

The Psychological Benefits of Office Dogs: Expert Insights on Staff Wellbeing

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The culture of the workplace continues to evolve rapidly post-pandemic, and more and more companies are embracing one trend that brings joy and productivity together: allowing dogs in the office.

From start-ups to established firms, the presence of our four-legged friends is proving to be a game-changer for employee wellbeing and workplace culture. [BizSpace](#) – who support SMEs with flexible workspace solutions tailored to their individual needs – have teamed up with psychologist [Dr Gurpreet Kaur](#) to explore why and how a dog-friendly office could be your business's secret weapon!



Key Benefits of Dogs in the Office

“As businesses embrace this innovative approach to workplace culture, they are discovering that allowing dogs in the office isn’t just a trend—it’s a strategic move towards fostering a happier, healthier, and more productive workforce,” says Aman Parmar, Head of Marketing at [BizSpace](#). “The large majority of BizSpace’s premises are dog-friendly because our clients have made it clear that this is something that is important to them!”

Research has shown that having dogs in the office can significantly enhance employee morale and reduce stress levels: one study suggested that just the act of [petting a dog can lower cortisol levels](#), a hormone associated with stress, while simultaneously increasing serotonin and dopamine, which contribute to feelings of happiness and relaxation.

“Interacting with animals is a powerful somatic tool for regulating stress, anxiety, and trauma responses. Their calming presence helps lower cortisol, boost oxytocin, and promote nervous system regulation, much like nature does. Gentle touch, rhythmic movements, and nonjudgmental companionship create a sense of safety, helping individuals shift from fight-or-flight or dissociative states into balance,” stresses Dr Kaur.

What kinds of improvements can pet-friendly offices expect to see? Utilising a combination of research findings and personal experience, BizSpace and Dr Kaur have listed the top five:

1. Enhanced Employee Wellbeing: Employees report [feeling happier and more relaxed](#) when dogs are present. The simple act of interacting with a pet can boost mood and promote a sense of belonging, fostering a positive workplace culture: “The warmth of an animal’s body, the texture of fur, and synchronised breathing all offer a deep sense of grounding, helping people reconnect with a regular breathing pattern and their bodies. Whether through petting a dog, stroking a cat, or simply being near an animal’s steady presence, these interactions provide a profound, body-based way to self-soothe, build resilience, and cultivate emotional healing,” says Dr Kaur.
2. Improved Collaboration: Dogs can serve as social catalysts, encouraging interaction among colleagues.

This can lead to improved communication and collaboration, breaking down barriers and promoting teamwork.

3. Increased Productivity: A relaxed environment can enhance focus and creativity; employees may find that short breaks spent with dogs help to clear their minds and return to work with renewed energy and motivation. Pet-friendly offices can also play a role in stress prevention.

“Stress can distract from daily tasks and diminish overall work engagement; if stress continues unchecked, it can eventually lead to burnout and disengagement. As motivation and energy levels deplete, individuals may become more prone to absenteeism and a noticeable drop in productivity,” points out Dr Kaur.

“However, employers can play a crucial role in reducing the impact of stress by offering supportive measures like flexible work hours, pet-friendly offices, or financial wellness programs. Small changes, such as allowing pets in the workplace, can help employees regulate their nervous systems, foster a sense of safety, and ultimately enhance both their emotional and professional resilience.”

4. Attracting Talent: As companies compete for top talent, offering a dog-friendly workplace can be a unique selling point. Many job seekers view a pet-friendly policy as a sign of a progressive and caring employer, and as workforces increasingly seek a healthy work-life balance, integrating dogs into the office environment is an effective strategy.

Financial costs factor into this, too: for people who work from an office and need to pay for doggy daycare, 5 days a week, dog owners can expect to pay [upwards of £650 per month](#). Flexible working arrangements and pet-friendly offices could therefore offer considerable savings for pet owners, giving a company who allows this a distinct advantage for attracting pet-owning top talent!

5. Health Benefits: Regular interaction with dogs encourages physical activity. Having a dog in the office means that the owner will, by necessity, have to take screen breaks and get physical exercise walking the dog on breaks.

These behavioural changes can be hard to implement solo, but a dog gives great motivation for ensuring your own needs are also met! “Evidence shows that increased breaks and body movement lead to better work performance through enhanced concentration. Lunchtime walks in particular, have been shown to lead to improved mood and reduced stress levels at work, according to the [Association for Psychological Science](#),” says Dr Kaur. This can lead to improved physical health and overall wellness among employees.

Implementing a Dog-Friendly Policy

To create a successful dog-friendly office, companies should consider establishing clear guidelines to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for both pets and employees. This may include:

- Carefully considering all [the prospective HR issues](#) that running a dog-friendly office may cause and ensure the workforce are properly consulted and listened to before committing to any decisions.
- Implementing strict rules regarding dog behaviour and enforcing them. Any canines causing disruption to the workday with excessive barking, playing or whining must be asked to leave!
- Establishing designated ‘pet-free’ zones: at minimum, there should be a ‘comfort’ area free of pets, as

well as a strict ban on dogs in any food preparation zones.

- Ensuring all employees are comfortable with the presence of dogs. If there are allergies, phobias or even general dislike to contend with, companies can work with staff to find bespoke solutions (which may include guaranteed 'dog-free' days or enhanced cleaning).

Conclusion

The integration of dogs into office life is more than just a passing fad; it is a commitment to creating a supportive and enjoyable workplace that acknowledges the importance of mental health, collaboration and overall employee satisfaction.

As more organisations take this step, we can expect to see a ripple effect, inspiring others to follow suit. Ultimately, initiatives which enhance work-life balance and staff wellbeing will play a significant part in transforming the landscape of work for the better.