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Plus

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How to Take Dogs to Work

By Dr. Kathleen Begley, Book Author and Professional Speaker

Note to Readers: This week's blogletter from Write Company Plus communications training is by guest columnist Mikey the Dog. The extremely cute son of regular writer Dr. Kathleen Begley, Mikey fancies himself a literary genius. He hopes one day to win a Pulitzer Prize.

By Mikey the Dog

My mom subscribes to a bunch of dog magazines. I have no idea why, considering that I and my two furry sisters Abby Cadabby and Vanna Banana barely understand phonetics. Recently, after leafing through an issue of Dog Fancy magazine, Mom excitedly told me that June 26 – this Friday -- is Take Your Dog to Work Day. She thought I'd be excited. Is she nuts?

In my day-to-day life in a wooded home outside Philadelphia, I nap on a bed with 400-thread-count all-cotton sheets. I snack on high-priced Greenies. I eat from a bowl designed by a professional artist. Why on earth would I want to go to work?

"OK, Mikey, so you want nothing to do with Take Your Dog to Work Day," Mom said. "But don't spoil it for everyone else. Some pets have to stay home alone while their moms and dads work. This is their chance to get out and see what their parents do to earn money for Milk Bones." Talk about a guilt trip. Moms are like that, you know.

"OK, OK," I replied. "I get it. I can see why it's important for other animals to participate in Take Your Dog to Work Day. I'm not going to do it, but I am willing to research the origin of and tips for celebrating the big day."

So I began Googling for more information, which is no small feat when you have paws instead of fingers. But, with a little help from Mom, I discovered that Take Your Dog to Work Day has three official sponsors: the aforementioned Dog Fancy magazine, Pet Sitters International (PSI), and Petfinder.com.

"Started in 1999, this event is meant to celebrate the great companions dogs make and to encourage their adoption at humane societies, animal shelters, and breed rescue clubs," the official website says. "This annual event encourages employers to experience the value of pets in the workplace for this one special day and to promote pet adoption."

Now, as adorable as I and most dogs are, you probably realize that everyone does not like to be nuzzled and licked for hours on end. Personally, I think these humans need to have their heads examined, but that's me. To avoid ill feelings about Take Your Dog to Work Day, here are some suggestions from me, Mom, and event sponsors:

Lobby your Human Resources Department. For ammunition, check out the event's website. It lists the top 10 things to say to your boss to encourage participation in the event. Among them: "It's the leash you can do." Without written approval of your company, I definitely would advise you to leave your dog at home on Friday. If Rusty or Fluffy want to ease their loneliness, tell them to give me a call or, better yet, stop by for a Pupperoni or Beggin Strip.

Check with your colleagues. If the person sharing your cubicle says no way is she going to work like or with a dog on Friday, come up with an alternate plan. Perhaps you can stage an



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outdoor Take Your Dog to Work Day activity for Zelda and Freddy on the corporate campus. Frisbee, anyone?

Puppy proof your office. In new surroundings, Chico and Maxine may think computer cables are new chewy toys. Remove or hide anything that will rapidly disintegrate under the force of canine teeth – your dog's, not yours.

Contain your pet. Event sponsors suggest you use a leash when walking your dog in the hallways. In addition, they recommend putting up a baby gate to keep your pet in your work station. Personally, I love both ideas. Wearing a leash always makes me feel super connected to Mom. On top of that, like many people of my ilk, I love holing up in tiny spaces with clear boundaries; a baby gate is a perfect line of demarcation.

Limit your expectations. If you think that Buddy and Zorro are going to help with the workload, you better get a grip. My guess is that your dog's biggest contribution will be lying on your feet and keeping them warm while you're emailing all your friends seeking advice about the best way to inform your boss that your beloved pet just ate your travel receipts.

Prepare a doggie bag. Like high-maintenance human babies, dogs need a lot of stuff to get through the day. So be sure to pack a water bowl, treats, toys and – if you anticipate worse coming to worse – paper towels and stain remover. Air freshener is a nice touch, too.

Have a backup plan. What if Red or Cocoa, who have been housetrained for years, suddenly become major piddlers? You might consider bringing diapers made specifically for dogs. Personally, however, I must admit I would never be caught dead wearing such an undergarment. Diapers? On a 30-pound macho guy like me? I think not.

Dr. Kathleen Begley owns and operates Write Company Plus communications training outside Philadelphia. She has written seven books and gives corporate seminars on topics such as writing persuasively, presenting confidently, and managing positively. You can call her at 610-429-1562 or e-mail her at KBegley@writecompanyplus.com. She responds to everybody.