



Petco Urges Employers Not to Forget Fido in "Return to Work" Plans, Will Introduce a New Playbook and Toolkit to Help Employers Go Pet-Friendly

April 19, 2021

In recognition of sixth annual National Pets at Work Day, Petco reveals new survey results that show pet parents are stressed about returning to work without their pets

SAN DIEGO, April 19, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- As businesses across America develop and start to implement return-to-work plans, Petco Health and Wellness Company, Inc. (NASDAQ: WOOF), a complete partner in pet health and wellness, is urging employers to consider adopting a pet-friendly workplace policy among other post-pandemic changes and sharing [information and resources](#) for employees and employers ready to welcome pets at work.



The company will introduce a new playbook and toolkit this summer to help employers transition their workplace into a safe, healthy and productive environment for both people and pets. Offerings will include options ranging from DIY solutions for creating a pet-friendly workplace to benefits like [pet insurance](#), [Vital Care](#), on-site pet services and supplies.

"At Petco, we've experienced the benefits of working with and around pets all day for decades – whether in our Petco Pet Care Centers or our pet-friendly support center offices," said Ron Coughlin, Petco's Chairman and CEO. "The past year of quarantining and working from home has brought more pets into American families than ever before and significantly deepened the bonds we share with them. We want to see those bonds continue and ensure these pets remain an integral part of our families well into the future. As pet parents consider heading back to offices, we believe they will and should expect their employers to welcome their pets as well – and Petco is here to help companies do it."

More than 3 million incremental new pets have entered U.S. homes in the past year,* and many of them have rarely, if ever, been separated from their humans for more than a few minutes or by more than one door in the house. Older family pets have long forgotten their old routines and become used to their two-legged family members being home most of if not all day long. Now, after more than a year of working from home – often with pets, children and other family members in tow – Petco's latest survey** shows that 69% of pet parents are stressed about what returning to work means for their pets, and hopeful their employers may add "pet-friendly" to the list of post-pandemic office perks.

Other key findings from the survey include:

- 44% of pet parents want their employers to adopt a pet-friendly workplace, and 41% would consider switching jobs if it meant they could bring their pet to work.
- 83% of pet parents had minimized stress levels due to working from home in close contact with their furry friends.

- 62% of pet parents have a more positive attitude toward companies that allow pets at work. If an employer had a pet-friendly policy:
 - 58% believe it would help alleviate stress while at work.
 - 52% would be likely to stay at their employer longer.
 - 47% believe it would promote better work productivity
- Pet parents' top three worries about returning to the workplace are their pet's loneliness, their pet's separation anxiety, and missing the comfort and joy experienced with having their pet with them while working.
- 65% of pet parents who cannot bring their pets with them to the office worry about their pet's separation anxiety, and 56% are concerned about leaving the pet at home all day without supervision or exercise.

Research shows that having a pet, or even interacting with one, has positive effects on both animals and people, which supports three of the five pillars – physical, mental and social health – of Petco's [Whole Health philosophy](#). The presence of friendly animals can reduce people's heart rate, blood pressure and cholesterol; and regularly interacting with animals can reduce anxiety and promote calmness. Pets in the workplace can even enhance productivity, employee engagement and socialization among co-workers. Particularly given the concerns around post-pandemic separation anxiety and its impact on pet mental health, allowing pets into the office is also beneficial for pets' mental well-being and will help ease the return to work transition.

"It's no secret that pets come with a multitude of benefits for humans, from reducing stress to improving health," said Dr. Whitney Miller, Chief Veterinarian at Petco. "Pets encourage us to stay active and provide incredible companionship, especially over the past year, when so many people have felt isolated at home and bereft of social interaction. When it comes to pets in the workplace, I'm confident that as more companies witness the positive effects that pets have on employees and company culture, the more they'll see enhanced overall morale, which bodes well for business performance."

As a leading pet-friendly employer, Petco can offer expertise for how other companies can foster and manage pet-friendly office environments, and keep both pets and people safe, comfortable and happy. With employers already making changes in their office spaces and flexible work policies, Petco invites other companies to include pets in the conversation around shifts in the workplace and offer employees the flexibility to bring their pets to work.

Petco's recommended set of pet-friendly workplace guidelines and etiquette includes:

- Creating a thorough policy for bringing pets to work that includes requiring up-to-date pet vaccinations, an action plan for any pet-related incidents and clear requirements for pet housing, such as pet gates, small animal habitats and aquariums.
- Ensuring there are readily accessible outdoor areas for pet breaks.
- Investing in built-in or removable [pet gates](#) at employee workspaces to make containment safe and easy.
- Designating pet-free zones for employees who have allergies.
- Clearing any pet-zone areas of potentially dangerous items such as cables, human food or furniture that could easily be knocked down.
- Providing pet clean-up stations, offering things like [stain and odor eliminator spray](#) and [deodorizing wipes](#), for inevitable "accidents" around the office.

Petco established National Pets at Work Day in 2016 to lead the charge in raising awareness for the mental, social and business health benefits associated with having pets in the workplace for pets, people and employers alike. Today, Petco is using [#PetsAtWork](#) to call on pet parents to share how bringing pets to the office would support their happiness in returning to work, and asking business owners, HR leaders and office space landlords to share the benefits they've experienced by going pet-friendly or what they would need to make the switch.

Petco provides pet parents with unique benefits aimed at supporting them throughout pet parenthood, including [Petco Insurance](#), which offers accident and illness coverage for dogs and cats, as well as a pet bereavement policy that affords partners appropriate time to grieve when they lose a beloved pet. Additionally, Petco's [in-store and online dog training](#) covers a variety of topics from potty and crate training to managing undesirable behaviors and helping with separation anxiety.

For more information on National Pets at Work Day, the benefits of pet-friendly workplaces and key tips for employers thinking about how to go pet-friendly, visit [petco.com/petsatwork](#). Employers interested in learning more can reach out to [petsatwork@petco.com](#).

**Source: Packaged Facts with adjustments from company internal estimates.*

***Statistics from 2021 Petco consumer survey of 2,001 U.S. pet parents.*

About Petco, The Health + Wellness Co.

Petco is a category-defining health and wellness company focused on improving the lives of pets, pet parents and our own Petco partners. Since our founding in 1965, we've been trailblazing new standards in pet care, delivering comprehensive wellness solutions through our products and services, and creating communities that deepen the pet-pet parent bond. We operate more than 1,500 Petco locations across the U.S., Mexico and Puerto Rico, including a growing network of more than 100 in-store veterinary hospitals, and offer a complete online resource for pet health and wellness at [petco.com](#) and on the [Petco app](#). In tandem with [Petco Love](#) (formerly the Petco Foundation), an independent nonprofit organization, we work with and support thousands of local animal welfare groups across the country and, through in-store adoption events, we've helped find homes for more than 6.5 million animals.

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PETS AT WORK POLICY TIPS

- 🐾 Consider investing in built-in or removable pet gates at employee workspaces to help make containment safe and easy.
- 🐾 Clear pet-accessible areas of any potentially dangerous items such as cables, human food, electronics and furniture that could easily be knocked down.
- 🐾 Keep toys, treats and anything else pets may not want to share with other pets out of common areas.



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SOURCE Petco Health and Wellness Company, Inc.