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# Pets in the Workplace

**A Practical Guide to Ultimate Productivity and Happiness, M-F**

# Introduction

In recent years, it has become increasingly common to see pets at work. Four-legged friends have been demonstrating their ability to help offices in a variety of ways; from increased productivity, morale, and collaboration, to improved employee retention and so much more.

In this illustrated guide, we've compiled compelling data\* in the hopes it will benefit you and your coworkers (and, of course, the loyal pets you'll get to spend the day with). We've even included helpful tips and checklists that will make incorporating pets into your office beneficial for all.



*\*From the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI).*

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# Experience The Pet Effect

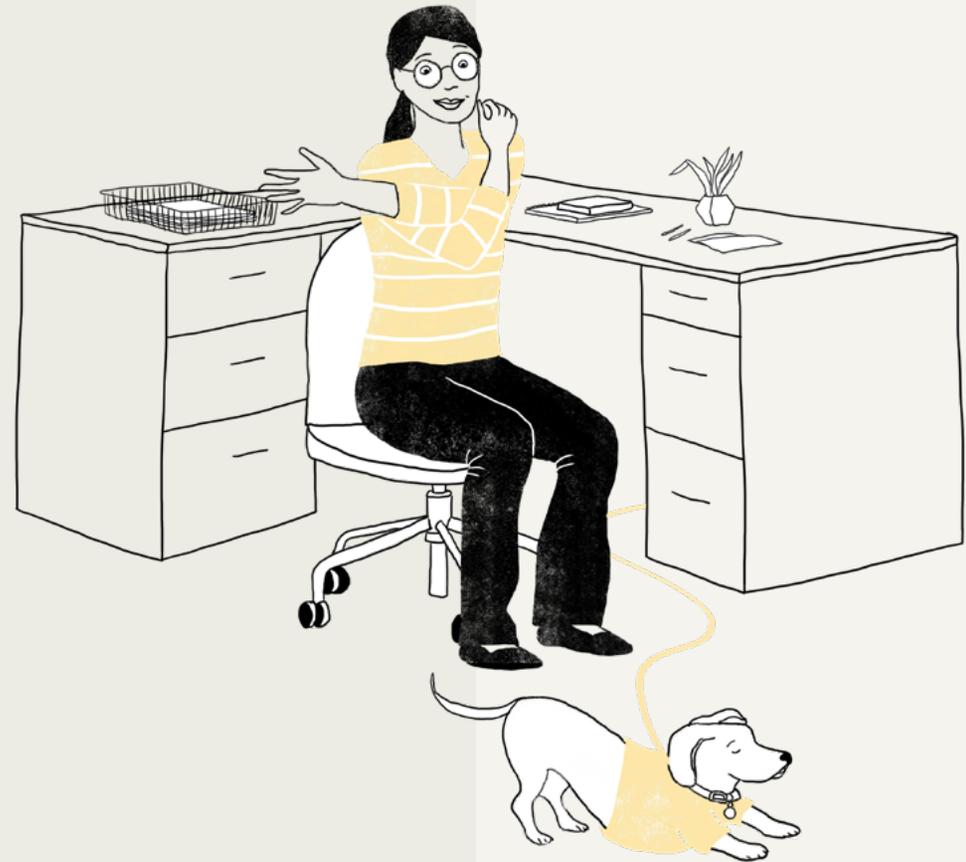
## *Chapter 1 - The Pet Effect*

There's something special between humans and pets. It's more than love and loyalty—every year, scientists learn more about the positive effect pets have on our health and well-being.

# Bring on the Health Benefits

**Dog owners are 34% more likely to meet the recommended 150 walking minutes per week than non-owners.<sup>1</sup>**

*The Pet Effect is real.*



Scientific research consistently shows that pets:<sup>2</sup>

- Improve our mood<sup>3</sup>
- Decrease stress<sup>4</sup>
- Provide social support<sup>5</sup>
- Increase our quality of life<sup>5</sup>
- Lower our blood pressure<sup>6</sup>
- Elevate oxytocin levels in the brain<sup>7</sup>
- Strengthen a child's immune system<sup>8</sup>
- Lower the risk of a heart attack<sup>9</sup>

# Negotiating a Merger Between Pets & People

## *Chapter 2 - Pet Policy Options*

Benefiting from pets in the workplace is easy but, as always, when a lot of different personalities come together (and some of those personalities have four legs and a tail), it's important to create an environment that works for everyone.

# A Woofice for Everyone

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*Choosing the right level of pet-inclusivity  
for your office.*

Employers can build a more desirable work environment by demonstrating they care about pets. Consider the various levels of pet-inclusivity when crafting your pet policy.<sup>11</sup>

## **Pet-Supportive**

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- **Should offer at least one:** Pet health insurance, pet sitting service, pet care WFH days, PTO for pet care

## **Pet-Friendly**

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- **Should offer:** Pets in the office all or some of the time

## **Pet-Friendly Plus**

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- **Should offer:** Pets in the office
- **Should offer at least one:** Pet health insurance, pet sitting service, pet care WFH days, PTO for pet care

# Sit. Stay. Improve Workplace Engagement!

## *Chapter 3 - Engagement*

Having pets around isn't just fun – it also improves employees' passion for their jobs, commitment to their workplace, and inspires them to go above and beyond.

# Fetching Happiness

*You are who you surround yourself with.*



The science is in – studies show that being around pets at work improves quality of life in substantial ways. There's just something about animals that increases the levels of serotonin and dopamine in the brain<sup>9</sup>, that can make work feel more worthwhile and everyday stresses feel more manageable.

**89% of employees in pet-friendly plus workplaces feel their company supports their mental well-being.<sup>11</sup>**

# There is No “I” in Dog

*Pets help create a culture of collaboration.*

Pets don't just bring people together to throw a ball or collectively say “awwwww” – they actually enhance work-related collaboration.

In recent studies, groups performing a collaborative task with a pet around were more communicative, less closed-off, and cooperated better<sup>12</sup>. They even cited trusting their coworkers more. Now we'll drink from a bowl of water to that!

## Put in Practice

Many workplaces transition slowly with occasional pet-friendly days to see how well everyone adjusts.



**Employees at pet-friendly plus workplaces are 3X more likely to experience positive working relationships with supervisors and coworkers.<sup>11</sup>**

# Pets Unleash the Good

*A positive mindset yields positive results.*



Let's face it – no matter how much employees love their jobs, there are going to be times when they hit a slump and just aren't as motivated. Thankfully, studies show pets reduce stress and make the work environment more comfortable.<sup>13</sup>

**Employees who work in pet-friendly plus offices report significantly higher levels of physical and mental health.<sup>11</sup>**

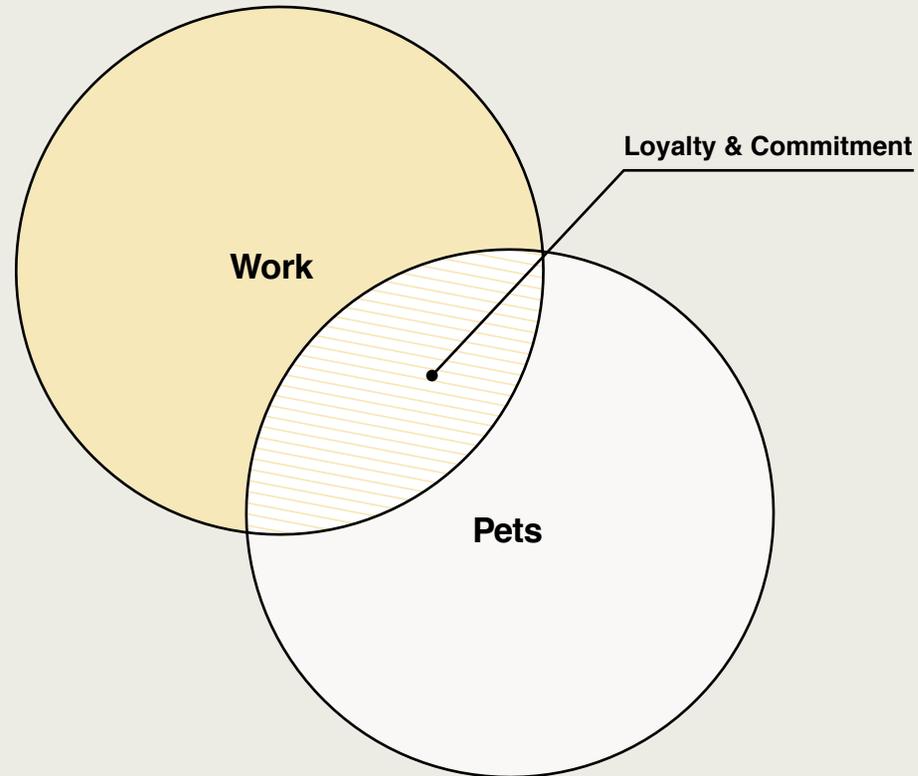
# Pets — Turning Jobs Into Careers

## *Chapter 4 - Commitment*

It's no secret that high employee turnover is bad for business. It takes valuable time and resources to find and train replacements and can also damage company morale. There are many factors that can improve employee retention, but only one that'll play fetch with you – pets.

# Loyal Role Models

*Pet-friendly policies inspire commitment in the workplace.*



Pets add to the company's culture, enhance collaborative work relationships, and create a more engaging environment for employees and their supervisors – so it's no surprise that people want to stay around longer.

**88% of employees in pet-friendly plus offices plan to stay for at least 12 months vs. 73% in non-pet-friendly offices.<sup>11</sup>**

# Pets and Productivity

*Increase the amount of work done at work.*



Pets need to get outside occasionally to stretch their legs and get some exercise. Those moments of fresh air are great opportunities for their humans, too, helping them return to their desks refreshed and more focused on work that needs to be done.

**91% of employees in pet-friendly plus offices are more fully engaged with their work vs. 65% in non-pet-friendly offices.<sup>13</sup>**

## Tip

A code of conduct for well-behaved pets can limit unwelcome distractions.

# A Cure for Sick Days

*Side effects may include increased attendance.*



Pets have been shown to improve our health. It could be that when people are happier, they just feel better, which improves attendance. Or maybe it's because pets help improve mental health, including alleviating depression and stress. Likely, it's a combination of all of the above – and that's a huge benefit to any business.

**85% of employees in pet-friendly plus offices rarely miss work for well-being and recuperation vs. 77% in non-pet-friendly offices.<sup>11</sup>**

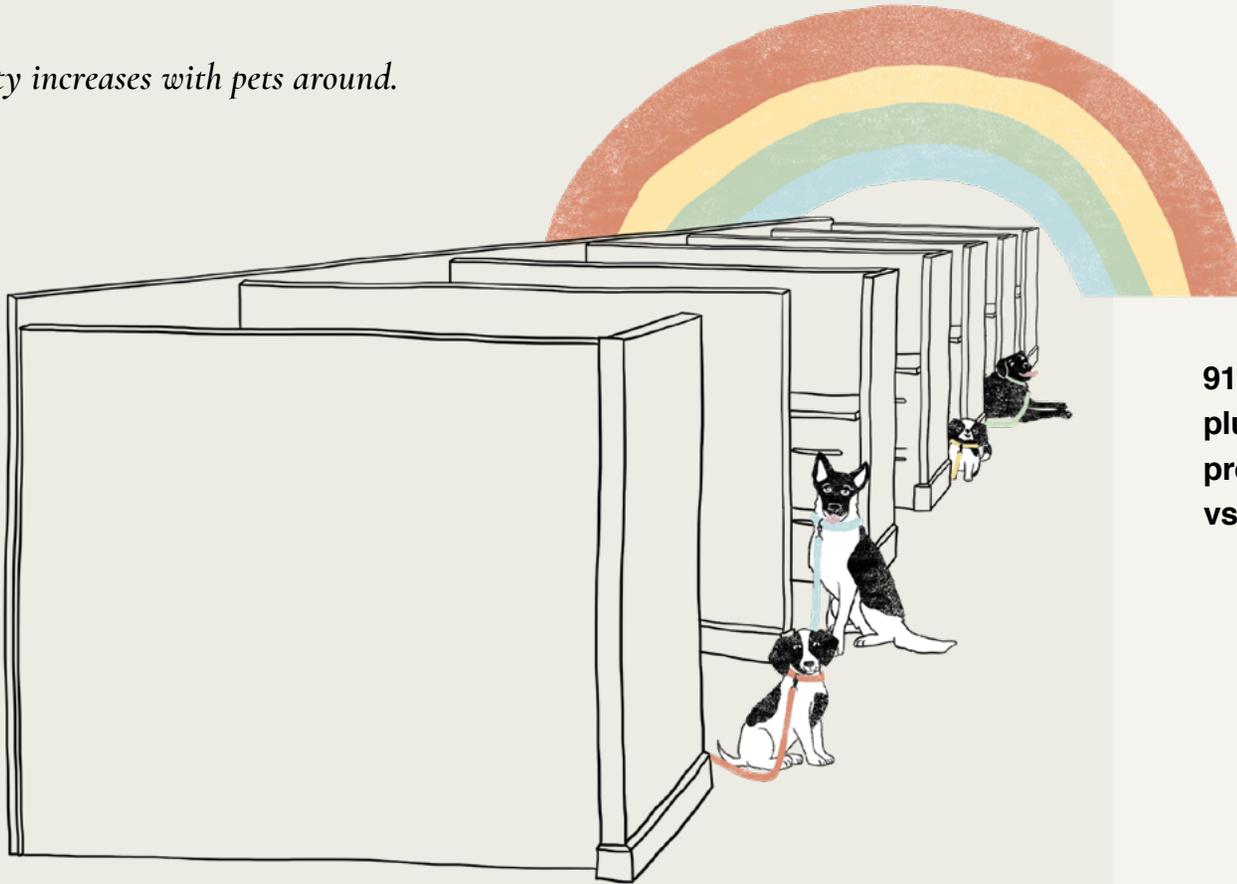
# Best in Show

## *Chapter 5 - Attraction*

Top talent is hard to attract and even harder to keep. But for the four-legged variety? It's a walk in the dog park. Research shows businesses with pet-inclusive policies have a recruiting advantage.

# Get Rave Reviews

*Job favorability increases with pets around.*



If you want employees to charge through the door every day, ready to give their best, it's important they care about where they work and who they work for. Pets inspire those warm, fuzzy feelings at work, making it more likely for employees to recommend their workplace to others.

**91% of employees in pet-friendly plus offices feel their company promotes good work-life balance vs. 48% in non-pet-friendly offices.<sup>11</sup>**

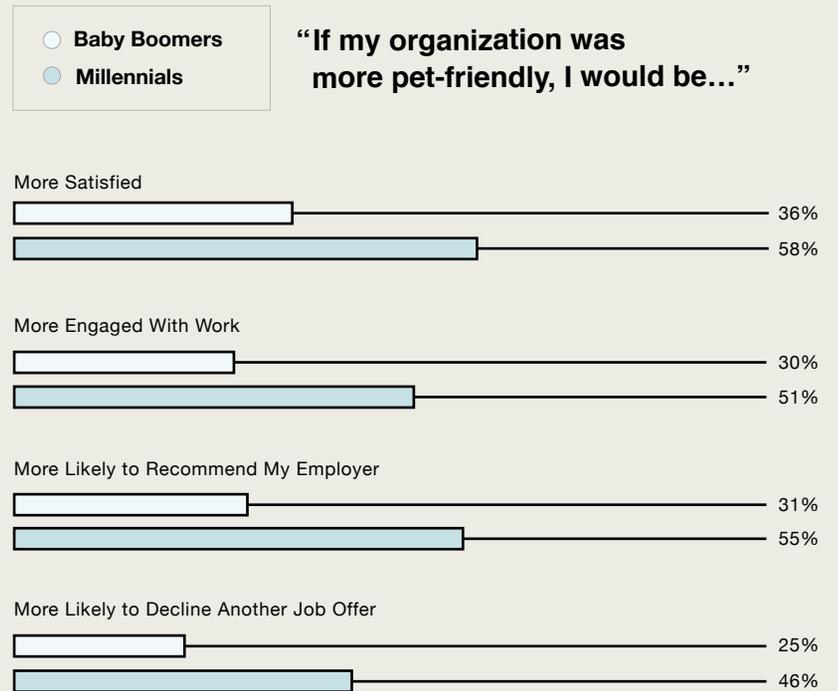
# More Than Just #trending

*The next generation of leaders wants pets in the workplace.*

Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest living and working adult generation. So when studies show that Millennials would be more satisfied and engaged with their work and less inclined to accept a job offer at a similar, non-pet-friendly company, it's important to take note. #weknowhashtagsarepointlessinprint

## Put in Practice

If your office is pet-friendly, lead with that when listing company perks on a job posting. You'll be amazed at the results!



**Millennials are significantly more likely to favor pet-friendly workplaces when compared to their Generation X and Boomer counterparts.<sup>11</sup>**

# Benefits Know No Bounds

## *Chapter 6 - Benefits for All*

One may assume that the astounding effects pets have on a workplace are solely reserved for the pet owners – but the whole office gets to reap the rewards.

# An Office United

*Even people without pets want to work in a Woofice.*



Even non-pet owners are vocal about their support for pets in the workplace. And why wouldn't they be? They get to experience all of the benefits from 9-5.

**At pet-inclusive offices, employees without pets perceive their company more favorably across the board.<sup>11</sup>**

## Tip

Send out an anonymous survey to your entire team to see how your office feels about pets in the workplace.

# Proper Workplace Pet Care

## *Chapter 7 - Healthy Pets*

Ensuring pets are healthy is key to them being beneficial to everyone. With a few common sense precautionary measures, and emphasis on the importance of veterinary care, you can mitigate most potential problems that may arise.

# A Pet Policy's Best Friend

*Veterinarians help pets prepare and stay healthy in the workplace.*

Consider the following guidelines when crafting your pet policy and make sure to ask for veterinary records.

## *One* **Medical**

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- Spayed/neutered
- Current on vaccinations for the following:  
Rabies; Canine Parvovirus/Distemper/Adenovirus & Parainfluenza (H3N2 and H3N8); Canine Leptospirosis; and Bordetella bronchiseptica
- Parasite-free
- Currently on tick and flea prevention
- No recent history (6 months) of infection or ringworm
- Microchipped

## *Two* **Behavioral**

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- Owner must have lived with or known their pet for at least 180 days
- Must be fully house-trained
- Must be obedient
- Able to walk calmly on a leash
- Must be friendly and socialize well with other pets and people
- Cannot be excessively vocal

## *Three* **Office Precautions**

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- Plants must be out of reach
- Cover, hide, and contain cords and wires
- Put pens and highlighters away
- Trash must be covered
- Keep food out of reach

# Turn Your Office into a Woofice



## *Chapter 8 - Starting a Woofice*

You've seen the science, you've pored over the data, and you've made it to chapter 8 – so chances are you're a lover of animals and a champion for pets in the workplace. So, now it's time to take the steps to turn your office into a Woofice.

# Let's Get Started

*Actionable steps you can take to turn your office into a Woofice.*

## Get Landlord Approval

- If your company owns the building, that simply means getting leadership on board (which probably needs to happen anyhow).
- If your company is leasing the space, you may have to meet with the management company, leasing agent, and/or the landlord – potentially all three.

**Pro Tip:** Providing examples of similar businesses that are pet-friendly and offering to sign a release of liability can be persuasive for hesitant property owners.

## Liability Waivers for Employees

- The liability shouldn't rest solely on you or your business. Employees with pets can, and should, sign liability waivers, too. This ensures they understand any potential risks, and holds the employees accountable for any legal situations that could arise because of their pets.

**Pro Tip:** Getting insurance coverage for pets in your workplace is a great way to ease liability concerns any employees may have.

## Turn the Office into a Woofice

- If you so choose, designate a bathroom area outside for pets and/or a play area inside.

**Pro Tip:** Consider adding clearly labeled signage and specific, "For Pet-Waste-Only" bins to your designated bathroom area.

## Pet Health Documentation

- Before allowing pets into your office, send out a checklist of what your office requires regarding pet health. Set a reasonable deadline for employees with pets to submit documentation of medical checkups, and proof of required vaccinations.

# Policy Basics for Pet Owners

*Use this list to begin crafting a pet policy for your workplace.*

- Be 100% responsible for your pet's care at work – that includes behavior, well-being, hygiene, and happiness.
- Ensure that your pet's behavior does not interfere with other employees' comfort or ability to do their work.
- Make sure your pet gets enough bathroom breaks and exercise throughout the day, and provide your pet with access to water and sufficient space for comfort.
- Pet areas must be kept clean to control odor and to maintain a healthy environment for people and pets.
- Employees must wash their hands after playing with pets.
- Keep pets out of established pet-free areas.
- Take your pet home if they've become a distraction, nuisance or danger to anyone else.
- Maintain homeowners/renters insurance that covers pet damage.

- Sick pets are not allowed in the office.
- Clean up any accidents immediately.
- Keep your pet on a leash and with you throughout the day. If you need to step away, please make sure your pet is contained and attended to by a colleague.
- Check with coworkers in your vicinity to ensure no one is afraid of or allergic to your pet.
- Make sure your work area is “pet-proofed” and safe.
- You are responsible for providing items like waste bags, toys, food and water bowls.
- Provide proof of vaccination and veterinary care for your pets.
- Keep pets off of building furniture.
- Noisy pet treats, toys, or other items that may cause disruption are not allowed.
- You are legally and financially responsible for any damage caused by your pet.

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## **Issues with someone else's pet?**

- Talk with the pet owner to find a resolution.
- If at an impasse, speak to the pet owner's supervisor.
- If necessary, bring the issue to Human Resources.

# Conclusion

We've only recently begun to understand the full extent to which companion animals benefit humans in the workplace – not solely for their owners, but extending to their coworkers and organizations as well.

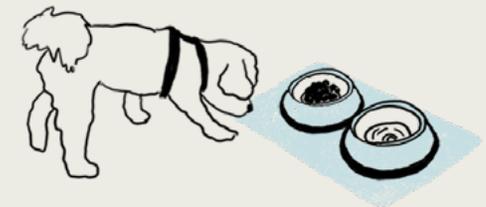
As this data becomes more widely accepted, and pets are increasingly welcomed into places of business, it's not hard to imagine their impact on the bigger picture. The pets you love have the ability to affect more than just your workplace – they can even help change the world. Here's to taking the first steps to implementing positive change in your office, and to experiencing all of the wonderful benefits of The Pet Effect.



To share this info without needing to track down a stamp, visit [www.thewooffice.com](http://www.thewooffice.com)

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For more on the health benefits of pets outside  
the office, check out [www.thepeteffect.org](http://www.thepeteffect.org)

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