

Dogs in the Office: Pros and Cons of Bringing Dogs to Work



A lot of well-known businesses are doing it. Amazon, Google, and Ben & Jerry's are just a few companies allowing employees to bring dogs to work. And so far, no one's complained about the results!

Goodness knows that at [PetPlate](#), we welcome dogs to the office with open arms and hearts. Besides helping to ease the transition away from WFH, it ups the fun quotient exponentially. And the perks are plentiful...we've got an array of pup-friendly snacks and meals that can't be beat!

If you're an employer or manager, it's never too late to join the movement and make your workplace dog-friendly. But first, it's wise to weigh the pros and cons of welcoming in pups, to determine if it's the right fit for your particular environment.

Potential Benefits of Dogs in the Office



Studies have shown that allowing dogs in the workplace benefits employers and employees alike. If you adopt an open-door policy for dogs, here's what you'll be creating:

A Happier Workplace

Quite simply, a workplace where dogs are present is more lively, engaging, and doggone delightful. Even people who don't bring their pups in will benefit. Who doesn't need a post-Zoom snuggle sesh? The love and levity that dog's bring to the office helps keep everyone motivated, energized, and laughing between assignments.

Healthier Employees

A few years ago, the [Human Animal Bond Research Initiative](#) launched a study charting the impact of pet ownership on well-being. They found that people with pets enjoyed significantly reduced healthcare costs compared to non-pet owners, which added to \$11.7 billion annually.

This isn't surprising, since dogs are one of the best antidotes to stress, anxiety, and inactivity. Evidence supports that employees actually require fewer sick days if you let them bring their dogs to work!

A Valuable Employment Perk

Many people have a difficult time finding affordable care for their pets. According to one recent study, doggie daycare costs between [\\$240 and \\$550 monthly](#), depending on where you live. But if you don't have a trusted family member who can look after your dog while you're at the office, you may have no choice but to pay professionals to do it for you.

You guessed it...one of the best ways to combat burdensome expenses is to bring dogs to work with you! In addition to the financial savings, you'll enjoy wonderful companionship, which might be the best perk of all.

And don't forget the loyalty you'll engender in your employees.

"When it comes to retention, people are seeking out benefits beyond healthcare nowadays," comments Fred Zorn of [Fred Zorn Dog Training](#).

Possible Drawbacks or Risks of Dogs in the Workplace



And about that training...

Dogs are the bestest. But dogs in the office can be disruptive if potential challenges aren't acknowledged and addressed proactively.

Here are some of the potentially thorny issues you might face, and how they can be minimized or avoided:

Bad Behavior

If there are one or two aggressive or destructive dogs in the bunch, it could quickly throw your office into chaos. Meaning you'll need to emphasize that only well-trained and well-behaved dogs are welcome.

Even with proper training, anytime you drop a dog into a new environment, there's always a chance they'll feel uncomfortable and react badly. To deal with the unfamiliarity dilemma, encourage your employees to choose a quiet and peaceful day to bring their dogs to the office for the first time.

"Bring them in on a quiet Friday or even the weekend if the office is available. Any time when there are fewer dogs and less people," Fred Zorn recommends. "Make sure that first interaction is about the dog learning how to be in the office, and not about you finishing your TPS reports. Your dog's first impression of the space needs to be calm and sedate and chilled out."

Messes Will Happen

Let's face it, no matter how calm, laid-back or well-trained a dog might be, they're going to make a mess at some point. They may vomit, pee or poop on something, spill food or water, leave chewed-up toys lying around, or tip over a garbage can and spread its smelly contents across the floor.

This type of problem can't be avoided altogether. But you can reduce the mess-making odds by giving your employees the time they need to take their pups out for walks (bathroom breaks) two or three times each day. You should also ensure they keep garbage cans off the ground and out of reach.

To prepare for the inevitable, you should have generous supplies of enzymatic cleaning liquids or sprays on hand since these will be your best remedy for doggie messes of all types. They'll leave your office looking and smelling as good as new.

Creating a Distraction Zone



If dogs are free to wander around uncontrolled or left to bark or whine without intervention, their presence can be distracting and unsettling.

To prevent dogs from creating chaos, you should encourage your employees to train their four-legged companions to retreat to “hot zones,” which are safe and comfortable places where they can relax and rest.

“Your dog needs to have their own space *inside* of that office space,” Zorn says. “Whether it’s a crate or doggy bed, it’s theirs.”

“It should be a place where a dog will go and nap, and you should enforce their willingness to go to that space with treats,” Zorn continues. “You should be able to “hot zone” the space by having a command for it, such as *bed*, so that when you say that word, the dog immediately goes there.”

Having a safe retreat will help a dog deal with anxieties and issues that might arise in the workplace, such as an unexpected encounter with another (possibly hostile) dog.

“Other dogs in the office will feel more secure, knowing that your dog has a safe space,” explains Zorn. “When they see that you’re able to call off your dog, not only will they trust *you*, they’ll trust the office environment, even if they don’t trust the other dog.”

The hot zone concept should be taught to a dog at home first, so when their crate or bed is brought into the office, they’ll understand its purpose.

Other Pets

Some workplaces actually allow other types of pets in the office besides dogs!

If you’re considering playing open house to cats, fish, and ferrets (hey, it can happen), you’ll need to ensure that office dogs won’t pose a threat to smaller and more vulnerable creatures. As a precaution, the behavior of dogs should be monitored and carefully controlled when other animals first arrive in the workplace.

“It’s a good idea to use a drag leash the first couple of weeks that they’re in an office space,” Zorn says. “Just a light, long leash that they wear. You don’t need to hold onto it all the time, but you’ll be able to grab it if you need to.”

Zorn also recommends hiring a dog trainer to visit the office, to ensure harmonious relations between animals in the workplace. Doing this as quickly as possible once you implement your new dog-friendly policies would be best. The trainer will analyze what’s happening and suggest how to address current conflicts or head off future problems.

“Not everyone is a natural referee...or should be expected to be,” he says. “Having a professional assess the dynamic and help mediate issues is a worthwhile expense.”

Consider Other Employees

Research by the [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#) revealed that between 15-20% of people have an animal allergy. Others have an intense fear of dogs.

You should have a group meeting to get everyone’s approval before bringing dogs into your office. Everyone’s concerns should be heard, and if you proceed, you may have to take some special steps to ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable.

What you can’t do is ignore your employees’ concerns. People with allergies are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and those with a strong aversion to dogs may also be. If you violate their rights, you could get in a lot of trouble.

Insurance for Accidents

In many cases, you *and* your employees may be jointly liable for any property damage their dogs cause. You may both be responsible for the medical bills of any employee or client who gets bitten by one of these dogs. You could also be liable for any injuries the dogs may suffer, depending on how and why the injuries occurred.

There are no hard and fast rules about liability for accidents or property damage that result from having dogs in the workplace. Your level of responsibility can be affected by where you live, what insurance company you use, the types of policies you have, and the nature of the property damage or injuries. Therefore, it’s incumbent on you to contact your insurer before letting dogs in, to ensure your commercial liability insurance and/or property insurance covers all potential expenses.

How to Determine if Your Dog is a Good Fit for the Office



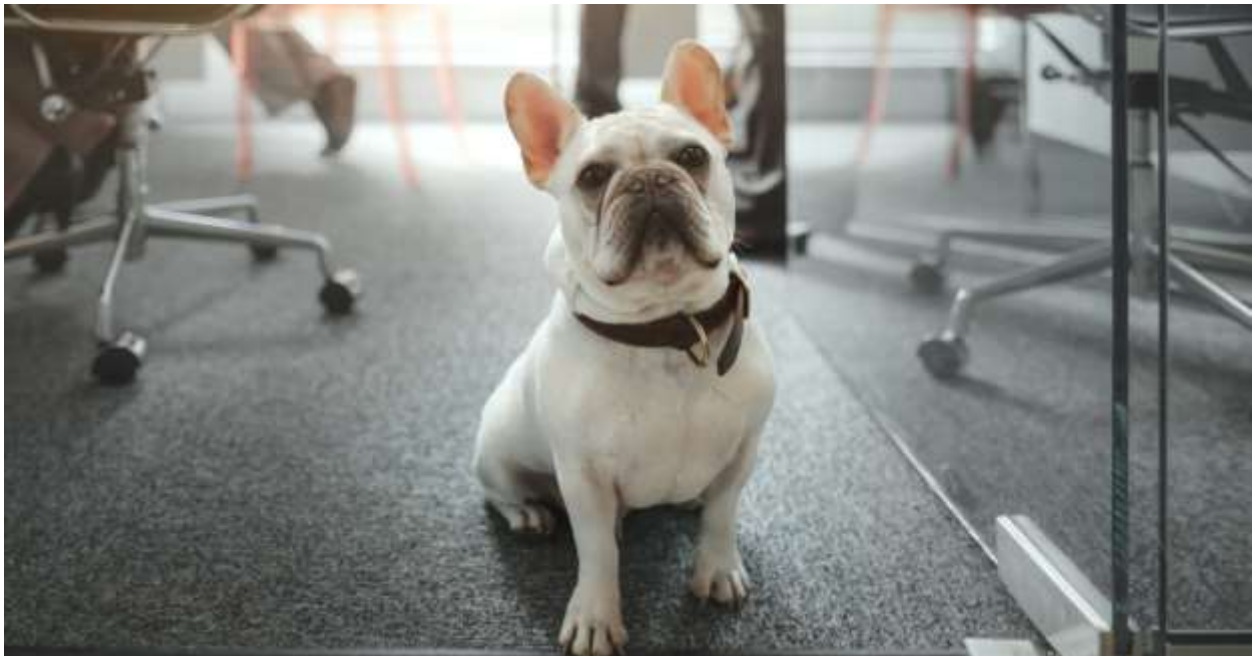
Before you bring your dog into your office—or allow your employees and managers to do the same—you should take time to reflect on whether your dog would be truly happy and secure in such an environment.

Here are some of the questions you should all be asking yourselves:

- Will I have enough time to spend with my dog during the day?
- Does my dog get along with other dogs?
- Does my dog like and trust strangers?
- Is my dog stressed by too much noise or hustle and bustle?
- Is my dog adequately trained to follow my commands?
- Does my dog bark excessively and uncontrollably at times?
- Does my dog have a history of biting?
- Is my dog needy or high-maintenance?
- Is my workplace safe for animals?
- Are any people I work closely with allergic to or fearful of dogs?
- Will my dog be okay spending a couple of hours in the car traveling back and forth to work each day?

After you and your employees have answered all these questions, you should have a pretty good idea of which dogs will be suitable work companions and which would be better off at home or in doggie daycare.

Office Dog FAQs



The idea of having dogs in the office is a new concept to many, and is bound to raise certain questions.

Should dogs be allowed in the workplace?

Well-behaved and properly trained dogs are appropriate for the workplace unless mitigating circumstances exist. For example, you shouldn't bring them in if you have multiple employees with severe pet allergies or who fear dogs greatly. You also wouldn't want dogs around if your workers perform potentially dangerous tasks to dogs or themselves, should they become distracted. But in most instances, having dogs on the premises will inspire workers and leave them feeling more focused and refreshed.

What are the benefits of bringing your dog to work?

A recent study by [Nationwide Pet Insurance](#) found that employees from companies that allowed dogs at work were three times more likely to report a positive working relationship with bosses and co-workers than individuals employed by dog-free companies. A full 90% felt highly connected to their company's mission, as opposed to just 65% of the latter group.

Meanwhile, in a 2021 study published in the journal [Animals \(Basel\)](#), people employed by dog-friendly companies reported higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment, better communication and greater social cohesion among the workforce (people love to talk about their dogs with other dog enthusiasts!), and more positive work experiences accompanied by lesser amounts of stress and anxiety overall.

Can I bring my dog to the office?

As long as they're properly socialized and trained and won't attack other dogs or humans, you should be able to bring your dog into the office. It is vitally important, however, that they respond to your commands in that environment. Training them to respect your commands is the only way to guarantee they will stay out of trouble.

"They should refer to their person when they're having a problem in the environment, or an issue with other dogs," Zorn says. "Whether they're excited or intimidated, it will provoke a large response. That's why it's imperative that their person is able to get the dog's immediate attention when needed."

Which dog is best for the office?

A great office dog will like people and enjoy being around them, but not be overly needy or demanding. They will at least tolerate other dogs. They should have a relaxed and calm temperament and not be prone to overstimulation. They should be well trained and ready to follow their human's commands immediately. Most importantly, a great office dog will truly

enjoy being by their human companion's side, and not become anxious or unhappy about being taken away from their home.

Caring for Dogs in the Office and Out



When dogs accompany their pet parents to work, it strengthens and deepens their bonds, transforming the office into a space that people look forward to being a part of.

If you really want a work environment filled with happy and healthy dogs, consider signing up for PetPlate's meal delivery service! Our [high-nutrition meal plans](#) will deliver delicious breakfasts, lunches and dinners made from [100-percent human-grade ingredients](#) right to your door. In addition, our tasty [organic treats](#) are ideal rewards for dogs being trained to act well in an office setting. With perks like these, why would anyone want to WFH?

This post was originally published at [PetPlate](#).