

Factsheet: how to invoice like a boss

Fact is that you have the right to be paid. Unless you consent on a later payment date, the customer must pay you within 30 days of receiving your invoice of the goods or service provided. Check HMRC on payment obligations here: <https://www.gov.uk/invoicing-and-taking-payment-from-customers>

If the amount isn't very high, you can request to be paid within 14 days, which is very common. Same rules apply unless they reply immediately to suggest they can't pay within 14 days... They normally only reply once you start chasing them though, which is when you can start charging for late payments, hooray!

In any case, you can make your life easy (like being paid on time and lay grounds to charge for late payments) by including the following details/ terms on your invoice:

- a unique identification number (invoice number, must be different every time)
- your (company) name, address and contact information
- the company name and address of the customer you're invoicing
- a clear description of what you're charging for
- the date of the goods or service were provided (can also be a period e.g 1. - 11. Sept 2019)
- the date of the invoice
- the amount(s) being charged
- the total amount owed
- the due date of the invoice
- late payment clause (e.g "please pay within 30 days to avoid a late payment fee of £50.00" I recommend having this in small print ;)

Next step is to communicate this simply and politely in the content of the email:

--

Dear Sarah,

Please find attached invoice INV-12345 with regard to the work carried out as part of the Lucy Fox instal. Please make sure the total amount of **£546.00** is paid within 30 days and by 11. September 2019.

All my best, Vlada.

--

Very important: NEVER make exceptions. Every customer receives the same invoice template and communication. Even if it's a gallery you want to be represented by etc etc. If you have other things to say regarding a collaboration, send a separate email. Your email should have one call to action: getting paid.

Chasing for late payments

What if they don't pay on time, nevertheless?

Follow up on your originally sent email:

--

Dear Sarah,

I have yet not received payment with respect to invoice INV-12345, which was due yesterday, on 11. September 2019. Please let me know when to expect payment to avoid a late payment fee.

All my best, Vlada

--

If they reply and can pay within the same working week, I d'say accept it to maintain a good relationship. If they turn silent/ don't pay, send a new email and invoice containing your late payment fee. I normally give them 7 days. You can carry on like that, until they pay. As in; charging them additional fees per week.

—

Dear (...),

I have yet not received payment nor response with respect to invoice INV-12345, which was due on 11. September 2019. I have now updated the invoice with the late payment charge, totalling **£596.00** which will be due on 18. September. Please pay the total amount within 7 days to avoid additional late payment charges.

All my best, (...)

—

Additional tips:

- If the payment is delayed, try calling the company to speak with the accounts department. Like: "Could I please speak to the person responsible for accounts?" "I'm just tying up some loose ends and have noticed that my invoice hasn't been paid yet. Would you mind having a look? I've sent it on 11. September and the due date was 18. September" etc etc.
- Oh and if they silently pay the original amount without the late payment charge, you should invoice them for the late payment fee as outstanding amount and with a separate invoice (new number). By law, you have the right to be paid interest on late payments. I think officially, this is 8% on potential loss per day. Something along

those lines. But anyways, nobody does this exact calculation. Just make sure that late payment clause is on every invoice you send.