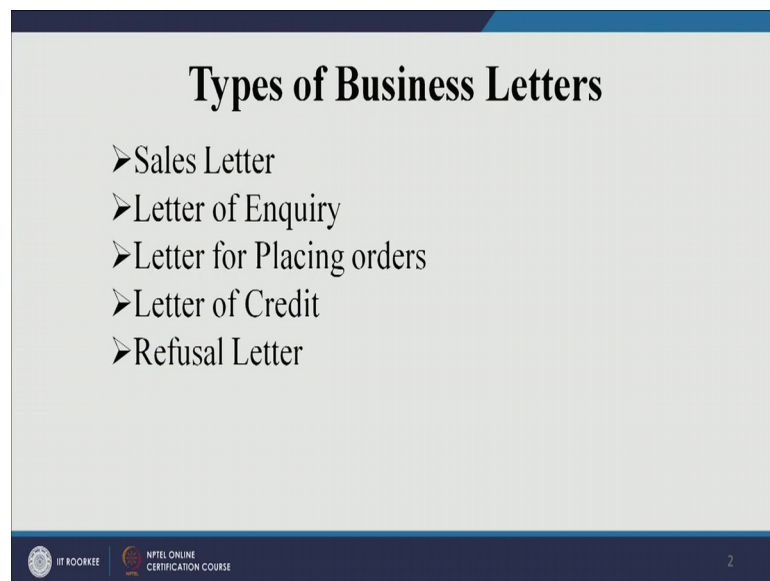
Soft Skills
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Lecture - 29
Types of Business Letters Part I

Welcome back to NPTEL online lectures on Soft Skills, and presently we are dealing with Business Letters. We have already talked about the principles of business letters we have talked about the structure, the format, the style, have been talked about all these requirements of business letter. Perhaps you might be very curious to know what would be the types of letters that you have to write in the days to come when you join an organization or when you are in an organization. Now, the lectures that follow will describe the Types of these Business Letters along with their examples.

And we will also see how systematically, how linguistically, how methodically, you will draft a business letter. When we talk about the types of business letters you will find that as I have said earlier depending upon the nature of job, depending upon the purpose and depending upon the needs there will be differences in terms of the letters also the first in this category is a sales letter.

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Types of Business Letters

- Sales Letter
- Letter of Enquiry
- Letter for Placing orders
- Letter of Credit
- Refusal Letter

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Though all business letters are goodwill letters as I have been insisting since the beginning of my talk on business letters, then there can be letters of enquiry, there can be

letters for placing orders, letters for credit, and sometimes there can be letters of collection, letters where you are not going to comply with the request of the letter writer and you are going to write them a refusal letter, then there can be a Claim Letter, Adjustment Letter, and Letters of Recognition.

Now what exactly are the differences between all these sorts of letter is it only language, is it only the approach, or is it only the way letters are written simply to comply, but in businesses because you are writing to people naturally you will also have to see what their requirements are and how you are going to satisfy their requirements, it has been said that a successful sales letter should be written like an advertisement. Now the question is why should you write a sales letter imagine you have developed a new product and you want this product to be launched in the market of course, for that you have advertisement facility, but then you want individuals also to know you also want other organizations to know and if you have some customers who are already your existing customers you also want to promote your product among them.

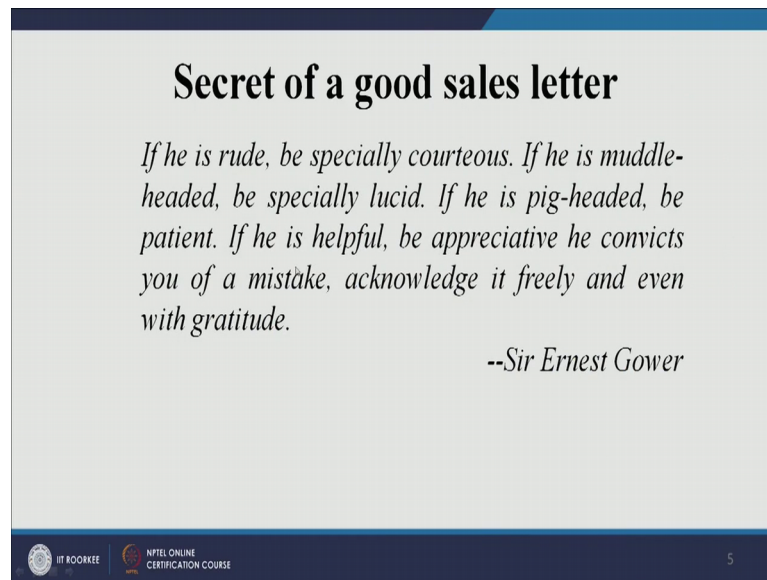
I do remember when I buy a policy from one insurance agency for my motorbike, after some days I see that they start asking me either by letter or by phone what other vehicles do I have what other facilities do they have this is actually a way to enhance and to increase not only their customer base, but also launching their products.

So, the sales letter has also the same function now when we talk about the function of a sales letter, but before coming to the function let us see how a business letter had some other characters and characteristics different from other letters; first is a Clear Content as we have already discussed then is the Tone of goodwill, and then the Correct Format.

In the previous lecture we have talked about various formats and depending upon your need and the practice being followed in your organization you will decide a format, but then suppose you sit and start writing a sales letter what actually should you keep in mind, I mean when you are writing a sales letter you will find that sometimes of launching a new product or promoting a new product.

But sometimes you are complaining, sometimes you are responding, sometimes you are placing orders, sometimes you are responding to those orders in this connection it is quite pertinent to keep into consideration what is the Ernest Gower Says.

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Secret of a good sales letter

If he is rude, be specially courteous. If he is muddle-headed, be specially lucid. If he is pig-headed, be patient. If he is helpful, be appreciative he convicts you of a mistake, acknowledge it freely and even with gratitude.

--Sir Ernest Gower

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And if you keep this in your mind I think all your sales letter, all your business letters, will turn out to be successful. He says because you know a letter is a correspondence even in business between 2 people. So, sometimes the other person may be angry and what Ernest Gower says is if he is rude be specially courteous, if he is muddle headed be specially lucid at times you will find an angry letter comes and the person has become very impudent, very rude, you know very harsh, is in that stage sir Ernest Gower advises us that we should be specially courteous.

If it is muddle headed, if he is confused, if is not clear about things, be lucid I mean the way you respond you should maintain a sort of lucidity you should maintain a sort of clarity if he is pig-headed be patient if the other person is very impatient, you need not be that impatient you should maintain patience if he is helpful be appreciative. Sometimes you will find for a particular issue, for a particular concern, on a particular aspect, the other party has helped you, but then that has to be returned also and returned in a way that you appreciate his services you appreciate his help.

If he convicts you of a mistake acknowledge it sometimes you may also receive letters where the other party tells you that you were mistaken in such a case there is no harm if you acknowledge it freely and even with gratitude, my dear friends I request all of you and I would rather advise all of you to maintain these lines when you are drafting a business letter or a sales letter I mean the lines which have been said by sir Ernest Gower

is actually the Quintessa of all sorts of business letters, you will find if you are going to write a sales letter and you have an idea about a particular product you are going to promote it is always better to maintain it is always better to follow the AIDA process; this AIDA process is actually this will guide you how to write a letter.

So, this is an abbreviated form AIDA A stands for Attention I stands for Interest, D stands for Desire, and A Attends for action, meaning thereby when you start writing a letter the first is you have to draw the attention of your customer about a particular product. And then once you have attracted the attention what you should do is you are to create in him or her the desire for that product, once you have done that then you can start giving him some sort of conviction I mean whatever you say about your product you actually have to explain carry conviction and towards the end of the letter; the letter receiver I mean receiver of your letter should be converted into a sort of buyer. So, what you need to do is you actually propel him you prompt him to take some action, that is what we mean by AIDA process or AIDA technique.

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AIDA Process

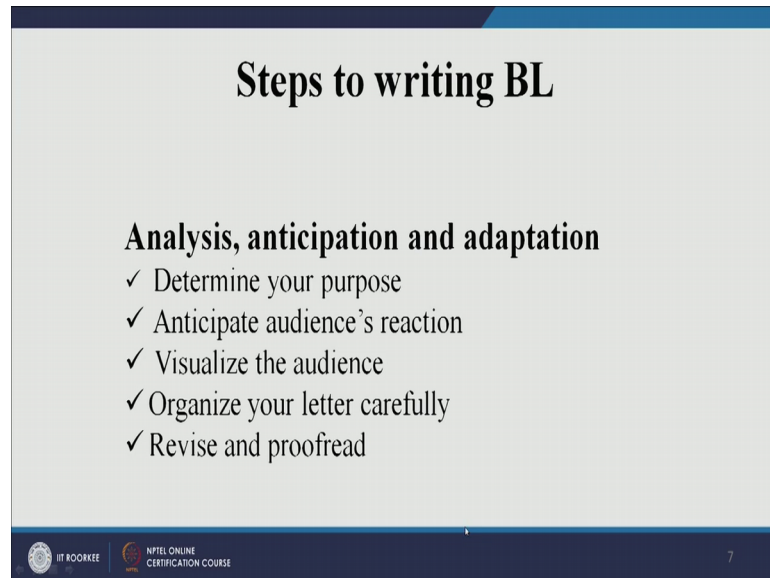
- ✓ Arousing interest
- ✓ Creating desire
- ✓ Carrying conviction
- ✓ Inducing action

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All sorts of sales letter will confirm to this AIDA process, suppose you start writing a business letter you have also to think about these 3 things. The first is now why you are writing this letter have you ever asked yourself why you are writing a particular letter or why this letter has come to me I mean you need to understand the background why you

are writing it to a particular person to a particular organization analyze I mean analysis anticipation and adaptation.

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Steps to writing BL

Analysis, anticipation and adaptation

- ✓ Determine your purpose
- ✓ Anticipate audience's reaction
- ✓ Visualize the audience
- ✓ Organize your letter carefully
- ✓ Revise and proofread

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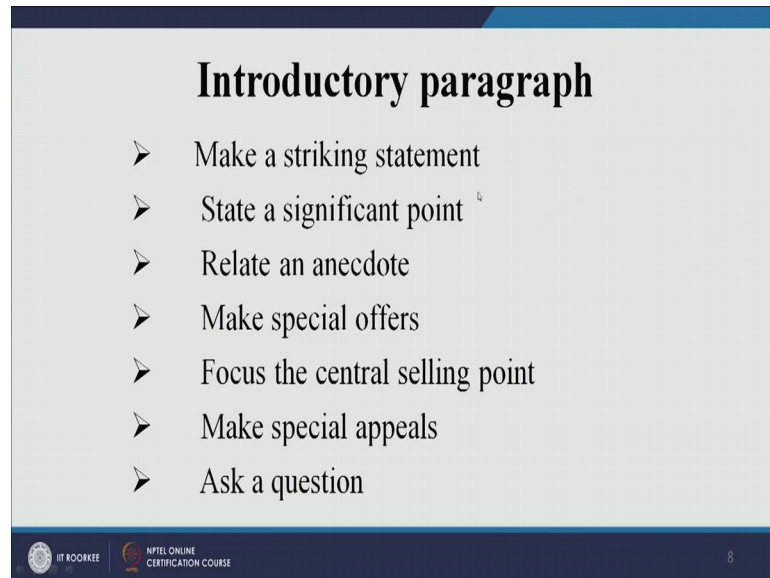
Sometimes or the other you will find that you do not know the background of your audience of your recipient of your reader naturally you will not be able to complete your letter.

So, first determine your purpose why you are writing this letter, then think about the reaction of the audience then also think about how the audience will react, how the recipient will react, and then organize your letter in a very careful manner, in a very clever manner, clever in the sense that the use of words which you are going to make should be very judicious. And finally, once you have written your letter it is always better to proofread and to see if a certain word can be deleted, if a certain one can be added in an way that makes your letter not only readable, but that makes your letter saleable.

Because the motive behind every sales letter is to convert the reader of the letter into a customer, now when you start writing a sales letter every sales letter will have 3 parts I mean it will have an introduction, it will have a body, it will have a close, but then the first thing as I said the first thing is to attract the attention in order to attract the attention that you will do because you know you have to write it a straightaway. So, in the very first paragraph you actually have to captivate you have to attract and there are several

ways to do that for example, making a striking statement I mean talking about something that can literally strike the mind of your reader.

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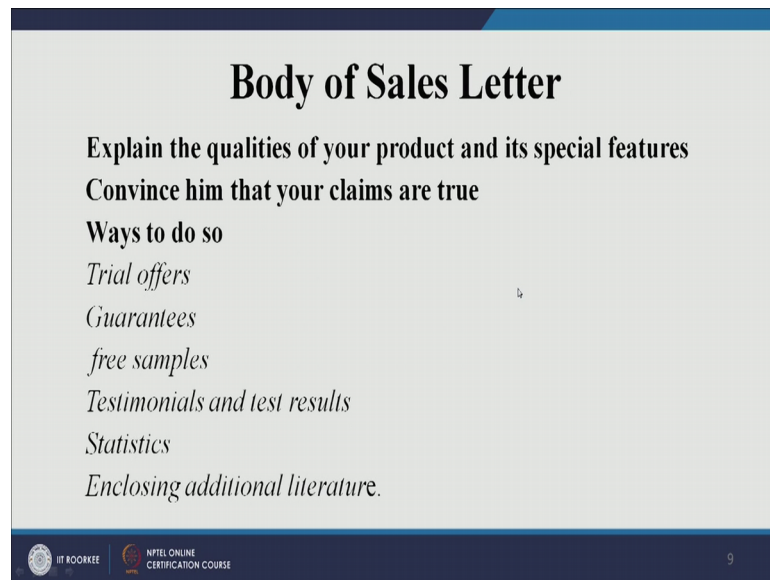
Introductory paragraph

- Make a striking statement
- State a significant point
- Relate an anecdote
- Make special offers
- Focus the central selling point
- Make special appeals
- Ask a question

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Making a significant point you know sometimes you are also going to start your letter with a quotation I mean suppose we say heard melodies are sweet those unheard are sweeter, is not it I mean you were going to captivate their minds you are going to attract their attention sometimes you are going to ask the question also because first is that you have to attract their attention, once you have attracted their attention then you are going to talk about the product, sometimes we are also going to make a special appeal, sometimes you are also going to focus on the central selling point so this is the introductory paragraph.

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Body of Sales Letter

Explain the qualities of your product and its special features
Convince him that your claims are true

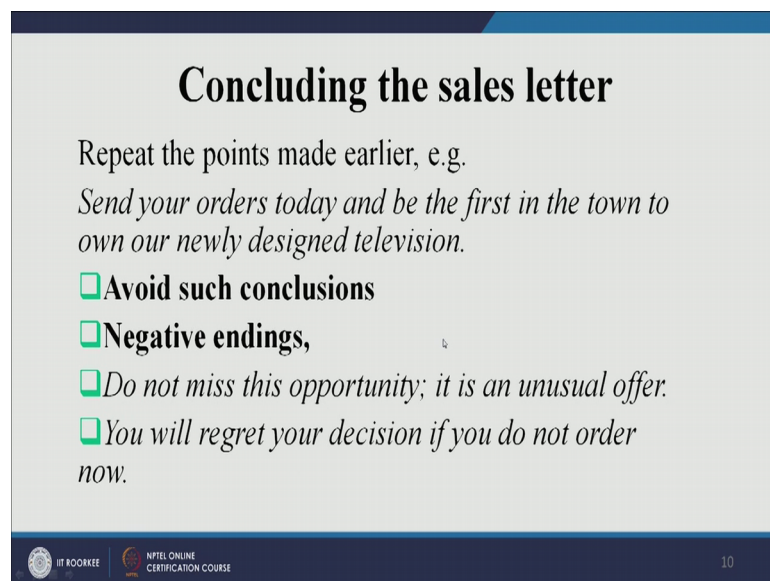
Ways to do so

- Trial offers*
- Guarantees*
- free samples*
- Testimonials and test results*
- Statistics*
- Enclosing additional literature.*

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Once you have talked about the introductory paragraph, then you will come to the body of the letter where you will explain about the product and for doing that there are several ways say for example, you are going to give trial offers, you are going to give guarantees, you are also going to provide free samples, you are also going to include additional (Refer Time:12:43) because you know as readers unless and until they are convinced, they are not going to be brought into action and your main target is to convert the reader into a buyer.

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Concluding the sales letter

Repeat the points made earlier, e.g.
Send your orders today and be the first in the town to own our newly designed television.

- Avoid such conclusions**
- Negative endings,**
- Do not miss this opportunity; it is an unusual offer.*
- You will regret your decision if you do not order now.*

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Now, when you are concluding the sales letter it is actually of utmost importance that many people you know being very enthusiastic, what they do is they at times exaggerate, but remember exaggeration is not the hallmark you know if you if you convince the reader that your product is better than all other products in the market this the in this way you are actually going to cross an ethical limit moreover sometimes or the other you may also come across such lines as avoid such lines as negative say for example, do not miss this opportunity it is an unusual offer I mean you actually try to win the customer, but at the same time you are using negative. So, avoid the use of negatives and also try to see that your letters should end on a positive note say for example, send your orders today and be the first in the town to own our newly designed television.

This is this is actually positive, but if you say if you do not send your orders today you will have to regret tomorrow now this will become very negative and perhaps people would not like it. So, what is of utmost importance and utmost significance is that when you are going to end yourself letter please end it on a very positive note by avoiding the use of negatives, you know letters are the medium through which in order to maintain a good relationship we are also trying to extend our customer base, and in order to extend our customer base, or strengthen our customer base we actually need to be very considerate.

And we should see that we are not going to hurt others even you know there may be very there may be several competitive agencies, but at times being very enthusiastic and writing a letter by making some tall or exaggerated claims that is not going to serve the purpose. Once you have sold something once you have launched something you are actually in a position to receive letters and people depending upon their needs will write either letters of enquiry, once you know some people also come to know about certain particular product from some others and then once again they feel that they should themselves try to have a sort of query and for that they will write letters of enquiry.

Now, when somebody writes a letter of enquiry you know because he is writing as an individual or as a representative of an organization. So, in such a case what should be the norm the norm should be to put the main idea first; now how to put the main idea first Punctuate polite command with a question.

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Letters of Enquiry

- Put the main idea first**
- Punctuate polite command with a period and not with a question
- Show appreciation before closing your letter

We are grateful for the information you will provide because it will help us have a smooth transaction.

I appreciate this information that will enable me to decide our order for 45 ACs for our offices.

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Suppose you want to know about a particular product I mean period and not with a straight away write directly and when you are going to close your letter please show your appreciation, I mean sometimes or the other suppose you want to buy 25 geysers or you want to buy a 20 room heaters what is over.

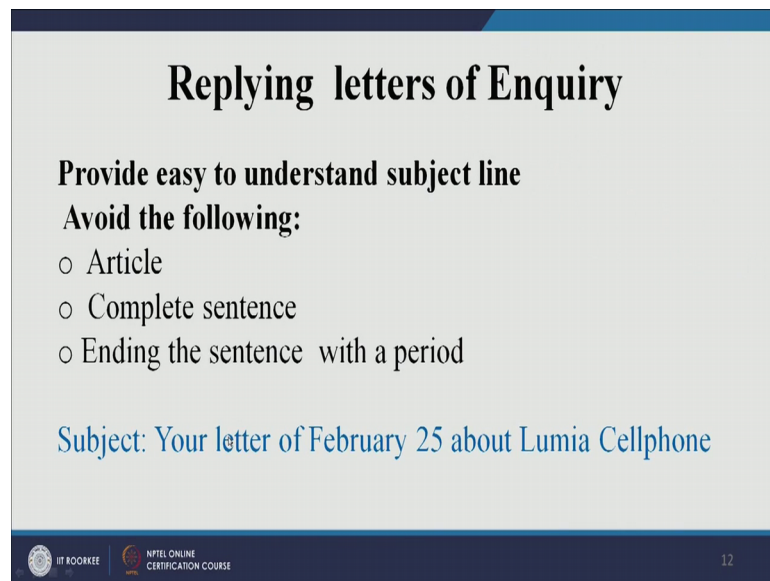
But then you should not make a lot of background rather you should put the main idea first, I mean other details such as payment procedures and all they will come later first you want to know about the particular thing and based on that you will actually give a sort of order. Now if we use a language like this we are grateful for the information you will provide because it will help us have a smooth transaction, I mean before we make any sale before we make any purchase we want to know about the product you know every customer nowadays is very conscious he actually tries to make a sort of comparative study and for that there is no harm in writing a letter of enquiry.

Sometimes for the other you may also write when you are going to end the letter, you may also write I appreciate this information that will enable me to decide our order for 45 ACs for our office. And in the first line you actually would like to know about the product particular product what is over and when you are going to close your letter you are actually going to close your letter on a note of hope, I mean every end in a business letter whatever nature of it be, but it should be it should have a positive it should have a cordial end I mean you are going to give some hope to the other party saying I appreciate

this information that will enable us to decide or that will enable me to decide the purchase of 25 Geysers or 25 ACs or what isoever.

Once you have sent a letter of Enquiry you are bound to receive a reply and based on your reply you are also going to place the orders, but suppose the letter for enquiry came and you are to respond now how should you respond.

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Replying letters of Enquiry

Provide easy to understand subject line
Avoid the following:

- Article
- Complete sentence
- Ending the sentence with a period

Subject: Your letter of February 25 about Lumia Cellphone

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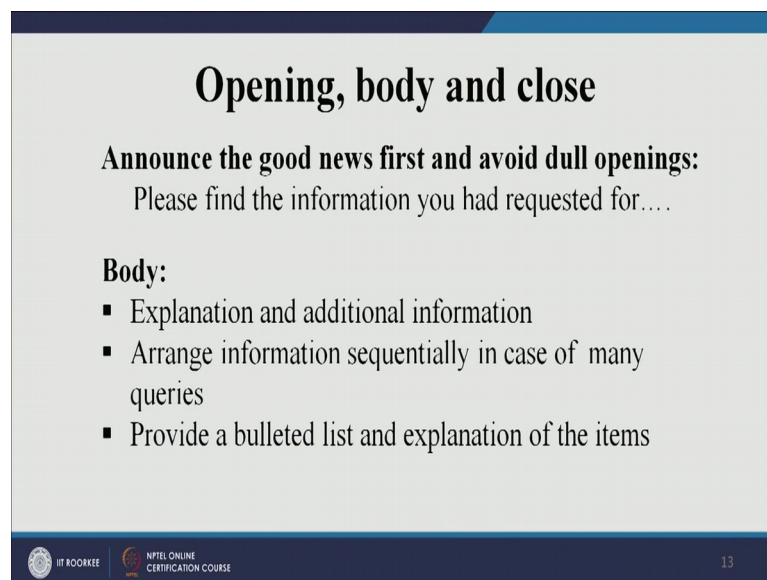
First is that you are as we have discussed earlier the subject line is very important. So, provide easy to understand subject line once you know about the product and you are going to make an order, but before that the other party is going to tell you.

So, what the other party will write when they are going to comply with your request by providing you the information, what they will do is they will write a subject line please be careful of course, you will need to be very particular about the use of language you need to be very particular about grammar, but remember when you are going to write the title it is not mandatory that you are making use of Article or you are going to make use of a Complete Sentence that is not appropriate what actually matters here is the subject I mean what do you want, but then when you are going to end the sentence It is once again not mandatory that you are going to end the sentence with a period even though you are going to ask.

Say for example, if I say may I know how much time will it take for our organization to receive the order of such and such now this appears to be in interrogative, but since it is in a polite way it is not needed to end with an interrogative rather you can also end it with a period, here is an example of a subject line you can see in subject line you are also mentioning your letter of February 25 about Lumia cell phone, suppose you are going to order you are going to know about this Lumia cell phone or what isoever.

So, please mention it in the subject line if you do not provide a subject line naturally the readers of your letters they will always be confused in all of them as I said earlier also they have a lots of responsibilities and jobs. So, what they need to understand first is; what is this letter about that is why the subject line has to be very clear.

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Opening, body and close

Announce the good news first and avoid dull openings:
Please find the information you had requested for...

Body:

- Explanation and additional information
- Arrange information sequentially in case of many queries
- Provide a bulleted list and explanation of the items

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Now, what is should be the opening and how should you write the body and then the close if you are going to tell them if you are going to comply with their request say to it that you write the good news first, in every business letter, whether it is a letter of enquiry, whether it is a response to the enquiry, whether it is a letter, when somebody is going to reply to your complaint and all announce the good news first and avoid dull openings.

What do exactly I mean by dull openings suppose I say lying before me is your letter dated such and such which actually demands or which actually wants to procure information about such and such thing, I mean this appears to be a very dull opening

rather you need to straight way state please find the information you had requested for Lumia cell phone please find the information please find attached the browser for such and such and later on you are going to explain.

You see here is a chance when you are going to explain here is a chance of promoting your other products also which is in line with I mean even though the person wants to seek information about a particular product, but since you are in a business organization and wants some other products also to be disseminated and to be promoted you can also talk about some additional information for example, we can say our company has also launched a new touch screen which is in the name of I phone or I tell like that. This way you are not only inviting your customer for one product rather you are also opening before him another box of information for some other product. And then sometimes it may also happen that the writer of the letter seeks information not only about one product, but also about some other products as well that may not be only about a particular product but about some other products as well or sometimes there may be a lot of questions also.

Now in such a way when you are responding to this letter please see that you are responding to all of their queries, but in a very sequential manner, but in a very logical manner. Moreover at times it appears that you cannot provide every information in a paragraph it is also to be seen the things which you write in a paragraph may appear to be at times cumbersome. So, it is always better either to list them on the right hand side of the letter in a very sequential manner or you can also provide them a bulleted list and also explanations of the items.

You know careful organizations; organizations which are experienced once they see to it that along with the answers they provide some additional enclosures which in some way or the other talk about some other products that the company has also launched or are going to launch. Sometimes they also start this coupon system this is one way now through which they can win customers they can invite customers at times it appears that your letter will have a sort of mixed messages when I talk about mixed messages (Refer Time: 24:36) derivatives not related only to one item, but to some other items which are different from Cell Phone nor say ACs or Geysers or what isoever, in such a situation sometimes you know you get a letter where a person is talking about where a person wants you to invite for a particular lecture.

But at the same time he also talks about some other things say for example, you are concerned about becoming the expert of a particular panel or so there also may be situations, but in such situations once again what you need to do is first you need to emphasize the good news.

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Dealing with Mixed messages

Emphasize the good news
Yes, I would be delighted to deliver a talk to your final year students.

Explain a problem
My schedule for the first two weeks of March are very tight as I'll be out of the country for a conference in Sweden.

Present the bad news in the middle
Although I cannot deliver a talk to your final year students during that time, perhaps we can schedule a date during the third week of March.

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Now, how will you emphasize the good news say for example, sometimes it so happens that you are not in a position to entertain all the requests which have been made by the writer of the letter.

But at the same time you do not want to lose that. So, in such a way what will do you will talk about in a very affirmative positive way, but then there are certain things which you cannot entertain that also you mention, but not in the beginning that is also to be brought towards the end or that has actually to be muffled that has to be closed in a different manner say for example, you have to say yes as we delighted to deliver a talk to your final year students, I mean here you have shown your interest in delivering a talk, but at the same time that the date which they have provided does not suit you.

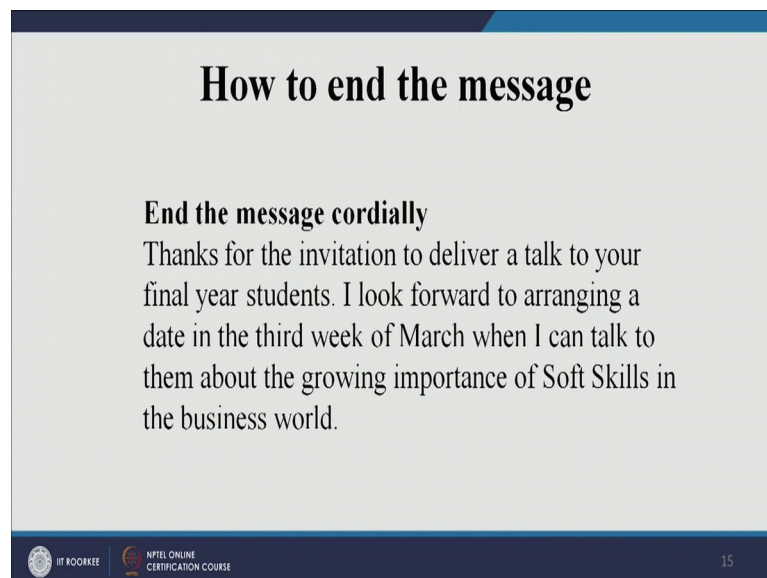
Now, what will you do you are interested to deliver a talk, but then you are not going to confirm to their dates. So, then you explain the problem while explaining the problem you can say you can choose a language like this my schedule for the first 2 weeks of march are very tight as I will be out of the country a for a conference in Sweden or for a conference elsewhere fine.

So, here you are explaining while you are explaining you are telling them it is negative though, but then in a way that you are presenting it does not appear to be negative and when you are going to close the letter, but before you close to letter present the bad news; the bad news is that you will not be obliging them on the dates which they have mentioned.

Now, you can put it to before the end, but even before the end it towards the end you will talk about the positive news, but before the positive news please situate this negative news such as although I cannot deliver the talk to your final year students during that time, when you say during that that time that actually means that the time which they have decided perhaps we can schedule a date during the last week of March or first week of April, but see since they are interested in you it is always better to give them a specific time say for example, as you say during the last week of March.

And once you are going to close your letter of course, as you all remember we have been saying close your letter on a very positive on a very cordial note saying thanks for the invitation this is the way you are going to end the letter thanks for the invitation to deliver a talk to your final year students.

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How to end the message

End the message cordially
Thanks for the invitation to deliver a talk to your final year students. I look forward to arranging a date in the third week of March when I can talk to them about the growing importance of Soft Skills in the business world.

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I look forward to arranging a date in the third week of March when I can talk to your students on the topic of the importance of Soft Skills in a business world.

Now by saying this you have not only kept their faith, but at the same time you have assured them that you will be delivering your talk, I mean this is one way by which we can even though there are certain things which we cannot ensure which we cannot guarantee, but then we have kept the hope alive. So, this is one way of responding to letters of enquiry next comes when you are going to place orders you know in business organizations sometimes you have to order sometimes you also have to appreciate and sometimes you have to complain.

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Letters for placing orders

Let the reader immediately know about the purchase

“Please send me 45 Hitachi Window ACs.”

List orders vertically
Inform the payment procedure.
Conclude on a cordial note

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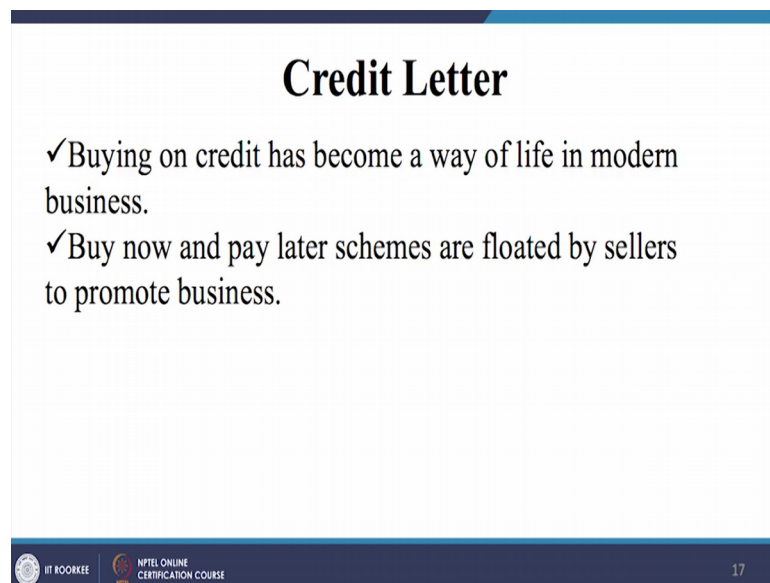
So, when you are going to write a letter for placing orders. So, what should you do as I said earlier you will be very straight no round about expressions, but the very first line of the letter should be “Please send me 45 Hitachi ACs Window ACs.” I mean here you have to be very specific.

But you see there is there are no such formality as of saying that we want to have a business with you like this fine, and if there are some more number of orders list them vertically it is also mandatory because you know the person you are going to give the orders they would also say to it they would also like to know about the payment procedure. So, please mention the procedure you can always say all our business transactions are done through Cheques. So, will in will make the payment through Cheque or you can also say through banking what isoever I mean whatever the facility be

there, but please ensure that you are going to tell them about the payment procedure and while you are going to conclude on a very cordial note.

Now, in a business world of today not everything can go by paying money always things at times have to be made purchases have to be made on credit and for that you also must know how to write a credit letter buying things on credit has become a way of life in modern day.

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Credit Letter

- ✓Buying on credit has become a way of life in modern business.
- ✓Buy now and pay later schemes are floated by sellers to promote business.

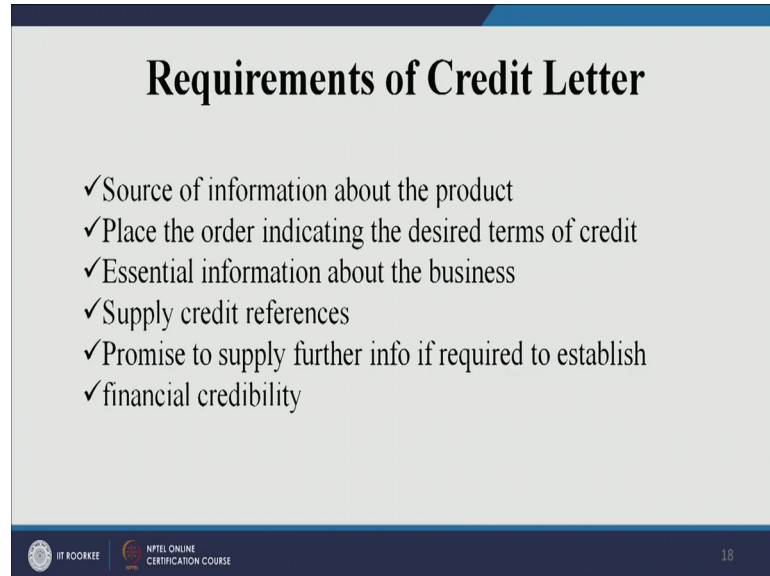
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And when you are going to write a credit letter the organization or the agency which is going to provide you the credit, it is not true that every now and then they may provide you the credit, but since you are going to write to them please write to them an authentic credit letter by authentic credit letter what I mean is you actually have to provide not only about your concern not only about your organization but also about some credit references which are valid.

Because based on those credit references only they can provide you the credit, but remember not every now and then your credit letter should be granted there are also situations depending upon the financial condition of the organization to whom you are writing they may at times refuse and suppose you are in the position where you are to write the refusal letter how should you write a refusal letter because writing a refusal letter does not mean closing our shop or writing a refusal letter does not mean closing all our ties.

So, when you write a credit letter and your credit letter does not have the sufficient credit information.

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Requirements of Credit Letter

- ✓ Source of information about the product
- ✓ Place the order indicating the desired terms of credit
- ✓ Essential information about the business
- ✓ Supply credit references
- ✓ Promise to supply further info if required to establish
- ✓ financial credibility

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I mean you are to provide sufficient credit references not only you are to be clear about the source of the information from which you have got to know about this organization which provides you the credit, but at the same time you are also to provide you know sometimes because the credit references are not sufficient that is why what you need to do is you also need to assure them that you can provide some additional information about the credit references and about the reputation of their company so that the credit is granted.

But the question is should have a credit be always granted our credit may not be always granted and in such a situation all you need to be is you need also to be prepared for a refusal letter, but when you write the refusal letter as I said you need not ensure or you need not announce that the ties are going to be over, I mean the refusal letters should be as cordial as some other letter or any other letter while you are drafting a refusal letter maintain the same cordiality thank the applicant for the request, for their interest in a particular product if you are all you are not in a position to grant them the credit.

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Refusal letter

- ✓ Thank the applicant for the request.
- ✓ State the reasons.
- ✓ Try to retain the customer by encouraging him to pay cash for the present transaction.
- ✓ Suggest the possibility of making credit arrangements in future

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So, please explain why explaining be hopeful you mention that at the present juncture our company is very new and we are not in a position to grant credit requests fine, but; however, we would like to entertain you as a customer who can pay in cash. When our financial conditions become sound we will look forward to receiving such credit letters and providing a things on credit, you know try to retain the customer by encouraging him to pay in cash for this transaction maybe this is one way to test this is one way to ensure that this person or this organization is interested in buying only your product, you have to suggest the possibility of making credit arrangements in future.

You know all you do through business letters is to continue the goodwill, because this goodwill leads to a sort of relationship and businesses tribe on relationship, there may be times, where you can grant, where you can also refuse, but then there are not always times where you give one credit and you are not going to receive the amount for that we will have to see because since we have given things on credit we also need to know how to get our money, how to get our outstanding.

Dear friends in a business world of today it is actually the relationship that matters and relationship can be shown, can be insured through the writings that you do for each other for ones organization on behalf of organization and through this through this communication you can ensure that business runs smoothly.

We shall be talking about collection letters, adjustment letters, claim letters, and some other letters in the next lecture. I hope you are enjoying this series of lectures, and in the days to come you will have many such lectures to follow which will help you make a successful and effective writer especially in terms of business dealings or in terms of drafting other documents.

Thank you very much.