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And They Call It Puppy Love: 68% of Working Canadian Dog-Owners Say They'd Bring their Dog to Work, if Allowed

One fifth of dog-owners would take a pay cut to be able to take their dog to work

Toronto, ON, May 19, 2022 – Canadian dog owners (or those looking to get a dog) are quite fond of their fur babies, but managing life with a furry friend becomes more difficult when work is part of the picture. According to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of MARS Cesar Pet Food, nearly half (47%) of working dog owners physically go into their workplace five times in a typical week, which could create a difficult situation managing work and pet obligations. Canadians are envisioning what a dog-friendly workplace could look like, and 68% say they would be likely to bring their dog to the workplace (37% very likely, 31% somewhat likely) if their workplace allowed it. Moreover, 21% would go as far as taking a pay cut in order to bring their fur-baby into work, underscoring the strong desire of many to integrate these two aspects of their lives.

Although many Canadians see the benefits of inviting dogs into the workplace, many are equally aware of the challenges of working in such an environment.

A quarter say they are more likely to apply for a job at a dog-friendly workplace

Just four in ten (44%) think that workplaces in Canada are dog-friendly. Three in ten (30%) think their current workplace is open to becoming dog-friendly (compared to 60% who think it is not; 10% say their workplace, specifically, is already dog-friendly).

Three in ten (29%) dog owners say dogs make the best co-workers, with more women agreeing than men (35% vs. 21%). A quarter (26%) say that they are more likely to apply for a job that has a dog-friendly workplace, and the same proportion (26%) say they wouldn't mind changing jobs for a workplace that allows them to bring their dog to work. One fifth (22%) of working Canadians say it will be harder to leave a dog-friendly workplace for one that isn't, with those between the ages of 18 and 34 (27%) more likely to agree than those over the age of 55 years (16%). A very small percentage (7%) say that they would never want to work in a dog-friendly environment. Four in ten (38%) dog owners say it doesn't affect them either way if their workplace is a dog-friendly environment.

Boosting happiness is the biggest advantage of a dog-friendly workplace

There are many advantages of a dog-friendly workplace, according to working dog owners, and fostering happiness tops the list, with some gender differences. Six in ten (62%) working Canadians say that dog-friendly workplaces boost happiness (70% women vs. 53% men), while 55% say that they relieve stress and anxiety (60% women vs. 50% men). More perceived advantages include:

- Encouraging healthy breaks (41%)
- Supporting better social interaction and team bonding (40%)
- Making it easier to own a dog (36%)
- Helpful in reducing pet surrender (32%)
- Boosting productivity (30%)
- Are more progressive (26%)
- Have better employee retention (26%)

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- Are more inviting to potential new employees (25%)

Women are significantly more likely to say dog-friendly workplaces encourage healthy breaks (45% vs. 35% men), as well as support better social interaction and team bonding (44% vs. 35% men). Younger generations are more adamant that dog-friendly workplaces help to boost productivity (39% 18-34, 27% 35-54, 23% 55+), are more progressive (33% 18-34, 24% 35-54, 21% 55+), and are more inviting to potential new employees (30% 18-34 vs. 18% for 55+). Only 10% don't think there is any advantage in a dog-friendly workplace, a sentiment felt more strongly among those between the ages of 35 and 54 (10%) and those over the age of 55 years (15%).

Triggering allergies is the biggest challenge of dog-friendly workplaces

Although many perceive benefits of working in a dog-friendly environment, there are relatively equal considerations that are less favourable. Six in ten (61%) of working Canadians say dog-friendly workplaces trigger allergies, and over half (54%) say they can become noisy. Moreover, many believe that dog-friendly workplaces:

- Can have cleanliness issues (51%)
- Create distractions at work (49%)
- Involve additional costs for maintenance (30%)
- May discourage potential employees (27%)
- Can be less professional (23%)

Working dog owners between the ages of 18 and 34 are more likely to believe that dog-friendly workplaces can be less professional (28% vs. 19% 35-54), as well as involve additional costs for maintenance (39% vs. 22% 35-54). Older working Canadians are more likely to acknowledge cleanliness issues accompanied with dogs in the workplace (60% vs. 48% 35-54). Only 8% of working Canadians don't think there is any challenge with dog-friendly workplaces.

Almost half say their workplace offers no dog-friendly benefits

When asked about what dog-friendly benefits their work offers, 47% of working Canadians say none, with those over the age of 55 years more likely to state this (63% vs. 49% 35-54, 34% 18-34).

However, smaller proportions say there are some benefits at their workplace, including:

- Sometimes allowing dogs in the workplace (19%)
- Offers dedicated play areas for dogs in the building/workplace (12%)
- Allows dogs throughout the whole workplace (12%)
- Offers dog walking services (9%)
- Offers paid time off for adoption, dog care or bereavement (9%)
- Pays for pet/dog insurance (9%)
- Offers discounts/promotions/subsidies on pet day care facilities (9%)
- Offers pet care stipends (7%)

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Of those employed dog owners who say their workplace does offer benefits, most tend to be younger Canadians. Those who are between 18 to 34 years old say their place of employment sometimes allows dogs at workplace (25% vs. 12% 55+), allows dogs throughout the whole workplace (14% vs. 7% 55+), offers paid time off for adoption, dog care or bereavement (14% vs. 6% 35-54), and pays for pet/dog insurance (16% vs. 8% 35-54, 3% 55+). Only 5% say they don't know of any dog-friendly benefits that their workplace offers.

A third want their workplace to offer a dedicated play area for dogs in their workplace

Offering a dedicated play area for Canadians' furry friends in the building they work in is a benefit that a quarter (25%) of working dog owners want to see being offered. Other dog-friendly benefits desired by owners in the workplace include:

- Allowing dogs in the office on some days (32%)
- Paying for pet/dog insurance (27%)
- Always allowing dogs in the office (25%)
- Offering paid time off for adoption, dog care or bereavement (23%)
- Offering discounts/promotions/subsidies on pet day care facilities (20%)
- Allowing dogs throughout the whole workplace (17%)
- Offering dog walking services (17%)
- Offering pet care stipends (16%)

Once again, younger working Canadians are significantly more likely to want to allow dogs in the office all days (32% vs. 23% 35-54, 18% 55+), have their workplace offer paid time off for adoption, dog care or bereavement (32% vs. 16% 35-54, 19% 55+), have their workplace offer pet care stipends (22% vs. 14% 35-54, 11% 55+), have their employer pay for pet/dog insurance (34%, 28% 35-54 vs. 16% 55+) and have their workplace offers discounts/promotions/subsidies on pet day care facilities (25% vs. 14% 55+). However, 21% of working Canadians don't want any dog-related benefits, significantly higher among 55+ (36%, vs. 19% 35-54, 11% 18-34).

In thinking of ways to convert their current workplaces to be dog-friendly, 40% of working dog owners believe they can take various steps, significantly more so among those over the age of 55 years (61% vs 40% 34-55, 25% 55+). However, similar proportions say they can share benefits of dog-friendly workplaces with their respective HR leaders (41% 18-34, 31% 34-55 vs. 19% 55+) or share benefits of dog-friendly workplaces with their friends and colleagues on social media (39% 18-34, 32% 34-55 vs. 20% 55+). One fifth of Canadians overall (22%) say they would join an advocacy group for dog-friendly workplaces.

Nearly half would not make any tradeoffs to spend more time with their dog

A majority (54%) are willing to make some sort of sacrifice in order to spend time with their dog while in their workplace. A quarter (27%) say they would go to the extent of reducing the number of hours they work to spend more time with their dog. Moreover, 21% would go as far as to take a pay cut if it meant they could work at a dog-friendly workplace, felt more strongly among 18-34-year-olds (31% vs. 20% 35-54, 10% 55+). A smaller proportion (16%) would consider working part-time to spend more time with their dog (22% 18-34, 16% 34-54 vs. 8% 55+).



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between April 12 to 19, 2023, on behalf of MARS Cesar Pet Food. For this survey, a sample of 1,010 working Canadians 18+ years and own a dog or planning to get a dog in the next 12 months were interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all working Canadians with a dog or intending to get a dog aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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