

## 11/07/09 - Lessons from the Dogs

My business partner and I both love dogs. In fact, we both have beagles right now. My family dog Sam is pretty experienced, and Matt's beagle is a puppy.

We recently had the opportunity to get the pets together, and remarked the similarities of the two beagles meeting to people in business.

Milo came to visit Sam in his yard. Sam has the run of the yard. Sam has a Dog Watch invisible fence, so the yard appears wide open. Milo was on a nice long lead. Sam was immediately interested in the new being in his yard. Both dogs walked around each other warily, checking each other out.

All of a sudden Sam's fur popped up, and he let out a mighty bark, as much as to say, "this is my place, watch yourself."

Milo wasn't deterred. He marched over to Sam with an incredulous look, "what's with you?" Sam took a step towards Milo, and let out another substantial bark, "I'm the boss." Milo immediately rolled over onto his back.

They did this a couple times, with Sam declaring his superiority and Milo being submissive. Eventually Milo decided this was a silly game, and started to explore other parts of the yard. Sam kept giving out singular barks, and Milo simply ignored him.

Eventually Sam decided to stop barking, and began exploring what Milo was exploring. While Sam could have gone anywhere in the yard, he stayed close to the leashed Milo. The dogs continued sniffing around each other quietly, with Milo occasionally nipping on Sam's tail.

Sam eventually went about his thing, leaving Milo. With that, Milo let out a mighty puppy bark. Sam largely kept politely ignoring Milo, who let out another bark. Sam then came back over, and the two dogs played with each other.

We then went inside, and Sam took Milo under his guidance. It was lunch time, and Sam holds a Masters in begging. Milo was quickly learning.

After lunch, Sam enjoyed a good nap, while Milo explored the house.

In the workplace, it's not uncommon for the more experienced team member to be a little wary of the new team member. Even when they are the same "breed", there's a getting to know each other period.

It took Sam and Milo about 30 minutes to figure things out and get comfortable with each other. In the workplace, onboarding new team members successfully should be a focal point for any IT group.