

The colleague with the cold snout?! Why more and more companies are getting dogs.

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He's quite "dogged" this new guy. And he smells from time to time, especially when it's wet outside. He gets his hair everywhere, too.

But anyway, it's still cute when he looks up so innocently from under your colleagues desk. Of course, we're talking about the new office dogs, which are dividing opinions throughout the working world. Besides flexible working models and the classic salary issue, it is the possibility of bringing your own dog into work that is proving crucial in the battle for the best workforce. This is because members of generation Y and Z have quite literally "gone to the dogs", so to speak, and even long-serving employees cannot be without their four-legged favourites. That's why we decided to take a closer look at the topic "Dogs at Work", putting together the pros and cons for you and explaining the legal issues.

Before we start, basic condition for cohabitation with dogs in the office is that the dog is healthy, vaccinated and insured. It is also just as important that the dog has a good nature and is ok with people and other dogs.

Dogs ensure relaxation.

It is scientifically proven that even being close to a dog alone is enough to release the hormone oxytocin in the brain. Oxytocin is more commonly referred to as the cuddle hormone. No wonder then that it has a positive effect on the well-being and reduces stress levels. This ensures a relaxed atmosphere in the office and a pleasant work climate.

Dogs make us more productive and healthier.

As opposed to lazing around at our desk or taking just a few steps to the canteen, dogs force us to stand up and move regularly—often accompanied by other colleagues. An adequate number of breaks, especially whilst getting some fresh air, increases productivity and makes us fitter, more awake, and strengthens the immune system.

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Smell and noise.

The novelty of our four-legged colleagues soon wears off for many employers when you arrive in the office to the typical smell of “wet dog”. The smell of dog food is also not everyone’s cup of tea. Too much barking is also considered as being disruptive—especially when on the phone or when concentrating.

Stress for the dog.

With all of the pros and cons for people, we mustn’t forget the well-being of the dog. Not every breed and every nature is suitable as an office dog. The dog should be relaxed around people. Otherwise it can cause the dog chronic anxiety or stress and in the worst case scenario, can even lead to biting.

Anxiety and allergies.

As well as the potential health problems, such as allergies to animal hair, we must remember that some colleagues can simply have a fear of dogs.

Hard facts: legal issues.

It is important to know that no one is simply allowed to just bring a dog into the office, except when talking about blind dogs. The decision lies with the employer. There's no time for walkies during the work day. Dog owners are responsible for damages caused by the dog and are obliged to clean any mess made by the dog immediately. The employer has a duty of care for employees. This means that people who are allergic or people who are scared of dogs must be protected. So much for the legal situation. Of course, we can't ignore animal protection either, which states that dogs should not be kept in manufacturing areas and must not be exposed to loud noises, damp or poisonous substances.

So does Mr Woof get the job?

More and more companies are allowing dogs to be brought into work, and for good reason. Office animals have a positive effect on the work climate and productivity. But whether Mr Woof is welcome in your company depends on the employer as well as the employees. Allergies and anxiety are KO criteria that make it impossible to integrate a dog into the office. It also completely depends on the company culture and the individual situation at the work place. If all the conditions are met and everyone involved agrees, then nothing stands in Mr Woof's way. One thing is for certain, though: the better I get to know my colleagues, the more I prefer my dog ;-)