

## Mars reopens South African HQ with new 'pet office'

Consumer goods company Mars Africa, owner of brands including Pedigree, Whiskas, Snickers and Orbit, has reopened its newly-renovated local head office in Woodmead, Johannesburg that now houses a new 'pet office' so that employees can bring their dogs to work.



Source: Supplied

Employees and their furry friends were welcomed back to the office last week after two years of working from home. During this time, Mars says that it witnessed the changing needs of its associates, took their well-being into account and redefined the rules and ways of working based on this experience.

The company designed collaborative workspaces and a new working method, called Future of Work, focusing on the individual needs of associates.



Source: Supplied

### Emotional well-being of pets and workers

With the new pet office, Mars decided to create a special office space just for dogs to help reduce their separation anxiety as the Covid-19 lockdown period of remote working from home comes to an end.

“We realise that the return to the office may have a negative emotional impact on many dogs who have become dependent on having human interaction during the workday. As a leading global pet food manufacturer, well known for brands such as Pedigree, Whiskas, Royal Canin, Iams and Eukanuba, we are intensely involved in the science of pet nutrition and physical health, however we believe it is just as important to consider their emotional well-being as we all return to the office,” says Tumi Masekela, corporate affairs director at Mars Multisales Southern Africa.

She adds, “Enabling our associates to bring their pets into the office is the perfect foundation on which to develop a truly pet-centric culture and encourage pet ownership, not only among ourselves but also more broadly in our wider communities.”

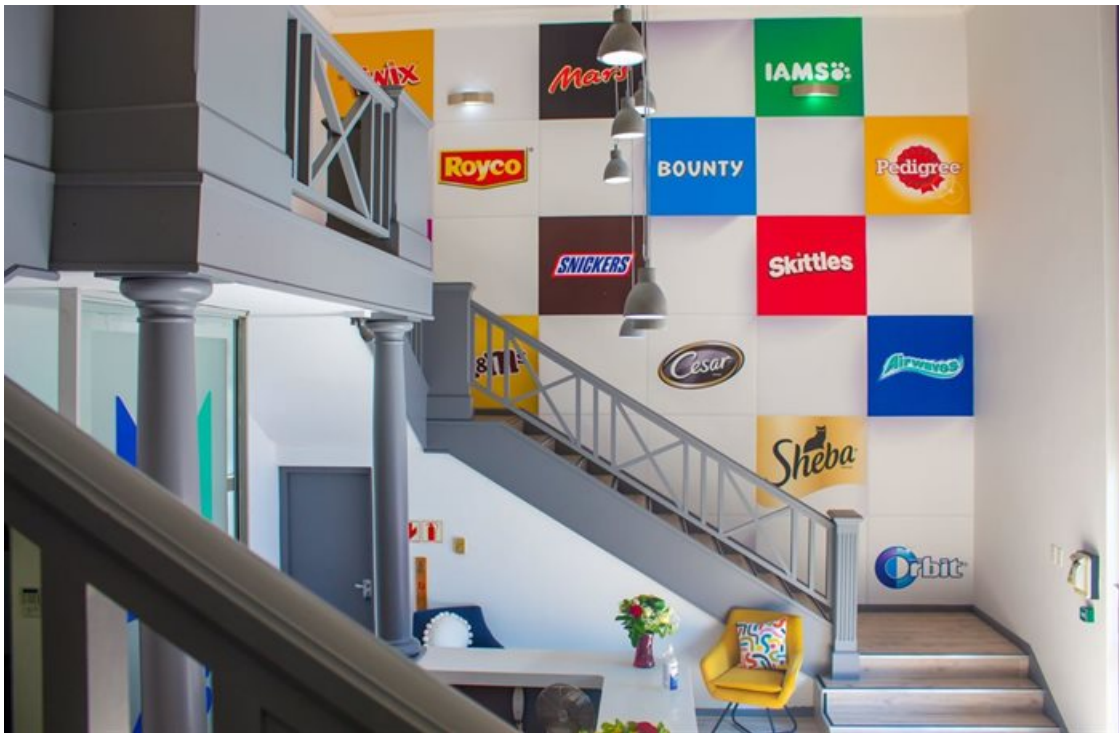


Source: Supplied

According to [research](#) by the Waltham Petcare Science Institute, there is accumulating evidence of the benefits of pets offering companionship, relieving stress and even helping to improve attention and memory.

Masekela comments, “Science tells us that pet ownership brings a multitude of benefits to our health and well-being: from improving our heart health and physical activity to building empathy and strengthening our sense of community.

“The pandemic has highlighted the role of pets in our lives, having them become an extension of our families. We would like to encourage all citizens and companies to help build a better world for our pets in the post-Covid society.”



Source: Supplied

## Flexible, collaborative working environment

The global company that refers to its employees as associates, has transformed its regional headquarters into a modern hot-desk system with open spaces that promote a more collaborative approach for meetings and team building.

Since before the pandemic, Mars has provided flexible working opportunities for employees – flexibility in daily working hours, collaborative workspaces and pet-friendly offices are just some examples to support this idea. The company has now introduced a flexible, hybrid approach called the 'Future of Work', which is based on only a portion of the working time being spent in the office.

The new work system, which is based on the feedback provided by associates worldwide, will allow Mars associates to carry out their duties in an environment that best suits their activity.



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## More sustainable meeting methods

Another important area of this new strategy focuses on a changed approach to meeting and travel. To reduce the number and time spent at meetings, as well as to keep the health and safety of associates in focus, Mars employees are only required to travel and organise a meeting for specific purposes and are supported by several online tools to do so.

The introduction of this new work model will also reduce business trips around the world, by at least half compared to the pre-pandemic level. "Remote work also benefits the environment by reducing the carbon footprint of associates travelling daily to offices. All this to increase work efficiency in balance with health and well-being and the implementation of Mars' sustainability plan," the company states.

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