HOW TO DO BUSINESS BY LETTER, AND TRAINING COURSE IN CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH, PP. 1-191

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AND TRAINING COURSE IN

Conversational English

By SHERWIN CODY

Author of "Word Study for Schools," "Short Term Grammar Drill," and "The Cody System for Business Men—How to Write Letters That Pull."

SIXTEENTH EDITION
(75 Thousand)

CHICAGO
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

PREFACE

This book is intended for teachers and students who wish to become able to write really creditable and up-to-date business letters in a business office in conversational English.

There is just one way in which this practical skill can be given, and that is by educating the instinct. Use of former editions of this book in the classroom for several years past has clearly proved that it really makes successful letter writers by giving the business instinct.

For one thing, the form, style, and arrangement of letters are so presented that the correct style is always before the student's eye, and he absorbs it almost unconsciously. A thing that is seen is learned in a mere fraction of the time required to master that which is merely talked about.

Above all, this book affords a successful training in Business English Composition by giving the student the business point of view. It enables him to catch something of the spirit of salesmanship in letters, and that develops into an enthusiasm that brings practical results in one-half or one-third the time that they can be obtained by any other method. Once get the student interested in the composition of letters from the salesmanship point of view, and he will develop instinctively a power of expression that is really surprising.

Of course, only a real business man could be expected to put the element of business instinct and salesmanship into a textbook, and I think that is the point in which this book has an advantage over others which have been prepared by theorists and not by successful practitioners of the art of doing business by mail.

The language taught in this book is that which a business man would use in talking to a customer, no word not natural in conversation being tolerated. I know of no better way to teach conversational English.

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How to Do Business By Letter

CHAPTER I

Using Words So as to Make People Do Things

Business letter writing is not a study of forms and usages. It is rather a study of human nature and "how to use words so as to make people do things."

If the student catches the idea that letters are talks on paper which must actually do business, and must be just as simple, direct, and clear as a business talk, instinct will help greatly to make the mastery of forms and usages easy.

Every young man or woman who goes into business must do business, for himself or for his employer, and much of this business (to save time and travel) must be done on paper. The study of business letter writing should therefore be the study of business in a nutshell.

But skill comes only by beginning with the simple things—and most of the letters in this book will be found to be merely simple, easy, and natural. The letter writer who can be "simple, easy, and natural" on paper is already well on the high road to success.

Familiar Notes

1

3/4/04.

Mr. Jones:

Will you notify the clerks in your department that on and after Monday next, July 11, this store will close at 5.30 p. m. instead of at 5.45, as in the past, and only three quarters of an hour will be allowed at noon—from 12 to 12.45, or from 12.45 to 1.30.

A. W. Thorne, Mgr. (58 words)

This short method of writing a date is very appropriate in a note like this, but should never be used in a regular letter.

Nowadays "p. m." or "a. m." in small letters is preferred, though capitals are not incorrect. The abbreviation should always be used after the first of a series of figures indicating hours, but may be omitted after other figures in the same connection.

A period is most convenient between figures indicating hours and minutes, though a colon is not incorrect, and was once regularly used.

2

6/31/98.

Miss Kennedy:

I shall not return to the office until to-morrow. I expect to be in from 9 o'clock to 1. Please complete the letters I gave you and have them ready for me to look over the first thing in the morning.

A. W. Thorne. (48 words)

Notice that "Miss" is not an abbreviation, and is not followed by a period. "O'clock" is not written with a capital letter in the middle of a sentence.

Numbers below ten and round numbers such as one hundred, one thousand, etc., are not usually to be written in figures unless in a series. In this note 9 and 1 constitute the smallest possible series.

3

7/31/99.

Mr. Thorne:

Mr. Kelly called this morning at ten o'clock and said he wished very much to see you this afternoon. He will call at four if possible.

Agnes Kennedy. (36 words)

In business letters we usually write hours and minutes in figures, though in social letters the written words are more common. When a full hour like "ten" is mentioned it may be written with "o'clock" in full; but if two or more hours are mentioned in succession, the figures may be preferred. Do not mix the styles in the same sentence or letter.

4

10/3/04.

Miss Kennedy:

I wish you would be a little more prompt in the morning. I noticed that this morning you were not at the office until