



Pet-Friendly Workplaces

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If you saw our tweet (@denovohrc) then you know that yesterday was National Puppy Day!

Here's a fun fact: everyone who works for De Novo HRC has two dogs. Companion dogs have been found to lower stress in the workplace. So sometimes, if we're very lucky, we'll arrive at work in the morning to discover that someone has brought their pups into the office for the day.

In fact, the International Journal of Workplace Health Management published its findings on "the effect of the presence at work of employees' dogs on stress and organizational perceptions." They found that "over the course of the day, stress declined for the DOG group with their dogs present and increased for the NO-DOG and NO-PET groups... On dog absent days, owners' stress increased through the day, mirroring the pattern of the NO-DOG group."

But lowering stress is not their only trick.

- Dogs are instant ice-breakers, facilitating social interaction and collaboration. People approach complete strangers with a smile and extended hand when the stranger is walking a dog – something otherwise unheard of in most regions of the U.S. The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology conducted a study with 120 participants split into groups either with or without a dog present, with each group being given a task to perform. Groups with dogs present had higher levels of interpersonal interaction and team satisfaction.
- Dogs keep employees calm and therefore focused and productive. In fact, dogs are used as therapy pets to help children with ADD/ADHD focus, establish a routine, burn off excess energy, and provide a nonjudgmental companion. The ability to focus at work is an important skill for all of us to master. But who can focus at work when you are worrying about leaving your dog at home for extended periods of time? Bringing your dog(s) to work eliminates that distraction.
- Dogs in the workplace force us to get up from our desks and move the recommended two minutes (minimum) per hour, either to take them outside, to get them fresh water, or to give them some love and attention. A report released by Wellness Natural Pet Food found that 62% of dog and cat owners reported getting more exercise as pet owners.
- Pet-friendly policies can attract, and help retain, talent. Banfield Pet Hospital surveyed over 1,000 employees and found that 82% of them believe that a pet-friendly policy makes employees more loyal to their company. Additionally, over 200 Human Resources professionals were surveyed, with almost 2/3 of them reporting that candidates ask whether or not their workplace is pet-friendly.

Benefits aside, a pet-friendly workplace is not for everyone. Some members of the workforce may have a fear of dogs, while other may have pet-related allergies. Beyond that, many industries simply do not lend themselves to being pet-friendly, due to the risk of contamination (think clinical labs) or safety concerns (think machinery). What's more, faced with an unexpected situation, an otherwise docile dog may become aggressive in response to a perceived threat.

Please contact us for specific preparation tips and company protocols to follow if you wish to establish a pet-friendly policy. We'll start by reviewing your lease to learn if pets are allowed on premise and surveying the workforce; continue on to a vetting (pardon the pun) process that covers shots/fleas, temperament, etc.; then finish up by creating a workspace free of dangers with ample opportunity for enrichment.

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