

# CHAPTER 9

## Letters to vendors and suppliers

This chapter contains examples of letters that are commonly written to vendors and suppliers. The occasion for writing these letters varies from something as simple as placing orders to issues that must be carefully handled, such as complaints about salespeople or products. The letters here serve as models for professionals to use in their own dealings with vendors and suppliers.

Unless a formal proposal is required and you're writing a formal letter to accompany that proposal, many of the letters in this chapter can be sent as emails or as attachments to emails. For those letters that can be adapted to emails, it's simple enough to copy the text of the sample letter into the text of your email.

### **Letter Dealing with a Request for Proposal**

Requests for Proposals, or RFPs, frequently go out to prospective vendors as a call for business. The RFP can be a specific and often complex document, one that lists requirements, specifications, and budgetary restraints. Letters that accompany these RFPs can vary in their own specificity, but should at a minimum indicate an enclosed document and offer further assistance, if needed. Sample Letter 9.1 is a straightforward example of such a letter.

## Sample Letter 9.1. Letter accompanying an RFP.

[date]

Jeff McCutcheon  
iFab, Inc.  
4000 N. Michigan Road  
Jonesboro, MA 02123

Dear Mr. McCutcheon:

One of the goals for us here at the Falmouth Civic Center is to increase the number and quality of playgrounds in our city. As an organization, we have set the ambitious goal of redesigning our existing three city playgrounds and building three new sites around the downtown area, replete with water elements, challenging but safe climbing environments, and multi-age play structures.

To help us meet our goal, we need a qualified and capable company to oversee the design, construction, and installation of these playgrounds and all related equipment. We admire iFab's experience in metalwork, fabrication, and custom design for creative enterprises in the region. Of particular interest to us was your recent installation of the "Bats" pavilion at the Metropole City Zoo.

We would very much like you to consider responding to our initial Request for Proposal, enclosed. The deadline for submission of proposals is Friday, December 1, 20X3. Our committee will meet on December 8 to review proposals, and notifications to those companies approved for promotion to the second round of applications will occur on January 3, 20X4.

If you have further questions about the project, the RFP, or the proposal requirements, please call me at (508) 555-5415. I look forward to receiving your submission.

Sincerely,

Michaela Coleman  
Chair, Buildings Committee

mc/ldf

encl.

## Letters Involved with Presentations

Sample Letter 9.2 is written to a sales rep, requesting that she make a sales presentation. The letter writer is clear in what she is asking as well as clear in how she will follow up to confirm the recipient's availability and willingness to make the sales presentation.

### **Sample Letter 9.2.** Letter requesting a sales presentation.

[date]

Dr. Whitney Lighthouse, President  
Precision Physician's Equipment  
45 Scalpel Avenue  
Point Medic, NJ 07550

Dear Dr. Lighthouse:

At Outdoor Doctor Pavilions, we are interested in providing our trade show customers with the latest in medical equipment options. Recently, your company was referred to us as one that might have the sort of unique products ideally suited to our customers.

Our semi-annual conferences, where all of our sales force gathers, take place in August and March. We were hoping you could find time in your schedule to attend our conference in March to make a sales presentation about your products to our sales force.

The conference takes place from March 4 through March 7. If you could let us know of your availability and willingness to make a sales presentation, we will work with you to accommodate your schedule.

Please call me at 617-555-2217 or email me at [md@odp.com](mailto:md@odp.com) to let me know of your availability.

Sincerely,

Mary Dock  
CEO, Outdoor Doctor Pavilions

md/nm

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Sample Letter 9.3 acknowledges someone who made a sales presentation to the letter writer's business in response to a Request for Proposals. The letter makes clear that no decision has yet been made about the contract recipient, but also lays out a rough timeline for when a decision might be expected.

### **Sample Letter 9.3.** Letter acknowledging a sales presentation made after an RFP.

[date]

Mr. Lucas Evan David  
Fighting Designers, Inc.  
164 Turtle Lane  
Stonevillege, MA 02188

Dear Mr. David:

Thank you very much for the design presentation you made today for the Python Flying Bridge project.

We have now received presentations from the short list of vendors we developed in response to our RFP. We do not anticipating hearing any more presentations.

Once we have decided on a vendor, we will be in touch with you. We anticipate that the deliberation process will take us roughly three weeks.

Thank you very much for your presentation as well as your patience as we make this choice that is critical to the future of our project.

Sincerely,

Liam Nephewson  
CEO, PFP Partners

LN/js

cc: Graham Cleese

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## Letters Dealing with Vendor Bids

Letters awarding contracts to vendors should be short, but enthusiastic, as they set the tone of a positive working relationship between business partners. This type of letter will usually come at the end of an application process that has established a degree of familiarity between correspondents. The award of a contract also signals the progression of the relationship to a new level. The details of the contract will be hammered out in future correspondence.

### Sample Letter 9.4. Letter awarding contract to a vendor.

[date]

Ms. Tess Freiman, Creative Director  
Fuchsia Design, Inc.  
Harbor Farms Road  
Lightning, TX 75090

Dear Ms. Freiman:

Thank you for your proposal for the redesign of the Junior Apparel campaign in Righteous! Girlswear's midwest region stores. Your vision for displaying our pre-teen line of clothing was dramatic and cost effective, and we are pleased to inform you that we have decided to award Fuchsia Design the contract to create all related display materials for our Righteous! Junior Apparel line.

Our Marketing Director, Elsa Zlotnikoff, will call you in the next few days to go over the terms of the enclosed contract. We here at Righteous! Girlswear look forward to working with you in the coming months. Congratulations again on a successful proposal.

Sincerely,

James Rothberg

JR:ejc

encl.

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Depending on the terms of a request for a bid, you may be required to notify losing bidders that you have awarded your business to another company. At any rate, it is courteous to respond to unsuccessful bidders: doing so may keep future business channels open. This type of letter can be short and sweet, complimentary but direct.

### **Sample Letter 9.5.** Letter notifying losing bidder.

[date]

Grady Rogers  
Nor-Cross Enterprises  
5300 Marietta Drive  
Baltimore, MD 20601

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Thank you for your recent bid to manufacture and distribute Hi-Ball's new product, The BuddhaBall™. Your proposal was thoughtful and met our minimum requirements for cost and quality, taking into consideration our warehousing and distribution guidelines.

However, another company delivered a proposal that was more cost effective than Nor-Cross Enterprises' bid, and we have decided to award the contract to that company. We do appreciate your efforts on our Request for Proposal, though, and we will certainly keep you in mind for future business ventures.

Sincerely,

Mike Branigan

MB/js

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## Letter Placing Order

Sample Letter 9.6 was written to place a simple order with a company. The letter writer clearly spells out what he wants to order, listing the product names, quantities, and total cost. He also indicates that he is enclosing a check for the order, and instructs the reader where to ship his order.

### Sample Letter 9.6. Letter placing order.

[date]

Mr. Maxwell North  
Andoris Publishing Company  
23 Lathrop Avenue  
Boonton, NJ 07005

Dear Mr. North:

Please send me the following books advertised in your Fall 20X7 catalog:

5 copies of <i>The Commercial Loan</i>	\$245.00
6 copies of <i>Banking Dictionary</i>	294.00
3 copies of <i>Bank Selling Directory</i>	<u>105.00</u>
Total	644.00
Less 10% discount on 10 or more books	<u>64.40</u>
Amount due:	\$579.60

I have enclosed a company check for \$579.60. Please send the order to me at: Big Bank Company, 186-A Grampian Road, Gloucester, New Jersey 08343.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Larry T. Edsel  
Training Director

lte:jls

enc.

## Letter Requesting Distributor's Name

Sample Letter 9.7 was written to a company to request the name of a distributor in the letter writer's area. The writer explains that he came across the product at a trade show. He asks for the name of a local distributor so he can purchase the product.

### **Sample Letter 9.7.** Letter requesting name of dealer or distributor.

[date]

Mr. Carl T. Pernicks  
Vice President  
Advanced Copiers In Offices, Inc.  
76 Troden Road  
Troden, CT 06056

Dear Mr. Pernicks:

I picked up your business card and a brochure for your company's copiers when I was at the Annual Office Supply Trade Show in Anaheim. I am very interested in buying a Mark-VG564 Copier, advertised on page 5 of your brochure.

Can you please send me the name of a distributor in my area? I would like to examine the machine to see if it is capable of meeting my business needs.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alan T. Rylees

jls

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## Letter Seeking Information About Product

Sample Letter 9.8 was written by someone whose office was in the process of evaluating a variety of copiers to make a purchase decision. The letter writer explains this situation and asks the reader to send information on his product. The writer briefly explains the type of office she runs so the reader might get an idea of her office's needs.

### **Sample Letter 9.8.** Letter requesting information about product.

[date]

Mr. Vladimir Puchefsky  
Vladimir's Copy Machines  
45 Orange Road  
Trinstale, MI 48056

Dear Mr. Puchefsky:

We are in the process of updating our copier equipment. Will you please send us information on the price, capabilities, and availability of your office line of copy machines?

Byron Public Relations, Inc., is a 50-person public relations company. We currently have two copy machines, which we plan to trade in. Because of the volume of copying our company does, we are considering purchasing four copy machines.

Please send us the information we need to evaluate whether or not your firm can supply us with the copiers we need.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Leigh Simons  
Office Manager

ls/js

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## Letter Asking About Quantity Discounts

Sample Letter 9.9 was written to a business to request information about quantity discounts on a product the letter writer is interested in buying. The writer identifies the product, explains how many copies he would be interested in purchasing, and asks if the reader can give him quantity discount prices on the purchase. He closes by letting the reader know when he'd need the first of the product shipments so the reader will know that he would like to make a decision about the purchase soon.

### Sample Letter 9.9. Letter asking about quantity discounts.

[date]

Mr. Nathan T. Bloom  
Dover Products Company  
312 West Main Street  
Boonton, NJ 07005

Dear Mr. Bloom:

On a recent trip from New York to Boston, I picked up a copy of Jason Lang's book, *Marketing Financial Advisory Services: A Hands-On Guide*, at an airport bookstore.

I speak on the subject of financial services marketing frequently. After reading Mr. Lang's book, I thought it might make an excellent course book for some of the seminars I run. Do you offer quantity discounts on your books? If I were to order copies, my first order would be for a minimum of 100 books. My seminars are run quarterly, so I would probably order 300 more copies throughout the year.

Please let me know if you can offer me a discount on this large purchase. I have a seminar coming up the first week of November and need to make a decision soon about which text I will use.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Brandt T. Higginbottom

bth/jls

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## Letters Complimenting Vendors

Sample Letters 9.10 and 9.11 were written to compliment vendors. The writer of Sample Letter 9.10 took the time to write about the quality service he had been getting from his sales representative. A letter like this does a lot to build goodwill with the sales representative and with the vendor.

Sample Letter 9.11 was written to compliment a vendor on the job he had done. The letter writer is particularly pleased with the service that the vendor has provided and lets him know. He clearly indicates that part of the success of his company's product is due to the vendor's services. Like Sample Letter 9.10, this type of complimentary letter goes a long way toward building goodwill and a solid relationship with the vendor. It also helps the vendor since it will give him something to show to others who might be interested in using his services.

Each of these letters could easily be sent as an email instead without making any significant changes to the text of the messages.

### Sample Letter 9.10. Letter praising supplier's representative.

[date]

Mr. Richard H. Unimant  
Branch Manager  
Best Copy Service  
412 Santiago Drive  
Wonderland, NJ 07020

Dear Mr. Unimant:

I recently renewed our service contract on our copy machine for the third consecutive year. Our lasting business relationship has prompted me to write this letter.

I want to compliment your company on its most important asset—your service representative, Peggy Fection. Peggy is a superior individual. She is always prompt, courteous, and diligent. Her work is quick and professional and it cures whatever ails our tired old copying machine. She instills a quiet confidence in your company, which is one of the reasons we continue to do business with your company. When we decide to upgrade our copying system, we will call upon your company for further assistance.

People like Peggy are hard to find. It's not often I take the time to write a note like this, but she's been so consistently outstanding that I just couldn't help myself.

Best regards,

Max Nightson

amb

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### **Sample Letter 9.11.** Letter complimenting supplier of services.

[date]

Mr. Brady D. Oram  
Oram Design Studios  
45 Andover Place  
Breakstone, MT 59025

Dear Mr. Oram:

Now that we've got our product—the Sunshield Sport Glasses—rolling off the production lines, I thought it appropriate to write you a note. Everyone in the company from the chairman of the board on down is extremely excited about the product. Your design of our packaging is above and beyond anything we ever expected.

I think we can credit Oram Design Studios' design approach with the success. Rather than designing a pretty box, your team created an "environment" for our product that truly communicates how special we feel the product and company behind it are.

The environment is being translated directly into a success at the wholesale and retail levels. When we started the project, Boonton Optical Company, Inc., was fairly new in the sunglass business. We did approximately \$120,000 worth of business in sunglasses last year. Currently this year, after only three months of selling, we have actual sales of more than \$500,000, and expect to hit \$1.5 million before the year is over.

Since the product line, sales force, and advertising have remained the same, it looks like the packaging is communicating the right message to the retail trade.

Once again, thanks for a great effort. We are anxious to begin work on the next project. We like the way Oram Design Studios communicates Boonton Optical's products to the trade and the public.

Sincerely,

Zed B. Grusinki  
Marketing Director

fwd

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## Letters Clearing Up Billing Errors

Sample Letter 9.12 was sent to a vendor to clarify a billing error made by the vendor. The letter writer is stern, yet not insulting. He identifies the cancelled check he is enclosing to verify payment and suggests that the vendor should be sure an invoice has not been paid before it threatens to turn over matters to a collection agency.

### **Sample Letter 9.12.** Letter to vendor clearing up billing error.

[date]

Ms. Patricia S. Paly,  
Customer Service Department  
P.O. Box 3452  
Grand Forks Office Supply Company, Inc.  
Albion, NM 87045

#### CLARIFICATION OF BILLING ERROR

Ms. Paly, I have enclosed a copy of the front and back of our check that was used to pay your invoice numbered 3352217. If you look at the copy of the back of the check, you will note that your company endorsed this check and that it was processed by your bank on January 5.

I would suggest that your company evaluate the procedures it uses for processing payments on its accounts receivable. It seems to me that you should correct your problems prior to sending past-due notices that threaten to turn your customers over to a collection agency.

I trust that the enclosed copy of our check will clear up your processing error and put our account back on the paid-up status.

JAMES LONG  
CONTROLLER

jl:rl

enc.

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Sample Letter 9.13 was written to a vendor who had shipped the wrong mix of products to the letter writer. The writer lays out the problem clearly and spells out the solution he would like from the vendor.

**Sample Letter 9.13.** Letter to vendor to straighten out incorrect order received.

[date]

Order #: 2488458

Mr. Loren Gary, Warehouse Supervisor  
P.O. Box 3452  
Eufaula Spacel Gardening Supply  
Hanover, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Gary:

On April 15 we sent an order to you for several garden supply products that we planned to use for our annual Patriotic Days Sale, which runs from Flag Day on June 14 until Independence Day on July 4. Included on the list of items we ordered were one dozen large birdbaths at \$600 for the dozen. We specifically ordered four in red, four in white, and four in blue.

This morning we received the shipment and were disappointed to find that all of the birdbaths you sent us were white. No letter of explanation accompanied the shipment.

We are returning eight of the white birdbaths to your attention by air freight. Please ship us the four red and four blue birdbaths we originally requested from you with our purchase order numbered 2488458.

Our Patriotic Days Sale begins on June 14 and we'd really like to have all of the bird-baths in stock before then. Thank you for giving your immediate attention to this order and resolving the mistake.

Sincerely,

Greg Gold, Chief Buyer

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## Letters Complaining to Vendors

Sample Letters 9.14 and 9.15 are examples of letters that were written to complain to vendors or suppliers.

Sample Letter 9.14 was written to a supplier of a business product. The letter writer clearly establishes his complaint and suggests the solution the reader should take. He explains that he would like to discuss the problem with the wholesaler since he has never had such a problem with the vendor before. The letter is clear and leaves no doubt about what the problem is and how the writer expects it to be resolved.

Sample Letter 9.15 was written to a vendor to complain about one of his sales representatives. The letter writer clearly explains that the sales representative is breaking the writer's company policy by directly approaching employees. After warning the sales representative and finding the situation has not changed, the writer finds it necessary to write the vendor to complain about the situation. The letter writer asks that the vendor speak to the sales representative to get him to stop breaking company policy.

### **Sample Letter 9.14.** Letter complaining about unsatisfactory products.

[date]

Mr. Lawrence E. Tribune  
Tisk-a-Disk, Inc.  
43 Software Center Turnpike  
Framingham, NH 02256

Dear Mr. Tribune:

For the last several months, my customers at the store have been returning Tisk-a-Disk thumb drives. Never before have I had such a problem with one of your products. The

complaint is the same for virtually all dissatisfied customers: The casing for the thumb drive falls apart soon after the thumb drive cover is removed.

Imagine the trouble this situation can cause my customers, Mr. Tribune. What if they lose valuable data that they have stored on these thumb drives? Have you been getting similar complaints from other retail outlets? Perhaps the latest shipment of thumb drives I received is an isolated case of poor craftsmanship. If not, then I will have to discontinue carrying your thumb drives and stock another company's.

I've shipped to you what I had remaining in stock of thumb drives. There are 100 packages with 10 thumb drives each, which makes a total of 1,000 thumb drives. I am returning these since I am concerned the same unraveling problem might occur. Since the wholesale price is 69.5 cents a thumb drive, please credit my account for \$695.

Please call me when you've assessed this problem and let me know Tisk-a-Disk's plans for correcting the situation. I look forward to hearing from you in the next couple of days.

Cordially,

Justin L. Raisch

jlr/nls

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### **Sample Letter 9.15.** Letter complaining about sales representative.

[date]

Mr. Oscar B. Crum  
Crum Notepads, Inc.  
467 Scholarly Way  
Tuskin, AL 35045

Dear Mr. Crum:

As you are probably aware, *The Armchair Reader's Review* orders a significant amount of supplies from your company. We are pleased with the quality of the products,

particularly the reporters' notebooks you manufacture. But I am writing you because of difficulty I am having with your sales representative assigned to our territory, Mack McIntyre.

While we do make frequent purchases from your company, we have time and time again requested that Mr. McIntyre deal directly with our office manager for product ordering. We have asked that he call to set up an appointment before arriving on the scene. On many occasions, Mr. McIntyre has simply shown up at our offices. Often, even when he has already met with the office manager, he approaches our writers and editors directly to encourage them to buy your products.

I must ask that Mr. McIntyre follow the procedure we have clearly outlined for him to use in approaching us for orders. His method of "cutting through the red tape" eats up our writers' and editors' valuable time. By having our office manager handle the ordering, we have centralized that function. I am sure you can understand why this procedure is important to us.

While we let Mr. McIntyre know about the appropriate procedure when he first took on this sales territory, he has continued to fail to follow it. Many of our editors and writers are up in arms about the disruption and continue to complain to me about his direct sales approaches.

We are very pleased with your products. We are also pleased with the speed and efficiency with which you handle orders. We are not looking to make life difficult for Mr. McIntyre. We simply ask that you speak to him about following the procedure that we have established here.

Cordially,

Kate McGuffie

km/js

cc: MN

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## Letter Cancelling Contract

Sample Letter 9.16 was written to cancel a contract with a supplier. The letter is short, but the letter writer clearly explains that his company would like to cancel a contract coming up for renewal. He closes by requesting that the machine that was contracted out to his company be removed as soon as possible.

### **Sample Letter 9.16.** Letter to vendor cancelling contract.

[date]

Mr. Richard H. Unimant  
Branch Manager  
Best Copy Service  
412 Santiago Drive  
Wonderland, NJ 07020

Dear Mr. Unimant:

We do not plan to renew our contract for the use of a Copier 14X40 copying machine. The contract expires June 20 of this year.

The copying machine is located at our downtown office in Melrose. We would like to have the machine removed at your earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely,

Phlange A. Indelible  
Office Manager

PAI:jls

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## Letter Firing Vendor Because of Economic Conditions

Sample Letter 9.17 was written to a vendor to explain why the writer would not be using the company's services anymore. The reason for the firing was that business was off for the letter writer. The writer's tone is friendly but clear, expressing regrets that for the time being he can no longer do business with this vendor.

### Sample Letter 9.17. Letter firing a vendor.

[date]

Mr. David Epstein  
Sales Manager  
Pompton Paper Products  
Wooster, ID 83230

Dear David:

I know you're well aware that sales have been soft lately for us. Well, this has caused us to reexamine the profitability of all of our vendor relationships. Because the costs of your goods are much higher than other paper product suppliers we do business with, we are going to terminate our current relationship with Pompton Paper Products.

Our decision reflects our determination to get our gross margins in better shape and in no way reflects badly on the service we've received from your sales representatives nor on the quality of your goods. The professionals at Pompton Paper Products are among the most helpful and informed with whom we do business.

I am really hopeful that economic conditions change so that we're able to do business with Pompton Paper Products again. Until then, please know that we've appreciated the service you've given us over the past eight years and are grateful for all the help you've given us in establishing ourselves as the leading retailer of stationery supplies in the Southwest.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Anne  
Vice President

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