

YOUR FIRST REPLY TO A FOREIGN BUYER: THREE TEMPLATES

The first reply isn't there to make the sale. It has four jobs: go out fast, show in two lines that you know your product, find out who you're dealing with, and propose a next step with a date. Fill in the square brackets and delete what doesn't apply.

1 · THE GENERIC ENQUIRY (CATALOGUE AND PRICE LIST, PLEASE)

Use this for a vague enquiry. The subject line already says why there's no price inside, so the missing price list doesn't look evasive.

Subject: Re: [product] enquiry - a few questions before I send the right price list

Dear [name],

Thank you for reaching out. We are [company], a [size] producer of [product] based in [region, Italy]. We produce [key technical detail: yield, batch size, formats] and we currently supply [countries / channels].

So that I can send you the right export price list rather than a generic one, three quick questions:

1. Which market will the product be sold in, and through which channel (retail, food service, distribution)?
2. What volumes are you considering for a first order, and in which packaging format?
3. Do you need our own brand, or private label?

In the meantime, I've attached our spec sheet in English so you can see the range.

I can send the full quotation within [24/48] hours of your reply, or we can go through it in a short call: I am available [day] or [day], [time range] CET.

Kind regards,

[name] - [role] · [company] - [website] - [phone]

2 · THE ENQUIRY THAT IS ALREADY SPECIFIC (PRODUCT, FORMAT, VOLUME, MARKET)

Use this when the enquiry is complete. Slowing it down with questions is the mirror image of sending everything at once. The last line turns an email into an appointment: only use it when it's true.

Subject: Re: [product] [format] - availability, terms and next step

Dear [name],

Thank you for the detailed enquiry, which makes this easy.

Availability: [product] in [format] is available, current lead time [X] working days for [quantity].

Terms: our export price list is attached, quoted [EXW / FOB port]. Minimum order [MOQ] for this format.

Compliance: our spec sheet in English is attached; [label adaptation / certificate] for [country] can be prepared in [timeframe].

Two points I would like to confirm before we go further: the destination market, since labelling requirements differ, and whether you need samples before the first order.

If it works for you, I can hold [quantity] from batch [reference] until [date] while you review.

Kind regards,

[name] - [role] · [company] - [website] - [phone]

3 · THE COUNTRY YOU ARE NOT READY FOR YET

Use this when the buyer asks about a market where you don't yet have the certificate, the label or the registration. A clear no with a date keeps the relationship going and puts you in their diary. Silence, or a vague promise to look into it, closes the door twice.

Subject: Re: [product] for [country] - not yet, and when

Dear [name],

Thank you for your interest in [product]. I'd rather give you a precise answer than a quick one.

At the moment we are unable to supply [country]: [the reason, in one line: e.g. the health certificate for that market / the label adaptation / the establishment registration] is not yet in place.

We expect to have it in place by [month]. If it helps, I'll write to you again on [date] with the export price list and the documents for [country].

In the meantime, we currently supply [countries / channels], and I've attached our spec sheet in English so you can see what we make.

Kind regards,

[name] - [role] · [company] - [website] - [phone]

Templates written from scratch: they don't reproduce any real customer's correspondence. Produced by Itria. The four jobs of a first reply:

itria.io/en/rispondere-mail-importatore-estero