

Brewery Becomes First US Company to Offer Paid Pawternity

An increasing number of companies are offering their employees paid pawternity leave so they can help a new pet transition into their home. Scottish beer maker BrewDog became the first company in the US to offer this incredible pet perk to its employees.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Beer maker BrewDog offers their employees a pawternity benefit, which allows them to take a week off of work, paid, when adding a new puppy or rescue dog to their home
- Mars Petcare also has a policy in which employees can get 10 hours of paid leave when they have a new pet settling in
- Policies such as pawternity leave not only benefit the pets and their owners but also boost employee morale
- Other forward-thinking companies offer employees discounts to doggie daycares, reduced pet insurance rates and even dog-lovers clubs that organize meet ups for members
- Research even shows that dogs in the workplace may lower employees' stress while boosting communication and productivity

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If you've ever added a puppy or rescue dog to your household, you know the time and emotional commitment involved. In fact, many new pet parents take at least a few days off of work — even up to a week — to devote their attention to making this a successful transition for their pet.

Not everyone has this luxury, unfortunately, which is why it's so refreshing to hear about companies who are thinking outside of the box and providing pet-related perks, including "pawternity leave," to their employers.

It makes sense, considering more than 36% of U.S. households count at least one dog among them (and another 30% own cats),¹ but it's still far more the exception than the norm. Perhaps one day that will change if more companies begin to think like BrewDog.

Scottish Brewery Offers Paid Pawternity Leave

Beer maker BrewDog is based in the United Kingdom but also has a location in the U.S. No matter their location, all 1,000 BrewDog employees are eligible for the pawternity benefit, which allows them to take a week off of work, paid, when adding a new puppy or rescue dog to their home.²

BrewDog co-founder James Watt told USA Today, "It's not easy trying to juggle work and settle a new dog into your life, and many members of our crew have four-legged friends at home ... We wanted to take the stress out of the situation and let our teams take the time they need to welcome their new puppy or dog into their family."³

As you might suspect, BrewDog is a very dog-friendly company, which allows its employees to bring their dogs to work as well. They say they were the first brewery in the U.K., as well as the first company in the U.S., to offer pawternity leave, but at least in the U.K. the concept has been catching on.

U.K.-based Petplan, the largest pet insurance provider in the world, says nearly 1 in 20 workers have been granted the opportunity to take advantage of a similar benefit.

The original arrangement was called "pupternity," according to Petplan's website, and devised more for dogs than other animals, such as cats, asserting that pups need more attention than kittens, who are generally independent and flexible, even in the earliest stages of joining a new household.⁴

They estimate that new dog owners take an average of six days off work while new cat owners take about three.

Mars Petcare, which employs more than 33,000 associates in 199 locations around the world,⁵ has also provided a policy in which employees can get 10 hours of paid leave when they have a new pet settling in.

Even Non-Pet Companies Give Perks to Pet Owners

It's not only companies in the pet-care field (or with the word "dog" in their company name) that offer pawternity. Tech company BitSol Solutions, based in Manchester, does too. Like BrewDog, BitSol offers employees a week off of work, paid, to care for a new pet.⁶

Policies such as pawternity leave not only benefit the pets and their owners but also boost employee morale. BitSol Solutions owner Greg Buchanan said:⁷

"If you do give time off for paw-ternity leave, you are limiting the number of people available to you; however, I believe the morale of staff definitely improves and they actually want to work harder for you."

It's a growing trend, not only for those adding a new pet to their family but also for those dealing with the loss of a pet.

Paid Pet Bereavement on the Rise

Returning to work immediately after a pet dies can feel unbearable, not to mention that you're unlikely to be in the right frame of mind to have a productive day on the job.

While many companies allow employees to take time off when a pet dies using personal or vacation days, some are now going a step further and offering paid pet bereavement as part of an employee's benefit package. Companies that have already implemented some form of pet bereavement days include:⁸

- Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, San Francisco, which offer a three-day pet bereavement leave

- Mars Inc. (some units), which makes candy and pet food, offers one or more days pet bereavement, flexible hours and the ability to work from home when a pet dies
- VMware, a California-based software company, offers flexible days off
- Maxwell Health, a Boston-based company that provides an operating system for employee benefits, also offers flex days off
- Trupanion, a Seattle-based pet insurance company, offers employees one paid pet bereavement day

An unintended benefit of pet bereavement days is that they provide validation for your feelings and recognition of your grief. If you're expected to return to work as normal, it sends the message that the loss isn't significant, when in reality many people grieve for their pets in the same way they do for human losses.

Pet Perks Benefit Employees and Employers Alike

All of these benefits, from pawternity and pet bereavement leave to allowing pets in the workplace, are signs of how integral pets are to our lives and homes. If it's important to you, the time to ask about such benefits is during the interview phase, as some companies are even using pet perks as recruitment tools.

Beyond the benefits already mentioned, other forward-thinking companies offer employees discounts to doggie daycares, reduced pet insurance rates and even dog-lovers clubs that organize meet ups for members.

Research even shows that dogs in the workplace may lower employees' stress while boosting communication and productivity,⁹ which means making reasonable accommodations for pet-owning employees pays off all around, including for employers.

Sources and References

¹ [AVMA, U.S. Pet Ownership Statistics](#)

^{2, 3} [USA Today February 16, 2017](#)

⁴ [Petplan Oct. 1, 2012 \(Archived\)](#)

⁵ [Mars Petcare 2015 \(Archived\)](#)

⁶ [Business Insider March 23, 2017 \(Archived\)](#)

⁷ [USA Today May 2, 2016](#)

⁸ [Society for Human Resource Management May 3, 2016](#)

⁹ [International Journal of Workplace Health Management, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.15-30](#)
