

The Cover Letter, Dissected.

Please see page two to read about the purpose and format of a well-written cover letter.

Stanley Tucci
Western Dental, San Diego
14 Filmmaker Drive
San Diego, CA 94114

June 1, 2XXX

Dear Dr. Tucci:

I am writing in response to Western Dental's **Associate Dentist** opportunity, recently posted on the OCPD job board. As a recent graduate from the University of California, San Francisco's DDS program, I have three years of strong clinical experience in a fast paced private practice setting, and Spanish and Mandarin language skills. As a resident of San Diego for fifteen years, I am committed to returning to the southern California area to serve the health care needs of my local community.

My academic and clinical training gave me a strong foundation and lots of experience triaging patients, conducting interviews and taking histories, conducting dental and oral cancer screenings, as well as proposing diagnoses and treatment plans. As a result, I was able to use my training while working at Healthy Dental, a thriving private practice catering to diverse clients in downtown San Francisco. There colleagues consistently recognized me for my attention to detail and quick learning style. Through efficiently managing my time I was able to see an average of ten patients a day. My adaptability and communication skills have been honed by working and learning in various settings, and I am also familiar with using the most advanced dental techniques and equipment. Additionally, my training includes experience in Endodontics, Restorative, and Prosthetic dentistry. I enjoy working in fast paced offices seeing diverse clients and would welcome the opportunity to continue building my knowledge while helping clients at Western Dental in San Diego's downtown district.

Working with pediatric, adult and elderly patients from every walk of life have helped me build excellent interpersonal skills and given me the opportunity to use my Spanish and Mandarin language skills in a medical capacity, sometimes even serving as the translator between the client and the dental team. My volunteer experience at the UCSF Dental Clinic has taught me how to address clients professionally and respectfully, discuss their concerns, and manage their frustrations. While the staff could not always solve the problem, I learned that the goal is always to have a positive exchange, and leave patients with a positive impression. I was recognized for this ability, and awarded with a volunteer of the month award.

My professional goals include returning with my family to the San Diego area and working in a fast paced dental setting. Your opportunity offers an exciting experience for me: to use my skills and experience and to learn how a successful practice is run from every angle. Please contact me at 123.456.7890 should you wish to speak further.

With regards,

Stanley Kubrick

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12 Movie Street, San Francisco, CA 0000. 111.222.3333. Stanley@email.edu

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A. Why write a cover letter?

A CV or resume only explains all of your previous **academic training** and **professional skills**. A Cover Letter:

1. Summarizes how that **academic training** and **professional skills** will directly benefit them.
2. Explains **desire** – why you want the job.

B. Often, employers only skim the first paragraph, so Stanley's paragraph is a summary of:

- A. What he brings to the table (experience & skills)
- B. Why he wants the job (desire)

This includes his:

1. **Academic training**
2. **Professional skills**
3. **Desire**

C. The rest of his cover letter gives detailed evidence about his claims in his first paragraph. It also follows the order of his summary paragraph.

1. **Academic training & 3 years clinical experience**
2. **Interpersonal & language skills**
3. **Desire**

D. Note that the text focuses on examples and language about what he is able to do for the employer. For example: "My training enables me..."

E. Isn't this a long letter?

A cover letter can be 1-4 paragraphs. A briefer letter would only include the first "and last paragraph.

F. Do employers really read cover letters?

Yes. The real question isn't if, but **when** do employers read cover letters? Think about how you sort through a stack of information. First, you'd probably skim the CV/resume and first paragraph of the cover letter, to sort candidates into 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe' piles.

The second time through, you'd read everything closely to whittle down your 'yes' pile to 3-5 strong candidates to invite to interview. But what if there were 6?

Here's when a cover letter is most valuable: it makes your argument about how you can contribute to their organization, and why you want the position. Those without cover letters have to hope that the employer