

# Pet projects pay off

Groundbreaking study by key industry leaders details novel way to increase engagement and retention in the workplace



If you heard you could land your most highly desired recruits, engage your workforce to an even higher degree and keep your very best employees without increasing costs, wouldn't you want to know how?

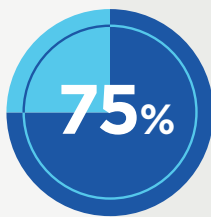
The answer is simple: Support the love people have for their pets. That's the clear message from a groundbreaking study produced by Nationwide® and the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute: Employers that recognize and support the benefits of pets in our lives have an edge on the competition.

It's a case of doing well by doing good, and the benefits are wide-reaching, according to the nation's first and largest provider of pet health insurance and the pioneering non-profit foundation









that studies the human-animal bond. Employees in pet-supported workplaces report feeling more connected to a company's mission, more engaged with their work, their bosses and their co-workers, and more likely to recommend and stay with their

companies. Bonus: They're happier overall and more likely to engage in healthy activities such as regular exercise, which aids in keeping absenteeism and medical costs down.

The landmark study is based on a survey that was given to 2,002 workers (1,502 pet-owners and 500 non-pet-owners) who spend most of their working time in an office. Participating companies had a minimum of 100 employees, ages 18-64. Companies were divided by the kinds of pet-friendly policies, from none to many.



Percentage of employees who have pets, compared to about half the general population

Pet-Inclusion		 <b>Pet Friendly PLUS</b> (n=163)	 <b>Pet Friendly</b> (n=95)	 <b>Pet Supportive</b> (n=711)	 <b>Not Pet Friendly</b> (n=1033)
		• Allows pets in the office • Offers at least 1 CORE benefit	• Allows pets in the office • Does not offer any CORE benefits	• Does not allow pets in the office • Offers any combination of CORE and NON-CORE benefit	• Does not offer any pet inclusion benefits
Core Benefits	Pets allowed in the office	Must allow	Must allow	Does not allow	Does not allow
	Pet health insurance	↕	↕	↕	↕
	Pet sitting services	Must offer at least 1	Does not allow	↕	↕
	Work from home to take care of pets	↕	↕	Must offer at least 1	↕
Non-Core Benefits	Allows time to care for pets	Optional	Optional	↕	↕
	Allows time off to care for pets	Optional	Optional	↕	↕
					

If you've struggled to make the case inside your company for pet-friendly policies, here's the help you need to open the conversation.

## **Pets make people happier ... and healthier**

Those who study the human-animal bond have long known the advantages of having pets. While once pets were considered "for the kids" or kept as mousers or working companions for farming or hunting, today's pets are more likely to be considered as full family members. Pets are adored not just by children in traditional-style families, but also by young professionals, mid- and late-career stalwarts and every manner and makeup of family known in our multicultural society. Americans love their pets and they appreciate employers that understand and support their lifestyle with pet-friendly policies and benefits.

Pets help overall health – both mental and physical – and their simple, unqualified love of those who care for them helps "pet parents" cope with the complexities of modern life. Peer-reviewed studies have shown companion animals help to fight depression and anxiety, and the need to care for pets keeps people better engaged in their lives and more social with other people.

Pets also keep people significantly more active: Those with pets average 3.5 days a week of exercise, vs. 2.8 days for those without pets, according to the Nationwide-HABRI study. An overwhelming 96 percent of surveyed employees agreed with the statement "My pet has a positive impact on my life."

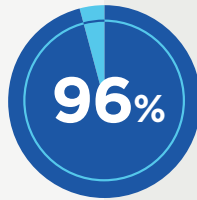
Pet-supportive workplaces recognize how happier, healthier people make for a better workforce. Employees in the most pet-friendly companies say they feel significantly healthier overall, at rates of 97 percent for mental health and 98 percent for physical health, compared to 75 percent and 81 percent, respectively, in companies with no pet-friendly policies.

## **Pet-friendly offices are friendlier ... to people**

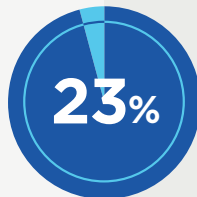
Perhaps the most surprising result to come out of the Nationwide-HABRI study is how pet-friendly policies drive teamwork at all levels. Another surprise: Pet-friendly policies are popular with people who don't currently have or are not interested in having pets of their own.

Almost a quarter of non-pet-owners surveyed said they wanted their workplaces to be friendlier to pets. And as for developing a more congenial workplace, consider that 52 percent of employees in the most pet-friendly companies say they have a significantly stronger relationship with their supervisors, vs. 14 percent in non-pet-friendly companies. Between peers, the overall numbers were comparable, with 53 percent saying they have a good relationship with co-workers, compared to 19 percent in non-pet-friendly companies. In an interesting

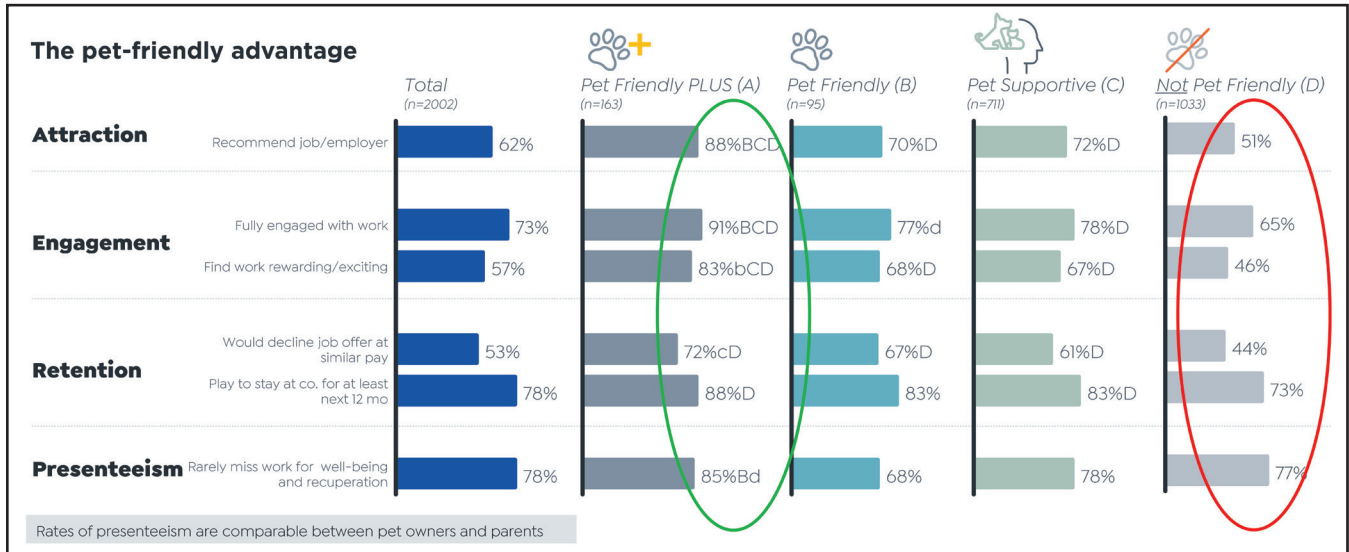
anecdote that brings home the difference, those in offices where pets are allowed are more likely to know the names of co-workers' domestic partners (76 percent vs. 72 percent in no-pets offices), children (79 percent vs. 69 percent) and pets (63 percent vs. 40 percent), which indicates a deeper connection between people in the work force.



Percentage of employees with pets who agree with the statement: **"My pet has a positive impact on my life."**



Percentage of employees without pets who want their offices to be more pet-friendly



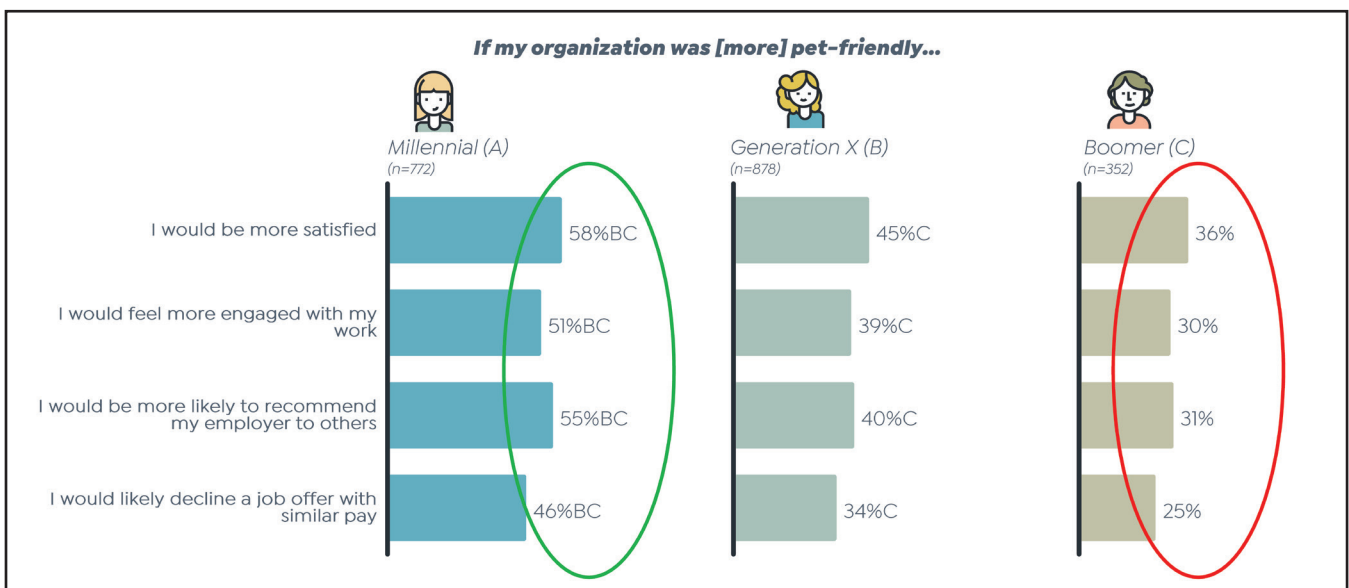
This type of engagement supports a collaborative environment where ideas are heard, developed and acted-upon, and where employees feel bonded to the company. It also gives an edge in recruiting and retention. As far as downsides, the study found that pet owners and parents had comparable rates when it came to missing work.

### Future perfect: a millennial meeting of the minds

Much has been written about millennials in the workforce, with studies noting such differences with older workers as less loyalty to employers when it comes to staying in a job, as well as the

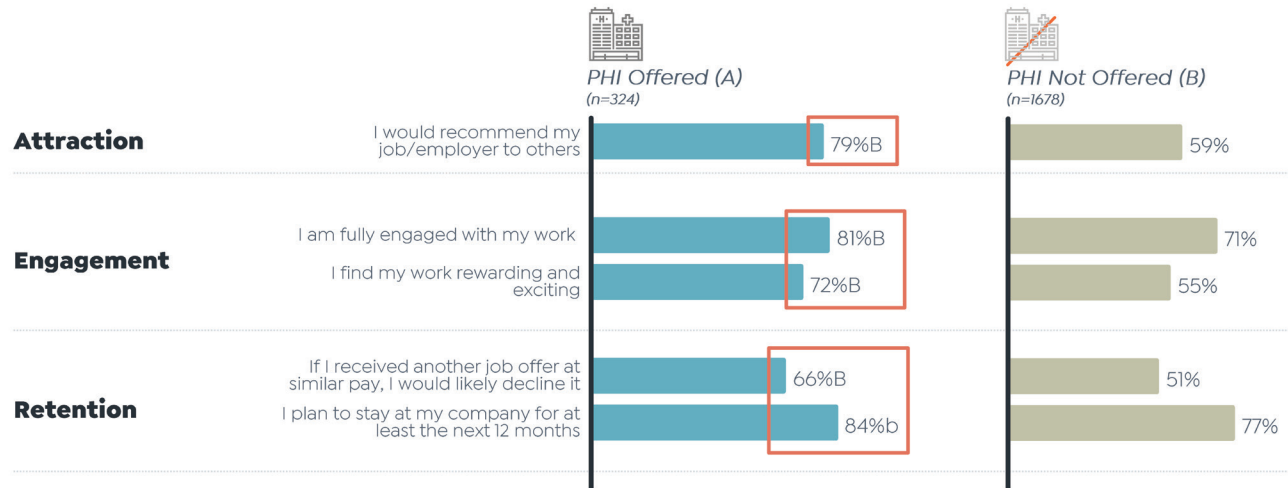
tendency of millennials to delay marriage and/or having children. For many, though, home is still where the heart is when it comes to family, but family is often four-legged, not two. Millennials are far more likely than their Boomer colleagues to say that pet-friendly work environments contribute to their satisfaction, engagement, retention and likelihood to recommend their employer. When you consider that millennials are the leaders of tomorrow, understanding their work-environment needs is necessary for building successful workplaces of tomorrow.

Companies ignore these differences at their own risk. Pet-friendly policies, however, are one sure way to address them.



# The benefits of pet health insurance (PHI)

Companies that offer PHI as a voluntary benefit significantly outperform those that do not offer it on attraction, engagement and retention.



## The pet health insurance edge

Many companies aren't willing or able to have pets in the office, either always or for special events. For all companies whose employees were surveyed, though, offering pet health insurance as a voluntary benefit demonstrated the same kind of attraction, engagement, retention and relational lifts as organizations that do let pets come to work. Once again, the pet-friendly edge is marked with employees overall, not just those with pets.



Nearly half of all Fortune 500 companies and more than 6,000 U.S. companies overall offer Nationwide pet insurance as a voluntary benefit. Let us show you how easy it is to get your company on the pet-friendly path! Companies that offer pet health insurance as a voluntary benefit earn higher ratings than those that don't.

[PetsVoluntaryBenefits.com](https://PetsVoluntaryBenefits.com)

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Findings based on independent research conducted by LRW, a leading marketing and insights firm known for their use of sophisticated analytics and deep human understanding. "Pet-friendly" is defined for the purpose of this study as allowing pets in the office plus at least one of the following: pet health insurance, pet-sitting services, or working from home to take care of pets.

Underwritten by Veterinary Pet Insurance Company (CA), Columbus, OH, an A.M. Best A+ rated company (2017); National Casualty Company (all other states), Columbus, OH, an A.M. Best A+ rated company (2017). Agency of Record: DVM Insurance Agency. Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle, and Nationwide is on your side are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. ©2018 Nationwide. 18GRP5530a