

Deductible Dog

I'm an accountant.

Every March and April I spend most of my waking hours doing tax returns. Over the years I've noticed a strange phenomenon—just like fads and fashion, different tax deductions enjoy popularity in waves, and just as suddenly, disappear.

The first wave I noticed were 'happy' drugs—out of nowhere, everybody had prescription receipts for Prozac and Zoloft and Xanax.

Next it was therapists. Mounds of tidy little receipts, one hour at a time.

And this year it's...dogs.

For some reason, all my canine loving clients want a tax deduction for their dog. Time after time I have to tell them, dogs aren't deductible. You may love them like a child, but the Canada Revenue Agency is never going to allow them as an eligible dependant. Which is the way it should be.

Or is it?

If you are self-employed and have an alarm system, there's no question a portion of the monthly monitoring fee is deductible as a home office expense. Well, what better alarm than a keen eared, yappy dog?

And, what about those therapist fees? All deductible medical expenses. How is that better than unconditional love, 24/7, from your furry best friend? I say it's different only that the therapist isn't as effective as a dog for healing a wounded soul.

Then there's the meals and entertainment deduction, a legitimate business write-off for drinking and stuffing your face with somebody you just met. Call it 'networking'. Can there be any better networking tool than a walk on a busy street with a cute puppy? Talk about meet and greet. Yet, while premium scotch at a bar is okay, a lap around the block with Rover is denied.

It's time for CRA to allow dogs as a business expense. They're cheap compared to a therapist, never require a visit from the police because of a forgotten security code, and provide a healthy and low-fat alternative to a business lunch.

Okay, maybe the *whole* dog shouldn't be deductible, but at least an end of it should be. And since we're talking about taxes, I think it's clear which end I'm talking about.

Don DeWolfe

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