

Do You Have an “Un-Welcome Letter?”

Which message are you sending?



In the Dental Practice Building Seminar, we emphasize the importance of sending “thank you letters” for patient referrals. But equally important, and definitely a part of your “awesome customer service,” is the “welcome letter” you send each patient before his or her first appointment with you.

You “sold” the first appointment on the telephone and you want to be sure you don’t “buy it back” with an overly-long, un-welcoming welcome letter! Just like the first telephone call, keep it brief and keep it positive. Details of your draconian financial policies can wait!

We have seen some truly “un-welcoming” welcome letters! Some offices have thoughtlessly discouraged patients from coming to that first appointment by sending a long, boring, even intimidating introductory letter! If you really want to scar them off, why don’t you add the “cancer warning” and “x-ray danger notice?” Instead, you need to put yourself in the patient’s shoes and send a friendly, warm greeting that makes the patient want to keep that first appointment!

Maybe you should include these, too!



[Here is a link to a “welcome letter” for a new patient exam appointment.](#) (You can easily modify the welcome letter to use for consult-only appointments, prophy-only appointments, etc.) Feel free to use it as-is or modify it to suit your needs. You will need to format the letter with the specific “merge fields” from your dental software in order to personalize them with the patient information and print them as “quick letters.”



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BTW, because there is no big hurry about delivery, you can snail-mail the “thank you for referring letters” in a nice envelope and on your nice letterhead (with a couple business cards!). But there is a big hurry about getting your welcome letter to the new patient ... especially if the appointment is this afternoon or tomorrow. Email works best because it is immediate! However, you can also make your email customized welcome letter appear as if were printed on your nice, colorful letterhead when you email it as a pdf attachment.

While you could merge and print the welcome letter on letterhead, then scan it to create the pdf, there is an easier way that doesn’t waste paper. Set up your welcome letter templates and scan one copy of your blank letterhead as a jpeg file. You can then “insert” this jpeg letterhead file over your welcome letter template in MS Word. When you “merge” the welcome letter, you create a document that appears to be printed on your letterhead. You can then “print” the completed quick letter as a pdf file and email it to your patient as an attachment.

You should also include pdf attachments of your medical history and patient information sheet. We recommend you include these forms even if you also have a “paperless” mechanism such as a link to your website “e-forms.” Many patients will still prefer to use “paper.” We don’t want to get off on the wrong foot with a new patient by forcing them to use unfamiliar “electronic” forms. Let the patient chose what is easiest for them! (“Always give people choices, all of them yours!”)

An “un-welcoming” welcome letter and requesting too much information, especially in unfamiliar, seemingly complicated ways, are both “barriers” we see fairly often in offices. We hope this helps to eliminate some barriers and help get the new patient into your office!

Questions or Comments?

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