

10 Tips for a better buyer's letter

Practicing good written communications contributes to a successful 4-H project.

As many youth prepare their projects for the fair season, one important aspect of a successful project is a well-written buyer's letter. This piece of communication is a crucial way to convey information to potential customers about your project and the auction, while also making a personal connection. Whether this is your first project auction or you've been doing it for several years, here are some tips to help make your letter stand out.

1. Plan ahead!

- Send out letters well in advance of the auction so that buyers can make plans to come. In general a buyer's letter should go out at least one month before the auction.

2. Personalize it.

- Include a personal greeting to the potential buyer (ex: Dear Mr. Smith, Dear Ms. Jones or Dear Johnson County Farm Bureau.) Sometimes it is more appropriate to address it to a company or business, but make an effort to learn the specific names of people if you can.

3. Tell a story.

- Your letter should include the story of your product/project (how you chose the project, what preparation choices you made, what makes your product/project stand out) as well as information about you, such as your age, how many years you've been in 4-H or what your project is supporting (college, next year's project, etc.). Help the buyer get to know you more by telling them a little bit about yourself. Answer questions such as:

1. What other activities have you done related to your project?
2. What have you learned through 4-H?
3. What club and community are you a part of?
4. Why would you like buyers to come to the auction?
5. What are your long-term goals?

4. Think of yourself as a business.

- Include information on the "product" you are producing. What are they buying? What can they do with it? Why is it a good idea to buy a 4-H project? What sort of value will this product bring to them?

5. Market your opportunities.

- Invite them to the auction. Clearly state the date, time and location of the auction. Include important details such as parking or admission

information. Never pressure the prospective buyer into buying your project – but rather encourage them to support 4-H youth of your county. Be positive!

6. Have a customer service mindset.

- If you are writing to previous customers, you can communicate appreciation of their past support, which may contribute to another sale. Remember, though, that even if they don't end up purchasing your project, getting more customers to the sale will benefit everyone.

7. Meet and greet.

- Invite the buyer to come early to meet you and see your project. Practice your business handshake and professional pitch ahead of time so you can make a good impression!

8. Be creative.

- Add something special that your buyer will remember about you. A picture of you and your project, sample recipes or a quote are just a few examples. Share a personal story or memory from 4-H or from the auction.

9. Spell check!

- Your letter should be typed (but include a hand-written signature), use proper business letter structure and be proof-read by someone else. Grammar, spelling and punctuation matter!

10. Safety first.

- Reminder on personal information: always check with your parents before distributing information about yourself!

Writing buyer letters is a great way to raise awareness of your project and encourage potential buyers to attend the auction! If your letter is well-written and interesting, you will make a good impression on your customers.

Article adapted from:

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