

Now is the Time for Pets at Work

by the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)

Pets have played an important role in our lives throughout the pandemic, and this stronger human-animal bond is predicted to change how we live and work in the future.

As people return to the office and worry about leaving their pets behindⁱ, the demand for more pet-friendly workplaces will rise. According to a recent pollⁱⁱ, 72% of c-suite level executives expect more workplaces will be pet-friendly after the COVID-19 pandemic, and 6 in 10 companies plan to be more flexible in a post-pandemic world.

The science-backed benefits of pet-friendly workplaces show that this is a smart decision for employers:

1 Increased Employee Attraction and Engagement

According to a survey conducted by Nationwide in partnership with HABRIⁱⁱⁱ, **91% of employees in pet-friendly workplaces are more engaged by their work and 83% feel their work is rewarding**. This is significantly higher compared to 65% of employees who feel engaged and 46% who feel rewarded in non-pet-friendly workplaces. In addition, 88% of employees at pet-friendly workplaces would recommend their employer to others versus 51% at non-pet-friendly companies.

Another study found that employees report feeling pride while working at pet-friendly offices^{iv}.



2 Improved Workplace Collaboration

Science suggests pets can facilitate social interaction and serve as an organizational mascot, bringing people together^v. In fact, **employees at pet-friendly workplaces are 3x more likely to experience positive working relationships with their supervisors and coworkers** than employees in non-pet-friendly workplacesⁱⁱⁱ. Research also shows that groups performing a collaborative task with a pet around were more communicative, less closed-off, and cooperated better^{vi}.



3 Better Employee Retention

Pet-friendly employers are better able to retain employees, with **72% of employees who work for a pet-friendly company saying they would decline a job offer with another company at similar pay** versus only 44% who work in non-pet friendly workplaces. In addition, at pet-friendly companies, 91% of employees say their company offers a good work/life balance compared to 58% of employees at non-pet-friendly companiesⁱⁱⁱ.



4 A Healthier Workforce

A study on the effect of dogs at work found that while all employees start the day with similar levels of stress, those with a dog in the office end the day with significantly less stress than those in non-pet-friendly offices^{vii}. In addition, employees with pets reported getting more exercise than non-pet owners and **employees in pet-friendly workplaces were significantly more likely to report good physical health**, compared to those in non-pet-friendly workplacesⁱⁱⁱ.



Meeting the Needs of Pet Owning Employees

Helping employees care for and spend more time with their pets is an effective way to support their overall health and wellbeing. Even if allowing pets in the workplace is not an option, employers can demonstrate that they care about their pet-owning employees by providing benefits that help pet owners take good care of their pets. For example, employers can consider offering pet health insurance, time off to care for a new or sick pet, pet sitting services or allowing employees the flexibility to work from home to take care of pets.

Interested in becoming a pet-friendly workplace?

There are plenty of resources available on how to welcome pets at work and institute pet-friendly policies^{viii}. To explore the scientific research on the benefits of pets for people, please visit www.habri.org.