

Enquiry and Bargaining



Learning Objectives

- > To know the main elements in the quotation for freight services
- \blacktriangleright To know the basic rules for a valid offer and an acceptance
- \triangleright To learn the expressions in making enquiries and quotations

Skill Developing Objectives

- ➤ To develop communication skills in the enquiry and quotation for freight services
- To develop writing skills in the enquiry and quotation for freight services

Section 1 Theme Lead-in

Read the following passage to get a better understanding of this unit.

Quotation after Enquiry

First of all, European inquiring parties expect a firm quotation within three days. If you cannot, for some reasons, react within these three days, make sure someone in your organization gives a message: asking for further details, explaining or excusing the delay, and mentioning the period in which a firm reaction can be expected, plus the reason for it, and asking whether that is acceptable.

You need to know more about the customer before you make your offer. A useful source of information is certainly the company's website and more details can be found through trade directories as well.

Make sure you have all the tools available on your own end, including a good brochure, a dynamic website and instruments to show your professionalism contained in a company profile.

Last but not least, train and instruct your assistants with precision to communicate properly when the customer contacts you via the phone. Your employee who is responsible for commercial issues should make a basic instruction manual for your assistants.

In order to make a good quotation which includes all the necessary information, you should follow certain steps:

Your quotation should bear an identification reference number as well and be clearly traceable from the customer's end. Moreover, your own employees must be fully aware of this identification number and recognize it immediately. The reason for this is simply that it shows the interest in the customer.

Confirm the quantities which were requested and make clear that your prices are based on these volumes.

Prices should be preferably in the currency which was requested but make clear which prices belong to which quantities. Although you may be at risk, in this phase it is more important to accommodate to your customer's wishes than to secure all the risks. Prior investigation of the credibility of the customer may reduce the possible threats.

Provide a realistic delivery time schedule but have it checked with your production manager first. This can certainly prevent any obstructions once the order comes through.

Limit the acceptance time of your offer to be able to review the prices and delivery schedule when that time has lapsed. Mention the acceptance validity of the offer and make clear that you have to review your quotation after that date.

Notes

1. First of all, European inquiring parties expect a firm quotation within three days.

首先,欧洲的询价方期待能在三日内收到对方报的实价。

2. Asking for further details, explaining or excusing the delay, and mentioning the period in which a firm reaction can be expected, plus the reason for it, and asking whether that is acceptable.

进一步询问信息,为延迟报价做出解释或道歉,提出报实价所需的时间并解释原因,并询问对方是否可以接受。

- You need to know more about the customer before you make your offer. 在报盘之前,你需要对顾客有更多的了解。
- 4. Make sure you have all the tools available on your own end, including a good brochure, a dynamic website and instruments to show your professionalism contained in a company profile.

确保你拥有所需的一切工具,包括产品手册、动态网站,以及公司简介中体现专业 性的各种设备。

- Last but not least, train and instruct your assistants with precision to communicate properly when the customer contacts you via the phone. 最后但同样重要的是,一定要指导你的助理在接听客户来电时恰当沟通。
- Your quotation should bear an identification reference number and be clearly traceable from the customer's end. 你的报价需要包含用于识别的参考码,并确保客户可以追踪到。
- Confirm the quantities which were requested and make clear that your prices are based on these volumes.
 确认需求数量并且声明报价基于这些数量。
- Prices should be preferably in the currency which was requested but make clear which prices belong to which quantities. 价格应以所要求的货币为准,但应使价格与数量一一对应。
- 9. Although you may be at risk, in this phase it is more important to accommodate

to your customer's wishes than to secure all the risks.

虽然你可能有点冒险,但在这一阶段迎合客户的意愿比规避风险更加重要。

10. Prior investigation of the credibility of the customer may reduce the possible threats.

提前对客户进行信誉度调查可以减少风险。

- Limit the acceptance time of your offer to be able to review the prices and delivery schedule when that time has lapsed. 规定报价的期限,以便在这一报价到期时重新定价和安排交货。
- Mention the acceptance validity of the offer and make clear that you have to review your quotation after that date. 提及报价的有效期,并声明超过这一日期后你将重新报价。

😼 Problems Solving

- 1. Discuss with your partners about the procedure in forming a contract.
- 2. Match the following sentences with the proper terms in the box.

acceptance firm offer non-firm offer counter offer enquiry

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- (1) The offer is subject to our final confirmation. (
- (2) The offer is valid subject to your reply reaching us by the end of May. ()
- (3) Could you offer us your lowest price for freight forwarding services? ()
- (4) Your price is not competitive. Could you reduce the price to \$70? ()
- (5) We accept your offer of \$0.67/piece and please find attached our request for sample.

Section 2 Conversations and Warm-up

Conversations +

Conversation 1 Bargaining over Freight Rate

(B is Ms. Li, the clerk of Hengtong Company, who is talking with A, William Smith, a potential client.)

- A: I'm interested in all kinds of your products, but this time I would like to order some fireworks and mosquito coil incense. Please quote us C. I. F. Rangoon.
- B: Please let us know the quantity required so that we can work out the premium and freight charges.

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- A: I'm going to place a trial order for 1,000 units of a dozen fireworks and 500 cartons of mosquito coil incense.
- B: All right. Here are our F. O. B. price lists. All the prices are subject to our final confirmation.
- A: Your price is reasonable but I wonder if you would give us a discount. You know for the products like yours we usually get a 2% or 3% discount from European suppliers.
- B: We usually offer on a net basis only. Many of our clients have been doing very well on this quoted price.
- A: Discounts will more or less encourage us to make every effort to push sales of your products.
- B: The quantity you ordered is much smaller than those of others. If you can manage to boost it a bit, we'll consider giving you a better discount.
- A: As far as a trial order is concerned, the quantity is by no means small. And generally speaking, we like to profit from a trial order. I hope you'll be able to meet our requirements.
- B: Well, as this is the first deal between us, we agree to give you a 1% discount as a special encouragement.
- A: 1%? That's too low of a rate. Could you see your way to increase it to 2%?
- B: I'm afraid we have really made a great concession, and could not go any further.
- A: Well. I don't think it's wise for us to insist on our own price. I suggest we meet each other halfway. It seems this is the only proposal for me to accept. I'll come again tomorrow to discuss it in detail.
- B: All right. See you tomorrow.

Conversation 2 Enquiry and Quotation

(A is William Smith, an exporter from DLA Clothing Company, who is talking with B, Wang Yong, a sales manager of a logistics company.)

- A: Good morning, Mr. Wang.
- B: Good morning, Mr. Smith. Thanks for your enquiry of August 20.
- A: You know we are very interested in your quotation. Could you show me your latest freight service catalogues?
- B: Sure, here you are.

- A: Thanks. Is it your best price?
- B: Yes, it is. And for the quantities of more than 100 MTs, we can offer a discount of 15% on our price list.
- A: That's great! Please let me know the shipping schedules in recent months.
- B: OK. I'll send you the details as soon as I get them.
- A: Very good. We'll be expecting to hear from you.

Conversation 3 Request for Quotation and Payment Terms

(A is Miss Lin, a receptionist of a logistics company, who is welcoming B, Jason, a businessman from an export company.)

- A: Good morning. Welcome to our company. What can I do for you?
- B: Good morning. I learned from the newspaper that your company can transport large machinery and equipment, right?
- A: Yes, we can. What kind of machines do you want to transport?
- B: We have some urban cleaning machinery to be exported to the United States.Would you please give me the quotation with details of your freight prices?
- A: Sure. This is our catalogue. Please have a look.
- B: How should we pay for your services?
- A: We usually accept the payment by cheque when the whole delivery process is over.
- B: Okay. Is there any time limit for making the payment?
- A: You are required to make the payment within five days after you receive our bill. For the overdue account, we charge 0.5% of the total arrearage per day.
- B: I see. Thanks for the information.

🖉 Warm-up

A. Match the definitions in Column B with the terms in Column A.

А	В	
1. FOB(Free on Board)	A. an irrevocable offer made by a merchant	
2. ceiling price	B. a trade term requiring the seller to deliver goods on board a vessel designated by the buyer	
3. CIF(Cost, Insurance and Freight)	C. a government-imposed price control or limit on how high a price is charged for a product	

Continued

А	В	
	D. a trade term requiring the seller to arrange for the carriage of	
4. firm offer	goods by sea to a port of destination, and provide the buyer with	
	the documents necessary to obtain the goods from the carrier	
5. DAT (Delivered at Terminal)	E. an international commercial term whereby the seller pays all	
	transport costs	

B. The following is a passage about offer and quotation. Fill in the blanks with the words given in the box and then discuss with your partners about the differences between a quotation and an offer.

negotiation	conclude	customer	role	conditions	
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Offer is an expression in which its offeror is willing to (1) ______ a transaction with an offeree on terms and (2) ______ mentioned, it is a reply to an enquiry from a (3) ______. In international trade practice, quotation, which is the reply to the inquiry's requests, can also play the (4) ______ of the offer. It is often made by letter, fax or E-mail. It is the first step in business (5) _____.

C. Make up a dialogue according to the following situation.

Student A works as a sales manager in a logistics company, and Student B is an exporter who is willing to know the quotation for freight services. Student A and Student B will act out a dialogue about the quotation for freight services.

The dialogue should cover the following information: greeting, the information of the goods to be delivered, the quotation and payment terms for freight services.

Section 3 Format Writings and Practical Usages

Format Writings

Read the following passage, and answer the questions.

Offer and Acceptance

Offer and acceptance are elements required for the formation of a legally binding contract.

An offer is an expression of willingness to contract on certain terms, made with the intention that it shall become binding as soon as it is accepted by the offeree. The 8

expression of an offer may take different forms, such as a letter, advertisement, fax, email and even conduct, as long as it communicates the basis on which the offeror is prepared to contract.

A valid offer usually includes at least the following four terms: delivery date, price, terms of payment and detailed description of the item on offer including a fair description of the condition or type of service. An invitation to treat is not an offer, but an indication of a person's willingness to negotiate a contract.

An acceptance is a promise or act on the part of an offeree indicating a willingness to be bound by the terms and conditions contained in an offer. There are several rules dealing with the communication of acceptance:

- The acceptance must be communicated, the offeror cannot include an Acceptance by Silence clause.
- An offer can only be accepted by the offeree, that is, the person to whom the offer is made.
- The offeree should not materially alter the terms of the offer.



Problems Solving

- 1. What elements are required for the formation of a legally binding contract?
- 2. According to the passage, what terms are usually included in a valid offer?
- 3. Could you give an example of an invitation to treat?
- 4. Can a person to whom the offer is not made accept the offer? Why?

5. If an offeree alters the term of payment in an offer, is his acceptance valid? Why?

塗 Writing Samples

Letter 1 Enquiry

August 15, 2024

Dear Sir,

We have learned from the website that your company can transport large machinery.

We run crane retail business and we are interested in the machines in Canada. Would you please quote us your rate for the shipment from Shanghai to Port of Montreal and send us details of your sailing and the time usually taken for the voyage?

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It will be of great help if you could supply the best shipping line between Canada and China.

Yours faithfully,

Letter 2 Quotation

August 16, 2024

Dear Sir or Madame,

Thank you for your Enquiry of 15 August. We are pleased to hear that you are interested in our freight services.

We would like to offer you the best price from Shanghai to Port of Montreal. Our quotation is as follows:

1. BRING UP GOODS FEE	USD 90.00
2. CUSTOMS CLEARANCE	USD 200.00
3. BEAT SINGLE FEE	USD 38.00
4. DEST LOCAL CHARGE	USD 110.00
5. DOCUMENT FEE	USD 60.00
6. LOAD & UNLOAD CHARGE	USD 100.00

7. RECEIVE 2% AGENT SERVICE CHARGE OF INVOICE GOODS VALUE

Enclosed please find different containers' descriptions and shipping schedules in recent months.

We must stress that this offer can remain open for three days only and we look forward to receiving an order from you.

Yours faithfully,

Letter 3 Counter Offer

August 21, 2024

Dear Sir or Madame,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply and detailed quotation.

We regret to say that your offer is not in the least encouraging. There is a big difference between your price and those of your competitors. We wish you will reconsider your price and give us a new offer, so that there can be a possibility for us to meet halfway.

We are expecting your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

Practical Usages

1. Enquiry 询价

- To state the source of information and the intention to cooperate 说明从何处获知公司信息,表明合作意愿
- We have learned from the newspaper that your company can transport large machinery.

我方从报纸上得知贵公司从事大型机械运输业务。

• We have seen your forwarder ad in the newspaper and we are interested in your freight services.

从报纸上看到贵公司的货运代理广告,我们对此很感兴趣。

- To state the expectation for freight service catalogues or a price list 索要货运服务目录或报价单
- Would you please quote us your rate for the shipment from Shanghai to Port of Montreal and send us details of your sailing and the time usually taken for the voyage?

请问可否报上海至蒙特利尔港货运价,并告知我方该航线及航程的详细情况?

- Please send your current/latest catalogue/price list/brochure. 请寄送贵方最新产品目录/价目表/产品手册。
- Please quote your best/most competitive/lowest freight price. 请报最优惠/最具竞争力/最低货运价格。
- To state the expectation for future cooperation 对未来合作的期待
- If your freight service prices are competitive, we shall cooperate with you on a regular basis.

如果贵方货运价格具有竞争力,我们将长期和贵公司合作。

• If you can let us have a competitive quotation, we trust business will result. 如果贵方报价具有竞争力,相信我们将展开合作。

2. Quotation 报价

- To express the appreciation for receiving the enquiry 对询价的感谢
- Thank you for your Enquiry of 15 August. We are pleased to hear that you are interested in our freight services.
 感谢贵方 8 月 15 日的询价,很高兴贵方对我们的货代服务感兴趣。
- We are very pleased to have received your Enquiry dated Sept. 18.
 - 很荣幸收到贵方9月18日的询价。
- To reply to the enquiry in detail 详细回复询价信息
- We would like to offer you the best price from Shanghai to Port of Montreal. 现向贵方报上海至蒙特利尔港最低价。
- Enclosed please find different containers' descriptions and shipping schedules in recent months.
 现附寄不同规格集装箱说明及近几个月船运安排,请查收。
- We arrange shipments to any part of the world, we are sending you our latest freight service catalogues.

我们承揽发往世界各地的货运业务,现寄送最新货运服务目录。

- Stating the validity of quotation 表明报价的有效期
- We must stress that this offer can remain open for three days only. 我们必须强调此报价只在三日内有效。
- The offer is subject to our confirmation. 以我方确认为准。
- We cannot consider these prices firm for an indefinite period because of the situation on the present market.

鉴于目前市场的行情,我们无法长期保持这一价格不变。

- To state the expectation for the order or cooperation 对订单或合作的期待
- We look forward to receiving an order from you. 期待您的订单。
- We feel confident that you will find the services both excellent in quality and reasonable in price.

相信贵方会觉得我方服务上乘、价格合理。

- 3. Counter Offer 还盘
- Thanks for the quotation 对对方报价表示感谢
- Thank you for your prompt reply and detailed quotation. 感谢您的及时回复和详细报价。
- We thank you for the letter of August 15, covering the latest quotation for your freight services.
 - 感谢贵方 8 月 15 日来信,从信中我们获知了贵方货运最新报价。
- To decline the quotation and giving the reasons 谢绝报价并说明原因
- We regret to say that your offer is not in the least encouraging. There is a big difference between your price and those of your competitors.
 我们很遗憾您的报价太高,与同类竞争者的价格差距过大。
- We find your freight prices are too high to be acceptable. 我们认为贵方货运价格太高、无法接受。
- Your quoted price is out of line with the prevailing level. 您的报价与同行业价格水平不符。
- 3) Expectation of reply 期待回复
- We wish you will reconsider your price and give us a new offer, so that there can be a possibility for us to meet halfway.

我们希望您能重新考虑,给出新的报价,以便我们各自让步,达成一致。

• We hope you can consider our counter offer and reply soon. 希望您能考虑我们的还盘并早日回复。

🤝 Problems Solving

1. The following is a passage about counter offer. Fill in the blanks with the words given below.

binding respon	se implication	original	options	
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Counter offer is an offer given in (1) ______ to an offer. It implies rejection of the (2) ______ offer and puts the ball back. The original offerer who has three (3) ______: to a) accept it, expressly or by (4) _____; b) issue another (counter-counter) offer, or c) reject it expressly. No (5) _____ contract can be created until one party accepts the other's offer.

2. Work in pairs to discuss the charges which are usually included in the quotation for freight forwarding services.

Section 4 Skills Training and Case Study Samples

Skills Training +

A. There are ten incomplete sentences in this part. For each sentence there are three choices marked A, B and C. Choose the one that best completes the sentence.

1. Offer and ______ are elements required for the formation of a legally binding contract.

A. realization B. acceptance C. reception 2. A firm offer should become binding as soon as it is accepted by the . B. offeree A. offeror C. offerer 3. An invitation to treat is an indication of a person's willingness to a contract. A. negotiate B. sign C. discuss 4. An acceptance is a promise of an offeree indicating a willingness to be by the terms and conditions contained in an offer. B. carried C. binding A. bound 5. You need to know more about the _____ before you make your offer. B. customer A. manager C. guest 6. Make sure you have all the tools available on your own end, including a good and a dynamic website. C. action A. brochure B. manager 7. Your quotation should bear an identification _____ number and be clearly traceable from the customer's end. B. reference A. price C. quotation 8. Confirm the quantities which were requested and make clear that your prices are based on these . A. productions B. conditions C. volumes 9. Prices should be preferably in the _____ which was requested but make clear which prices belong to which quantities.

A. share B. create C. currency

10. Prior investigation of the _____ of the customer may reduce the possible threats.

A. credibility B. situation C. deduction

B. Translate the following terms into English.

询价	报价
实盘	还盘
参考号码	支付条件
产品手册	邀请发盘
账单	发货

C. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

- 1. Making a quotation or an offer is a most important step in negotiating an export transaction.
- 2. An offer refers to a promise to supply goods on the terms and conditions stated.
- 3. When an offeree receives the offer, he/she may show disagreement to some terms such as price or payment terms in the offer.
- 4. A quotation is a reply to an inquiry, which is an offer in simple form including a notice of the price of certain goods being sold, but in no legal sense.
- 5. If an offeree disagrees with the relative terms in an offer, he/she may send a counter-offer to the offeror.

Case Study Samples

Sample 1

An Inquiry

An inquiry is a request for information on goods or services. When business people send out an inquiry, they may ask for a quotation or an offer for the goods or services they wish to get. An inquiry can be made by written correspondence, such as a letter, telegram, telex, fax, e-mail or verbally by talk in person.

Inquiries from regular customers may be very simple in content, in which only the name and/or specifications of the commodity will be mentioned. Other inquiries may include great details such as the name of the commodity, quality, specifications, quantity, terms of price, terms of payment, time of shipment, packing method, etc.

required by the buyer so as to enable the seller to make proper offers.

An inquiry received from abroad must be answered fully and promptly. If there is no stock available for the time being, you should acknowledge the inquiry at once, explaining the situation and assuring that you will reply to it once a supply becomes available. If the inquiry is from an old customer, express how much you appreciate it. If it is from a new customer, say you are glad to receive it and express the hope of a future business relationship. In a word, the reply to an inquiry should be prompt and courteous and cover all the information asked for.



Problems Solving

- 1. What is an inquiry? What may be mentioned when you make an inquiry?
- Suppose you have 200 dozens of Sports Socks to be delivered from Shanghai to New York. Write an inquiry to ABC International Transport Company asking for a quotation for freight forwarding services.



ABC International Logistics Co., Ltd.

QUOTATION

20 GP-CIF

From Taishan, Guangzhou to the port of Miami, USA Ocean vessel: CMD

	Expense Categories	Cost(CNY)
1	O/F: Ocean Fee	13600
2	ORC: Original Receiving Charges	1250
3	DOC: Document Charge	200
4	AMS: Automated Manifest System	300
5	ISPS: International Ship and Port Facility Security	200
6	Seal:	50
7	RRI: Rate Restoration Initiative	2090
8	Truck Haulage Charge:	2400(Factory Loading)
9	Customs Clearance Fee:	1100
10	Total:	21190
11	Weekly ETD:	Tuesday, From Shekou Port
12	Day:	30 days



Problems Solving

1. Please translate the above quotation into Chinese.

- Suppose you have received an inquiry from a new client who wants to deliver 1,000 pieces of Men's Shirts to Singapore. Write a quotation letter for your freight forwarding services. Your quotation should include the following:
 - (1) Thanks for the inquiry;
 - The charges for freight forwarding services, the term of payment, and discounts;
 - (3) Hope for future cooperation.

Section 5 Elevating Vision and Useful Expressions

Elevating Vision

Freight Forwarding

Freight forwarding industry is an intermediary service industry between businesses and transport companies. A freight forwarder, forwarder, or forwarding agent, is usually a company that organizes shipments for individuals or corporations to get goods from the manufacturer or producer to a market, customer or final point of distribution. Forwarders contract with a carrier to move the goods. A forwarder does not move the goods but acts as an expert in supply chain management. A forwarder contracts with carriers to move cargo ranging from raw agricultural products to manufactured goods. Freight can be booked on a variety of shipping providers, including ships, airplanes, trucks, and railroads. It is not unusual for a single shipment to move on multiple carrier types. International freight forwarders typically handle international shipments. International freight forwarders have additional expertise in preparing and processing customs and other documentation and performing activities pertaining to international shipments. Some forwarders handle domestic shipments only.

Companies in this industry provide freight forwarding and customs brokerage services. Major companies include FedEx Trade Networks, UPS Supply Chain Solutions' and Sinotrans.

Demand is driven by domestic manufacturing output and levels of international trade. The profitability of individual companies depends on efficient operations, extensive relationships in shipper and carrier networks, and industry expertise. Large companies have advantages in account relationships and access to advanced logistics technologies.

Unlike fully integrated carriers that own truck, rail, air, or ocean assets and

transport cargo, freight forwarders usually arrange the transportation of goods without owning any transportation equipment or handling the cargo. Customs brokers add another layer of expertise by facilitating the clearing of goods through international customs barriers. Most companies specialize in either freight forwarding or customs brokering, though they can provide both.



Useful Expression