



Pet friendly policies for the workplace foster happy staff and happy pets

Benefits of a pet friendly workplace

- Improves employee morale, productivity and reduces stress
- Reduces incidence of barking and other nuisance dog behaviour in the community because dogs are not home alone and bored
- Builds and strengthens relationships among associates by breaking down barriers

Australian companies are discovering a new strategy that improves employee morale and work productivity, lowers stress, decreases employee absenteeism and boosts employee's willingness to work overtime; it's simple - bring pets into the workplace.

Recent surveys in both America and Australia reveal that pets in the workplace can be positive for organisations, employees and pets.⁴⁹ Companies benefit from improved staff performance, staff no longer feel guilty about pets left at home alone and pets are less likely to become bored and a potential nuisance.

A busy inner city office in Sydney is one pet friendly workplace where several dogs can be found in the office on most days. Mullet is a staffy-lab cross who has been accompanying her owner to the office since she was a pup. Mullet's owner Paul sees her as part of his family.

"It's easy enough having her here and other people enjoy her company as well. I think it's a good stress release." Paul, Pet owner



Lisa also takes her Jack Russell Terrier into the office. "When I first started working here I was told by colleagues that I should bring Jack in. It's fantastic! I don't have to rush home to feed him, so I can stay at work for longer hours if I need to," explains Lisa. "I also feel it heightens the morale in the workplace and that people are happier which then feeds back into the happiness of the workplace."

Mars Petcare Australia is another pet friendly organisation and has a 'Pets in the Office Policy' to help ensure that everyone, including the pets, are happy. Policy guidelines cover topics such as health and safety of both people and pets on site.

Employees who want to bring their pets to work need to register them at reception, complete forms relating to their pet's health, review company expectations and receive a complimentary pet I.D. card. The office is a large, open plan design, so pet I.D. is useful in case pets become separated from their owners. The organisation has also applied a practical limit of ten dogs in the office on any one day to ensure everybody's enjoyment and this means that all pets visiting the office receive lots of attention throughout the day.

Tips

- Gauge staff interest and consider implementing a pet friendly policy
- Check if workplace hygiene regulations and building tenancy agreements allow for pets
- Promote the concept to local businesses through media and Council newsletters
- Utilise existing Pets at Work protocols and policies to ensure a harmonious and successful workplace

"The company believes the "Pets at Work Policy" helps create a strong sense of community and brings to life the magic of pet ownership. Being a pet related company means that free treats are readily available. Owners are invited to bring their pet's beds to work but squeaky toys are not encouraged!"

Amanda Fisher, Mars Petcare Australia