Chapter Three

Inquiries and Replies (询盘)

Introduction

Inquiry about prices and products is usually the first step in a business transaction. When an importer intends to make purchases of some goods, he sends a letter of inquiry to an exporter.

An inquiry is a request for information about transaction. Generally speaking, inquiries fall into two categories: a general inquiry and a specific inquiry.

A general inquiry is sent to acquire some general information, such as asking for catalogues, price lists, and samples. A specific inquiry should contain not only the name of article but also more detailed information about the product, such as price terms, quantity, port of shipment and packing.

Inquiries should be direct and clear. In return, the answers to inquiries should be prompt, courteous and helpful. In case the goods are currently out of stock, the supplier should inform the inquirer when they will be available.

Lesson 9

(A) General Inquiry

If the importer wants to have a general idea of the commodity, he may make a request for a price list, a catalogue, samples and other terms. That is a general inquiry. (Generally, it is also a first inquiry. That is an inquiry writing without first writing a letter to establish business relations.) If it is a general inquiry, start your letter by telling your recipient from which source you got the name of the company and its products; meanwhile, you can give brief introduction of your own business.

A General Inquiry Should Include the Following Conditions:

- 1. The source of information and a brief self-introduction.
- 2. The intention of writing the letter. (Ask for a catalogue, samples or a price list.)
- 3. Stating the possibility of placing an order.

Letter 1

MOPPER KMDF CORP.

Schubert Strasse 28, K-1567, Hamburg, Germany

June 7, 2009

Dalian Industrial Machinery Trading Co., Ltd. 25 Yuli Road, Dalian 116000

Dear Sirs,

We have seen your advertisement in China Daily.

We are very interested in your Stainless Steel Spade Head and should be glad if you would send us by return your illustrated catalogue and price list of the goods.

We take this opportunity to introduce ourselves to you as large dealers in machinery and believe there's a promising market in our area for moderately priced goods of the kind mentioned. If your prices and terms meet our requirements, we will be glad to start a business relationship with you.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

Faithfully yours, (Signature)

Harald zur Hausen

Letter 2

GREENWOOD CO., LTD.

126 Lens Road, London, England

March 10, 2009

China Textile Import & Export Corporation

Dalian

China

Dear Sirs,

We have seen the introduction of you and your products from the Sunny Ltd. Company with which we have been doing business for many years, and we know that you are one of the leading exporters and wholesalers in the field of textile in your area.

We are one of the major import companies in textile fields with a business background of more than 20 years. As Chinese textile enjoys advantages both in quality and price in our market, we are now considering placing an order with you.

If you have these products or have stable relation to manufacture these products, please let us know. We shall feel much appreciated if you send us the catalogues and sample books at your convenient.

Your kind cooperation will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely, (Signature) Robert William

Lesson 9

(B) Reply to the Above

When you receive a letter of a general inquiry, you should reply as early as possible. Otherwise, the inquirer may turn to another supplier and you would lose a potential customer.

Writing a reply to a general inquiry, you should pay attention to:

- Express your thanks for his or her interest in your products.
- Answer the questions he or she asked and provide other information related.
- State briefly the advantages of your products.
- If you are unable to supply the product required, please give the explanations and express your willingness to do business with the inquirer in future.

Reply to Letter 1

DALIAN INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY TRADING CO., LTD.

25 Yuli Road, Dalian, China

June 13, 2009

Mopper Kmdf Corp. Schubert Strasse 28, K-1567 Hamburg, Germany

Dear Sirs,

We welcome your inquiry of 7th June and thank you for your interest in our products.

Enclosed are a copy of our latest catalogue and a price list for product. The various kinds of Stainless Steel Spade Head that we handle are all superior in quality, and have been sold to many countries.

For details, please refer to our catalogue. Should you need further information not yet covered by the above-mentioned catalogue and price list, please don't hesitate to let us know.

We are looking forward to receiving an order from you.

Faithfully yours, (Signature) Wang Peng

Reply to Letter 2

CHINA TEXTILE IMP. & EXP. CORPORATION

No. 107 Yujing Street, Xigang District, Dalian, China Tel: 0411-86354792 Fax: 0411-86354793

March 13, 2009

GREENWOOD CO., LTD. 126 Lens Road London, England

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of March 10, 2009.

Our company is located in Dalian City of Liaoning Province, one of the largest decorative fabric production and sales bases in China. Our company specializes in producing and selling all kinds of decorative fabrics, such as colored/dyed-yarn woven cloths, printed cloths and T/C cloths for sofa, curtains, tablecloths, and bedclothes. Our company has more than 300 different styles available to choose from.

According to your needs in your products catalogue, we have selected part of our products printed in a priced catalogue. Samples will be sent to you by air. Purchases over $5\,000$ meters for each item we will allow a quantity discount of 1%.

If you are interested in our products, please contact us directly for further details.

Faithfully yours, (Signature) Jin Hongyan

Lesson 10

(A) Specific Inquiry

In a specific inquiry, you express a definite wish to purchase a specific product if conditions are met, and you can ask more conditions for the name of the commodity, the specifications, the quantity, the unit price FOB... CIF..., the time of shipment, the terms of payment, etc.

Specific Inquiry Should Include the Following Conditions:

- 1. Expressing thanks for previous letters.
- 2. The names and descriptions of the goods inquired for, including specifications, quantity, etc.
- 3. Asking whether there is a possibility of giving a special discount and what terms of payment and time of delivery you would expect.
 - 4. Stating the possibility of placing an order or expectation for favorable reply, etc.

Letter 1

THE UNITED STATES RICH TEXTILE CO., LTD.

113 Manor Street, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

October 23, 2009

Zhejiang Jiaxin Silk Co., Ltd. No. 67 Hongling Road, Jiaxin Zhejiang, China

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of October 21.

We are very interested in ladies' dresses for we are one of the largest brokers of garments in Los Angeles. We would be grateful if you would give us quotations per dozen of CIF Los Angeles for those items as listed on the separate sheet. In the meantime, we would like you to send us samples of the various materials of which the dresses are made.

We know that you are a state-owned enterprise and we have confidence in the quality of Chinese products. If your prices are competitive, we will place a large order with you.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully, (Signature)
Tony Li

Letter 2

FOO KEE & CO., LTD.

36 Regent Street, Liverpool, England, UK

August 18, 2009

National Handicrafts Corp. No. 21 Heping Road, Heping District Tianjin, China

Dear Sirs,

We thank you for your letter of August 16 and shall be glad to enter into business relations with you.

We have seen your brochure and are interested in bamboo baskets. We shall be pleased if you will kindly send us samples and all the necessary information regarding the products mentioned.

Meanwhile, please quote us the lowest price, CIF Liverpool, stating the earliest date of shipment and the minimum quantity. Should your price be competitive and the date of shipment acceptable, we intend to place a large order with you.

Your early reply will be highly appreciated.

Truly yours, (Signature)
John Smith

Lesson 10

(B) Reply to the Above

When you receive a letter of a specific inquiry, you should deal with it seriously and reply as soon as possible. Writing a reply to a specific inquiry, you should abide by the following 5 main points:

- The answers should be correct.
- The replies should be comprehensive and thorough.
- The information given in the replies should be specific.
- The statement and format should be concise.
- The replies should be courteous and formal.

Reply to Letter 1

ZHEJIANG JIAXIN SILK CO., LTD.

No. 67 Hongling Road, Zhejiang, China

October 25, 2009

The United States Rich Textile Co., Ltd.

113 Manor Street

Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Dear Sirs,

We welcome your inquiry and would like to provide you with our most favorable terms for the goods in the subject.

A catalogue and quotation is attached. You will see detailed information about ladies' dresses on the catalogue. The samples have been sent to you by air, and will reach you within this week.

Other relevant information is given below:

Quality

Our products are of superior quality just as the samples given to you.

Packing

The pure cotton shirts packed in a plastic bag each and 100 pieces in a carton.

Payment

We accept payment by Irrevocable Non-transferable L/C.

Unit Price

USD 420 per dozen CIF Los Angeles.

Discount

We offer 5% discount for purchase over 10 000 pieces.

Delivery

Our time of delivery is within 20 days after receipt of your L/C.

We are looking forward to your order.

Sincerely yours, (Signature) Han Bing

Reply to Letter 2

NATIONAL HANDICRAFTS CORP.

No. 21 Heping Road, Heping District Tianjin, China

August 20, 2009

Foo Kee & Co., Ltd. 36 Regent Street, Liverpool England, UK Dear Sirs,

It is good to hear from you again. You inquired about my bamboo baskets on August 18, 2009. I sent you a company catalog at that time. I can send you a second catalogue if you need.

You are not the only importer in England that has asked us about bamboo baskets. I have also received inquires from ABC company, Universal Co., Ltd. in England, but they always inquired another kind of baskets. I will introduce this kind of basket to you if you need. Would you like me to help you by making a special sample for your Brazil market?

We are a professional bamboo products manufacturer with 14 years experience in China, offering over 1 500 various kinds of bamboo products and monthly output up to 5 million pieces. We are the best manufacturer that you can trust in China. The details for the product (as the attached photo) you inquired as following: USD 5.60/pc CIF Liverpool, Min. Quantity: $2\,000$, earliest date of shipment: 30 days after the receipt of your L/C.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely yours, (Signature) Bai Xue

Useful Words and Expressions

inquiry /ɪn'kwaɪəri/ n. 询盘,询价 general inquiry 一般性询盘 specific inquiry 具体性询盘 Stainless Steel 不锈钢 Stainless Steel Spade Head 不锈钢铲头 catalogue /'kætəlɒg/ n. (图书、商品等的)目录;目录册,目录簿 brochure /'brəʊʃə(r)/ n. 资料(或广告)

手册

broker /'brəukə(r) / n. 经纪人,中间商 wholesaler /'həʊlseɪlə/ n. 批发商 textile /'tekstaɪl/ n. 纺织品,纺织原料 garment /'gɑːmənt / n. 衣服,服装 dyed-yarn 染色纱 cotton /'kɒtn/ n. 棉,棉花,棉织物 T/C: terylene cotton 涤棉

FOB: Free on Board 船上交货价 CIF: Cost, Insurance and Freight 成本加保险费加运费 discount /'dɪskaunt/n. 折扣 commission /kə'mɪʃn/n. 佣金 sample /'sæmpl/n. 样品 carton /'kaːtn/n. 纸箱 irrevocable /ɪ'revəkəbl/ adi. 不可撤销

的,不能改变的,最终的,决定性的purchase /'pɜːtʃəs/ vt. 购买quote /kwəʊt/ vt. 开价quotation /kwəʊ'teɪʃn/ n. 报价specification /ˌspesɪfɪ'keɪʃn/ n. 规格,明细单,(产品等的)说明书,说明enclose /ɪn'kləʊz/ vt. 随信附寄,把······装人信封,附人

Notes

1. price list 价格单

We enclose herewith a price list.

我们随函附上一份价格单。

2. place an order 下订单 place a large order 大量订货 place an order with sb. for sth. 向某人订购某物

We will place an order with you for 100 metric tons of apples.

我们将向你方订购100公吨的苹果。

3. look forward to 期望,盼望

Looking forward to your prompt reply.

急盼回函。

4. terms of payment 付款方式

Our terms of payment is confirmed and irrevocable letter of credit.

我们的付款条件是保兑的不可撤销的信用证。

5. non-transferable 不可转让的

non-transferable credit 不可转让信用证

When the issuer writes the term "non-transferable" on the bill, then it cannot be transferred.

出票人在汇票上记载"不得转让"字样的,汇票不得转让。

6. out of stock 无存货

We are out of stock of this item.

这种商品我们无存货。

7. regarding 关于

Please send us a catalogue regarding your new products.

请寄给我们一份关于你方新产品的商品目录。

8. enclose 随函附寄

We are enclosing herewith a catalogue for your reference.

现随函附寄商品目录供你方参考。

9. price 价格

reasonable price 合理的价格 unit price 单价

Your price is prohibitive.

你方价格高得令人望而却步。

10. competitive 具有竞争力的

Their prices are more competitive.

他们的价格更具有竞争力。

11. appreciate 感激,感谢

We shall be appreciated if you could send us a brochure.

如果你方能寄给我们一个商品小册子,我们将不胜感激。

12. for your information 供你方参考

A copy of the provisional agenda is enclosed for your information.

随信寄上一份暂定的议事日程安排供参考。

Useful Sentences

1. Please quote the lowest price, FOB Dalian.

请报大连船上交货最低价。

2. Please make us your lowest quotation for Chinese folding fans.

请报中国折扇最低价。

3. Your quotation of Chinese folding fans is too high to be acceptable.

你方中国折扇报价太高,不能接受。

4. If your prices are favorable, I can place the order right away.

如果你们的价格优惠,我们可以马上订货。

5. Will you please send us your catalogue together with detailed offer?

请寄目录并附带详细报价。

6. We'd like to have your lowest quotation CIF Vancouver.

希望你方报成本加保险费加运费到温哥华最低价。

7. Please send us your best offer by internet stating payment terms and time of shipment.

请用互联网向我们报最优价,说明支付条件和装运期。

8. Full information as to price, quality, quantity available and other relative particulars would be appreciated.

请详告价格、质量、可供数量及其他有关情况。

9. In order to promote business between us, we are sending you samples, by separate

airmail, for your reference.

为促进双方业务往来,另航空邮寄样品以供参考。

10. To facilitate your work in promoting the sales of our products, we are airmailing you a small sample. A copy of relative description leaflet is enclosed.

为了便利你方促销我方产品,现航寄一件小样品,并随函附上一份有关的说明书。

2	Exercises				
I.	Choose the best a	nswer to complete	e eac	ch of the following	statements.
	When making an inquiry, it is improper to include in your letter				
	A. the product na	me	В.	the way of payme	ent
	C. packing			D. bargain over the price	
2.	If you are interested	ed, we will send y	ou a	sample lot	charge.
	A. with	B. in	C.	for	D. free of
3.	This price is of your 5% commission.				
	A. includes	B. inclusive	C.	covering	D. including
4.	your request, we are sending you a catalog and a sample book for your				
	reference.				
	A. According	B. As	C.	At	D. About
5.	On orders $___$ 1 000 pieces or more we give a special discount of 5% .				
	A. on	B. for	C.	at	D. of
6.	We are pleased to inform you that we in Chinese silk garments and would tak				
	this opportunity to send our quotation.				
	A. specialize	B. interested	C.	supply	D. sell
7.	"The prices given in the quotation for the above goods are valid for 7 days." Which of				
	the following can replace the underlined word?				
	A. remaining	B. lawful	C.	good	D. null
8.	8. We agree to reduce your price USD 160 per pair			FOB Shanghai.	
	A. at	B. to	C.	of	D. for
9.	We are so sorry to say that the captioned goods are				
	A. not available		В.	out of stock	
	C. in sufficient supply		D.	running out	

II. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

B. best

1. We'd rather have you quote us FOB prices.

10. If your prices are _____, we'd like to place a large order with you.

C. favorable

D. good

A. available

- 2. We regret to say that we have run out of stock now. But we'll get in touch with you as soon as the next supply comes in.
- 3. From the attached quotation you will find that the price indicated therein is CIF Lagos, inclusive of 5% discount.
- 4. We would be grateful if you would give us quotations per dozen of CIF Vancouver for those items as listed on the separate sheet.
- 5. Would you please send us detailed information concerning the prices, discounts, commission, terms of payment, together with the catalogue and samples for the captioned product?

III. Translate the following sentences into English.

- 1. 请告知你方有关商品的最低价。
- 2. 我们希望你们报离岸价格。
- 3. 我们想了解你们能供应什么,以及你们的销售条件。
- 4. 如果你们的价格优惠,我们可以马上订货。
- 5. 如果你方报价具有竞争力,交货期可接受,我们立即向你方订货。

IV. Translate the following letters into English.

Letter 1

敬启者:

我们从蒂科公司得知贵公司商号与地址,特此来函,希望能同贵公司发展商务关系。

多年来,本公司主要从事纺织品进口业务,目前想扩展业务范围。请惠寄商品目录与报价单。

如贵公司产品价格合理,本公司必定向你方下订单。 恭候佳音。

诚挚问候

Letter 2

敬启者:

我方有客户对你方天鹅牌毛巾感兴趣且让我方与你方联系,询问报价和现可供出口的产品的样品。请报你方货号 AK-18 的 30 000 打成本加运费的纽约最低价,说明可能最早装运时间及支付条件。顺告你方,这里类似产品的竞争非常激烈。务请保证你方价格与现在市价相一致,这样能够使我们为你方争取更多订单。盼尽快收到回信。

诚挚问候