



# An Introduction to Workplace Experience (WX)

How employers can use technology to support the needs of a hybrid workforce.

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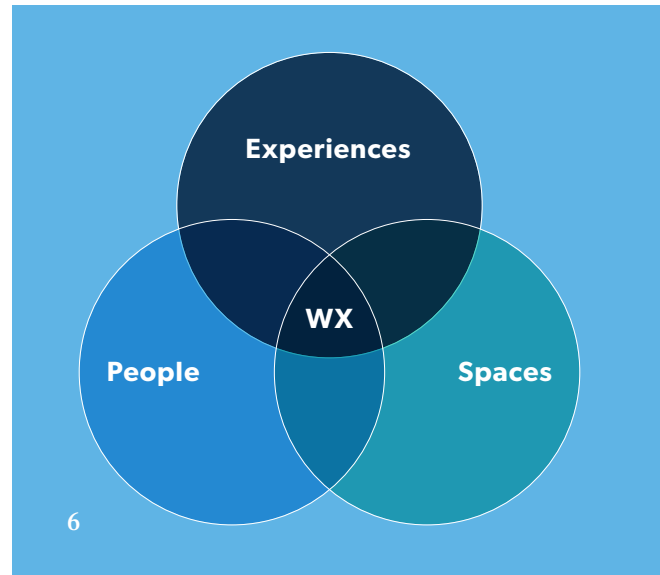
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*Chapter 1*

# Introduction



# Hybrid Work's Impact on the Workplace

The future of work has [changed](#) dramatically in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with hybrid work becoming increasingly common across the corporate world. HqO's [State of Workplace Experience](#) report shows, for example, that a large majority of employers and commercial real estate (CRE) companies expect that their employees and tenants will remain in a hybrid work modality for the foreseeable future. In fact, 88% of employees surveyed in the report say

that they think hybrid work is equally important to other benefits such as healthcare and annual leave. These findings are supported by research from [McKinsey](#), the [Harvard Business Review](#), and [Stanford's](#) Institute for Economic Policy Research, among others. The message is clear: in the face of COVID-19 and an ever-competitive labor market, hybrid work is here to stay. Now more than ever, employers need to ensure that they're well-equipped to grapple with this new norm.

## The Fight for Talent Attraction and Retention

In the past, many companies did not have to consider the needs of hybrid workers when crafting their overall workplace experience strategies — at least not in the same ways they do now. Similarly, improvements to the actual employee experience were not a priority across companies either. In today’s landscape, however — as hybrid work increasingly becomes the norm and the labor market remains competitive — a growing number of employers are being forced to augment and re-prioritize their experience strategies to accommodate the needs and desires of the modern, hybrid workforce.

But hybrid work isn’t the only concern for employers. Increasingly, record-high [inflation](#) is contributing to an uncertain economic environment, which has led many companies to cut back on costs. Even as the economy begins to cool off, however, the labor market remains white-hot; high salaries and labor shortages have both persisted throughout the current wave of economic uncertainty. In the event of a more serious economic downturn (which is a distinct possibility, according to the [Federal Reserve](#)) companies will want to do all they can to keep top talent. The so-called “[Great Resignation](#)” has combined with a volatile market environment to create a unique set of economic conditions.

## Creating Technology-Forward Workplaces

The shift toward hybrid work and the uncertain economic environment have both led employers to introduce a number of different workplace technologies to address specific needs (like flexible desk and room booking, digital programming, and direct communication) that hybrid workers are demanding from the workplace.

Though employers are already investing in these [new technologies](#), many face significant challenges when adopting them. The use of many different office apps and programs, for example, can lead to a disjointed and poor user experience. Oftentimes, employees end up spending too much time finding the various tools their workplace affords them.

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*Right: Meet the needs of hybrid workers with flexible room and desk booking.*

This can create a drag on productivity as workers are forced to switch between numerous apps and programs, which wastes valuable time, and limits their ability to focus. Thus, in a hybrid workplace, employers don’t just need to invest more in workplace experience — they also need to invest with *intelligence* in order to make sure that they’re truly addressing the needs of their workforce.

## Defining Value

In this guide, we’ll examine a few of the most important facets of workplace experience. We’ll also look at how technology can improve the workplace experience in a way that allows companies to boost employee productivity, attract and retain the best talent, and optimize their workplace spend. Hybrid work may pose a number of different challenges, but, at the same time, it also presents new opportunities for success. In the following sections, we’ll look at some of the tools that employers need in order to ensure that their transition to hybrid work is a positive and seamless experience.

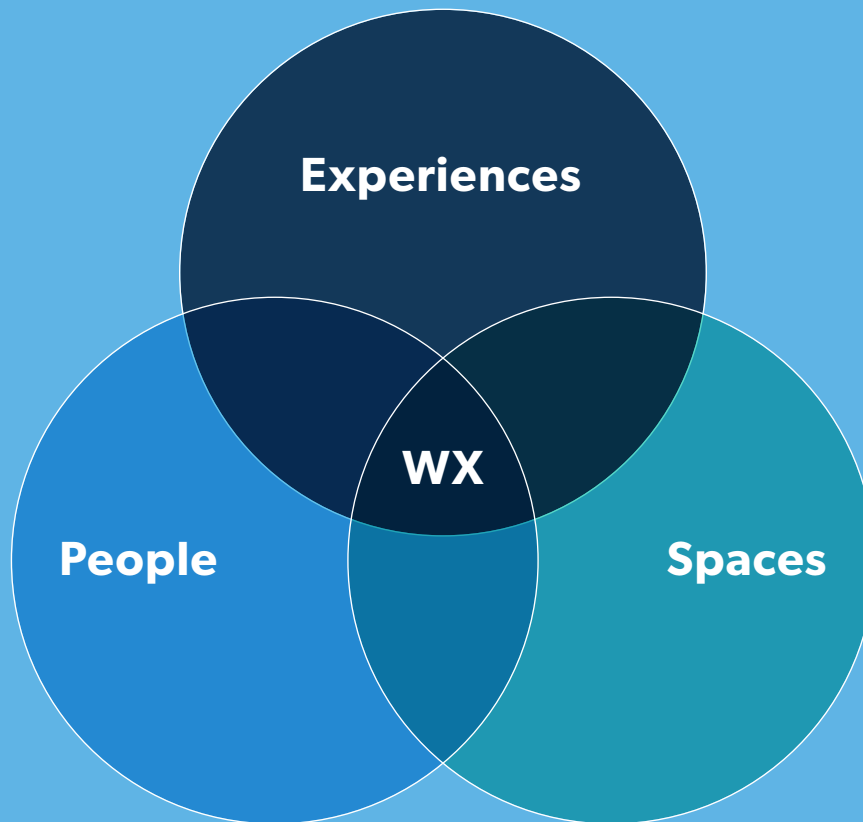
*Let’s begin.*



*Chapter 2*

# Understanding Workplace Experience

# Workplace Experience (WX)



## Defining Workplace Experience

So, what is workplace experience?

It's a term that has become increasingly common, but it can take on many different meanings depending on the company. In order to understand the benefits of improving the workplace experience, it's important to first have a clear understanding of both the term and its importance for employers.

Simply put, workplace experience consists of the **experiences, people, and spaces** that employees interact with in the workplace — whether in or out of the office. These components can be fueled and amplified by technology, empowering people to do their best work regardless of location. Below are just a few examples of this dynamic.

**Experiences:**

- » Building access control
- » Menus and order ahead
- » Room booking
- » Parking & transit

**People:**

- » Office socializing
- » Vendor/services interactions
- » Coworker interactions
- » Workplace culture and climate

**Spaces:**

- » In-office
- » Work from home
- » Office common areas
- » Satellite offices
- » Coworking spaces
- » Office amenity spaces

Once a company connects employees to each other, their overall workplace culture, and the physical spaces and resources offered to them, it will be able to generate both short- and long-term success.







# Why You Should Care About Workplace Experience

*“Employers need to make the workplace better suited to support more activities, because it needs to offer something additional to home-working environments.”*

Michael Hadcocks,  
Senior Researcher at Leesman

Employers value workplace experience because the quality of that experience directly affects the bottom line. [Research shows](#), for example, that investments in workplace experience lead to increased employee productivity (a 29% increase in work quality, according to Gallup) and decreased levels of absenteeism, among other benefits.

And, when it comes to workplace experience technology, the financial benefits are overwhelmingly clear: companies like [EY](#) find that the implementation of workplace experience technology yields direct financial benefits for commercial real estate companies. This sentiment is further backed by

HqO’s [State of Workplace Experience in 2022 report](#), which states that 72% of employers agree that workplace experience and engagement tools will be a critical element of successful offices in the future.

Employers also need to be mindful of the workplace experience because that experience is hugely important to their employees. HqO’s aforementioned report, for example, finds that 92% of office landlords believe employees want more from their offices. Additionally, in a [Q2 Global Office Working](#) survey by [Leesman](#) (an HqO company), only 61% of employees believe that their office environments allow them to work productively. These and other data points clearly show that employees are now demanding more from the workplace experience.

But in order to get the most out of their investments in workplace experience, employers need to have a clear understanding of the various tools at their disposal. We’ll examine those solutions in greater depth in the following sections, utilizing best-in-class employee experience research from Leesman.



# Optimizing the Hybrid Workplace

## New Insights from Leesman, an HqO Company

When it comes to measuring the quality of workplace experience, Leesman (an HqO company) is widely thought of as the authoritative voice. The Leesman [Index](#) in particular has become an indispensable tool for landlords and employers over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many workplace decision-makers have scrambled to augment their employee experience strategies. But Leesman-authored insights aren't just for industry experts. Due to their expansive scope and authoritative voice, Leesman reports are also required reading for those looking to get their bearings in the field.

In this brief insert, we'll present key data points from Leesman's workplace experience survey, which has over 900,000 responses from office workers worldwide (data as of June 30th, 2022).

## Issues with Workplace Satisfaction

Some of the most striking data points from Leesman's Q2 data relate to employee workplace satisfaction, which — according to several related responses — is markedly low:

- » **33.9%** of 900,000+ survey respondents do not believe that their workplace enables them to work productively on a collaborative basis;
- » **35.5%** of respondents do not believe that their workplace enables them to work effectively on an individual basis;
- » **38.4%** do not believe that their office space creates an enjoyable work environment;
- » **38.4%** do not believe that their office space contributes to a sense of community at work.

In other words: **over a third of workers are now dissatisfied with their office environments**, and may feel disconnected from their coworkers. In addition, a remarkably large number of workers (between 34% and 35% of survey respondents) do not feel that their office environments enable them to work productively. This last figure applies to both individual and collaborative work.

This data should set off alarm bells for employers. Not only are employees roundly dissatisfied with the quality of their workplace experiences, but **a large number of employees actually seem to feel that their workplaces hinder their productivity.** For many companies, this translates to lost value through lower employee productivity rates, and higher rates of turnover.

But how can employers work to boost employee satisfaction and productivity? The survey provides some promising suggestions, all of which begin with smart, informed investments in workplace experience.



*Above: Streamlined workplace experience technology can reduce distractions and save time.*

## Boosting Employee Satisfaction and Productivity

In addition to general employee satisfaction, the Leesman survey also asks employees to rank the importance of 21 different workplace activities, and to further specify whether or not they felt that their workplaces were actively supporting those activities. Together, these two sections of the survey present a number of promising areas for companies to improve the workplace experience (thereby boosting satisfaction and productivity).

» **Pain point:** “Individual focused work, desk based” ranks highest in importance out of all 21 activities measured, but only ~78% of respondents feel that this activity is actively supported by their employers. This means that *almost a quarter of respondents* think that their workplaces do not support this essential work activity.

» **Solutions:** employers can support their hybrid employees by adding flexible desk booking capabilities through a workplace experience app. The HqO app, for example, supports flexible desk booking with innovative and user-friendly workplace technology. This allows companies to better support their employees engage in individual desk-based work, which (again) was the single most important workplace activity for surveyed employees.

» **Pain point:** general workplace satisfaction data indicates that employee productivity is hampered by workplace environments.

» **Solutions:** companies can enhance employee productivity with the use of workplace technology. By integrating numerous features of existing technologies (like mobile access, food ordering, parking desk booking, and others), the HqO app eliminates the need to switch between different programs and apps. This saves employees time and eliminates distractions, allowing employees to improve their focus and become more productive.

» **Pain point:** close to 40% of surveyed workers do not believe that the office contributes to a sense of community.

» **Solutions:** By allowing for expanded programming, workplace experience technology allows employers to help workers form deeper, more meaningful workplace connections. This can boost employee satisfaction, which reduces turnover and related costs.

By partnering with HqO, employers gain access both to HqO's cutting-edge technology, and to Leesman's industry-leading insights. This partnership — [which is the first of its kind](#) — allows companies to make uniquely informed decisions that improve workplace experience.

To learn more about Leesman, visit them at <https://www.leesmanindex.com>.



*Chapter 3*

# Workplace Experience for Companies



## Addressing the Needs of Hybrid Workers

Employers have always understood the imperative to address the needs of their workers in order to attract and retain the best talent. With the rise of hybrid work, that task has become increasingly challenging and important. Hybrid workers have a unique set of needs, some of which employers were not equipped to address before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

For example, increased [perks](#) alone are no longer proving to be sufficient for hybrid workers. In addition to traditional perks, hybrid workers now demand greater flexibility, more engaging in-office experiences, and a workplace that meets their specific set of needs. This often translates to increased demand for new tools and programs like remote room and desk booking, enhanced in-office programming, mobile access, and food and retail offerings that help employers meet the needs of every employee.

# The Rise of the Workplace Experience Manager

In order to adapt to this changing work environment, many employers have developed more purposeful strategies to improve the workplace experience. To manage these goals, many companies have begun to hire new dedicated roles for the workplace: Workplace Experience Managers.

For employers, Workplace Experience Managers have very specific roles and functions. They are focused on achieving the following three goals for their company:

- » Elevating workplace experiences
- » Attracting and retaining talent
- » Optimizing workplace spend

Traditionally, workplace experiences and investments have been managed at the landlord and property team level. In those scenarios, facilities management would work with building owners to improve amenities, such as on-site fitness centers, and differentiate the workplace.

The impacts of the Great Resignation, however, have accelerated the need to prioritize these workplace elements on an individual employee level. In today's labor market, it's easier than ever for employees to quit jobs and seek other employment that provides better accommodation (such as flexibility and hybrid work), compensation and benefits, and alignment with workplace culture and purpose.



*Right: Workplace Experience Managers help employers meet the needs of hybrid workers.*

# The Role of the Workplace Experience Manager

In order to understand the role of the Workplace Experience Manager, it can help to take a detailed look at how this position operates within top companies. The Walt Disney Company, for example — long renowned for its “magical” experiences — has made significant investments in workplace experience.

Disney, in fact, has both Workplace Experience Managers *and* Experience Directors. Previous job descriptions for the company have covered the following corporate functions and more:

- » Supervise all facility-related activities including cleaning, pest control, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical and fire Life Safety systems
- » Partner with security to manage access control and security systems
- » Maintain vendor relationships, invoices, and the purchase and procurement of certain projects
- » Lead Disney’s return to office initiative, and prepare all local offices for a safe return that ensures compliance with The Walt Disney Company’s workplace requirements
- » Oversee the workplace management ticketing system
- » Compose and release frequent site-wide communications
- » Coordinate office events
- » Partner with other Workplace Experience roles and the Corporate Real Estate team on space planning and expansion projects
- » Manage food and beverage programs
- » Drive employee engagement through connectivity, work experience, and office/workplace management
- » Develop and manage programs that enhance the overall people experience
- » Embody and influence company culture, values, and act as an ambassador for people-building
- » Seek and analyze market research to develop broad subject knowledge and benchmark programs
- » Utilize information related to office usage to take actions based on the interpretations of that data

Though every company has a slightly different take on the responsibilities of the role, the general concept is the same: Workplace Experience Managers are advocates for the people of a given company, and need to place their employees at the center of every office strategy to reflect the needs of their unique building communities and elevate the overall workplace experience.

But what tools do workplace experience professionals need to improve the in-office and hybrid experience at their companies? And how can employers look to implement these strategies at their companies, regardless of whether or not they currently employ a Workplace Experience Manager? We’ll look at the answers to these important questions in the following sections.



*Chapter 4*

# How Workplace Experience Technology Helps



## Defining Workplace Experience Technology

Workplace experience technology is, simply put, software that employers use to improve the workplace experience.

In general, technology is most effective when it's implemented as a single mobile app for employees, which they can download directly to their smartphones. An effective workplace

experience technology platform should also be backed by self-service and analytics capabilities. The HqO app, for example, provides an advanced analytics platform, while also offering a wide variety of functionalities including mobile access control (meaning that employees can gain access to secure areas using their smartphones), food ordering, enhanced in-office programming, and custom and open-ended feedback options.

## The Benefits of Workplace Experience Tech

Workplace experience technology enables employees to manage their workplace experience; think of it as a remote control for the workplace, similar to a TV remote control. When executed well, it can bring together the different capabilities that employees need all under a single pane of glass (i.e. all in a single, easy-to-use app).

Workplace experience technology should also support the needs of Workplace Experience Managers, Real Estate, Facilities, and HR Managers with targeted real-time outreach, ongoing communications, and behavioral and feedback analytics for better decision-making.

And, to further generate business benefits, a growing number of Workplace Experience Managers are using technology to help their companies optimize spending and attract and retain top talent. Recent [research](#) indicates that investment in strong workplace technology yields tangible, obvious results.

On a practical level, workplace experience technology helps employers create deeper workplace connections, optimize the office, and ensure employee safety. Find a more detailed breakdown of these benefits below:

### 1. Do More With Fewer Applications

A report from [Asana](#) finds that the average U.S. employee changes through 13 apps, 30 times per day. By providing a unified, digital solution like HqO's Workplace Experience Platform, you can make your employees' lives easier and more productive by consolidating multiple features and benefits into one app. It gives them a universal remote control to your offices, and empowers workers to quickly schedule the spaces they need to do their work. In addition, when employers use a single unified app, they can increase app usage by focusing promotion and programming on that one app instead of multiple apps. Moreover, each time an employee uses the app, they can discover other functions that can help them as well. Consolidation drives better outcomes.



*Above: Workplace experience technology boosts productivity by reducing distractions.*



*Above: Create more meaningful workplace connections with expanded programming.*

## 2. Create Deeper Connections

In the age of hybrid work, it can be hard for employers to foster a workplace culture and sense of community that many companies used to take for granted. Workplace experience technology helps employers create deeper, more meaningful connections to and among their workforce by providing opportunities for expanded in-office and remote programming, discounts at local retailers, as well as a list of other enhanced perks.

Additionally, because employees can download the app on their smartphones, employer messaging is guaranteed to be consistent for all workers — whether they're in or out of the office. Furthermore, real-time mobile messaging increases the likelihood that employees will actually see those messages.

## 3. Optimize the Office

With workplace experience technology, employers can issue polls that allow them to measure employee sentiment. Leading technology platforms (like HqO's) will also give employers data on space and amenity usage. This information enables companies and workplace experience managers to tailor the workplace to the needs of employees by investing in the most popular programs and amenities, while simultaneously reducing investment in less popular amenities and spaces. This optimization allows companies to boost employee satisfaction, while also getting the most out of their spending on the workplace.

## 4. Enhance Employee Safety

As COVID-19 enters its endemic stage, employers need to be able to effectively communicate safety concerns to their employees. For example, HqO's custom communication feature allows employers to send messages directly to employees' phones — enabling companies to remain in contact about safety issues as they arise. Not only does this give employers the ability to keep their employees safe during an uncertain time, it also allows them to boost employee satisfaction by communicating proactively, with a uniform cadence. The HqO app also allows employers to manage occupancy limits, empowering them to keep their workers safe in uncertain times.

*Chapter 5*

# **Key Components of Workplace Experience Technology**

# Meeting Employee Needs with Workplace Experience Technology

When it comes to workplace technology, not all software is created equal; in order to yield maximum benefits, a workplace experience platform needs to be properly configured to address all the needs of a hybrid workforce. This means that the technology must be tailored to the preferences of individual employees, while also addressing several crucial product modules. Below, find a detailed breakdown of the key modules that are necessary to meet the needs of a hybrid workforce.

## Workplace Modules

To get the most out of your app, employees should be able to use workplace modules that the employer selects through a mobile or web interface.

We've identified six categories of importance for any workplace:

- » **Help:** Enable employees to submit maintenance and other requests from one interface, so they can get issues resolved faster without the usual back and forth.
  - » Functionalities: Service requests; targeted employee; communication and posts; mobile notifications
- » **Services:** Provide convenience and fitness services, so employees can take care of errands and stay healthy without having to leave the office.
  - » Functionalities: Service booking; food order ahead; deals; commuter schedule updates; wellness services

- » **Culture and community:** Use technology to create deeper connections in the workplace.
  - » Functionalities: Workplace update posts; events & volunteering; ESG posts
- » **Feedback:** You will want to provide employees with an easy way to share their sentiments, priorities, and feedback on an ongoing basis.
  - » Functionalities: Ratings; surveys and polls
- » **Spaces:** Take the friction out of desk, conference room, parking, and other resource reservations with tools to manage in-office space usage.
  - » Functionalities: Room and desk booking; parking reservations
- » **Security:** Keep spaces secure while providing a welcoming environment, through features such as mobile access control and visitor management.
  - » Functionalities: Mobile access; visitor management; SSO





## Key Additions to an End-to-End Platform

In addition to the modules outlined in our previous section, employers need to ensure that their workplace experience platform offers the following functionalities and features:

- » **Administration:** An administrative interface allows employers to create targeted programs, without assistance or custom coding. It should include everything that companies need to create, promote, get registrants for, and measure the success of their programs. Additionally, an Audience feature — like the one in the HqO platform — can allow you to target the right groups of people by department or interest group.
- » **Analytics:** To keep on top of office activity on an ongoing basis, employers need access to analytics. This will provide insights so that companies can optimize their operating and real estate investments, which is particularly important in today's rapidly changing environment.
- » **Marketplace of Pre-Built Integrations:** Being able to leverage a technology marketplace with pre-built integrations enables employers to use the technology investments they've already made, while also discovering new best-fit options for their workplaces. The Marketplace should also include service providers who can provide custom onsite and virtual programming and fitness options.
- » **General Platform Services:** Additionally, every platform should offer security and scalability to grow alongside employers' businesses. For example, the HqO platform is ISO, SOC-2, GDPR, and PIPEDA compliant — meaning we take security measures seriously and will make sure that all company information is safe and secure.
- » **Workplace Experience Programming:** A workplace experience strategy should also incorporate ongoing programming such as events and classes that build connections between employees — both digitally and in person. These programs also provide an additional incentive for employees to use the app on an ongoing basis.



# Choosing the Right Workplace Experience Technology

*"We really wanted to maintain that 'we' feeling throughout the entire organization and we needed a way to share – both our successes and personalities. This does not always come naturally in our line of work and HqO makes that really easy."*

— Kitty Schuurbiens,  
HR Manager at BESIX Netherlands

Workplace experience technology is a smart investment that has the potential to net serious financial benefits for employers. However, it's not enough to simply invest in workplace experience technology — companies need to make sure that they're making the right investments in order to maximize their return.

In the current economic climate, companies need a state-of-the-art workplace experience platform that can offer best-in-class integrations, smooth mobile access, and world-class programming to its customers.

In order to be effective, a workplace experience platform also needs to address all of the necessary product modules, ensuring that employers are able to optimize spend on workplace experience, while simultaneously attracting and retaining the best available talent. In the age of hybrid work, it's important for employers to support the needs of their employees. Strong workplace experience technology helps companies keep their workers safe, connected, and satisfied during a turbulent period in the market.

The [HqO Workplace Experience Platform](#) is a prime example of this, offering both broad strokes in the form of intuitive overviews and fine detail with granular control over a variety of office functions and features. It serves as a digital backbone for offices of the future, which will see — and are already seeing — employees working how, when, and where they like.

Ready to get started? [Schedule an HqO demo](#) today to see our workplace experience solutions in action.



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# About HqO

HqO is transforming how people connect with each other and the places they work. The HqO Workplace Experience Platform makes it easy for companies and commercial property teams to create modern workplaces through world-class amenities and services that allow people to thrive and produce the best results. Active in over 250 million square feet in 25 countries, 57% of the Fortune 100 rely on HqO to enhance their workplace experiences, improve employee satisfaction, and drive operational excellence. For more information, visit <https://www.hqo.com/>.



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