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## **IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH WITH PETS AT WORK**

### **Annotation**

The article deals with the problem of the health and mood-boosting benefits of pets and the benefits of a pet-friendly workplace.

The authors of the article examined and analyzed the problem of mental health and its connection with pets and pet-friendly offices. Studies continue to show that allowing employees to bring their pets to work is good business because it's good for employee morale, and that's good for the bottom line. Many companies see the value in coworker bonding and create team building outings and exercises. People who are able to bond and get along are able to collaborate more effectively and essentially are more productive. Resilience is a major weapon in the fight against mental illness. One of the best ways to build resilience is to identify and support those things

in our lives that revitalize us. For many people, pets provide significant emotional support and joy. Smart business leaders would do well to be mindful of this resource and create pet-friendly workplaces for their employees who need it. Many people feel stress at work. Research shows that just patting a pet can ease stress and reduce your blood pressure. Even watching fish swimming in an aquarium reduces stress. It can also help you relax and practice mindfulness. Many people feel stress. Research shows that just patting a pet can ease stress and reduce your blood pressure. Even watching fish swimming in an aquarium reduces stress. It can also help you relax and practice mindfulness. Pet ownership can improve cardiovascular health, decrease stress, and lower blood pressure. Pets can also reduce loneliness, a critical factor in mental health, and many chronic health conditions. Animal-assisted interventions can play an especially important role for those facing severe mental and physical health conditions. Innovative companies such as Google, Sales force, Etsy, and Amazon playfully embrace the role of pets in the workplace. Dog-owning Googlers are called Dooglers, and the company's corporate code of conduct explicitly welcomes pets.

### **Анотація**

У статті розглядається проблема переваг домашніх тварин, що покращують стан здоров'я та настроїв, а також переваги робочого місця, придатного для домашніх тварин. Автори статті розглянули та проаналізували проблему психічного здоров'я та його зв'язок із домашніми тваринами в офісах, де дозволено перебувати з домашніми тваринами. Дослідження продовжують показувати, що дозволити працівникам приводити своїх домашніх улюбленців на роботу - це хороший бізнес, тому що це добре для морального стану співробітників, і це добре для продуктивності праці. Багато компаній бачать цінність у зв'язках між колегами та створюють командні тренування та вправи. Люди, які вміють спілкуватися і ладнати, здатні ефективніше співпрацювати і, по суті, більш продуктивні. Стійкість - головна зброя у боротьбі з психічними захворюваннями. Одним із найкращих способів формування стійкості є виявлення та підтримка тих речей у нашому житті, які «відроджують» нас. Для багатьох людей домашні тварини забезпечують значну емоційну підтримку та

радість. Розумним керівникам бізнесу було б добре пам'ятати про цей ресурс та створити робочі місця, придатні для домашніх тварин, для своїх співробітників, які цього потребують.

### **Аннотація**

В статті розглядається проблема пользи домашніх тварин для покращення здоров'я та настрою, а також переваги сприятливої атмосфери для здорового розвитку робочого місця. Авторами статті розглянуті та проаналізовані проблеми психічного здоров'я та її зв'язок з домашніми тваринами. Дослідження продовжують показувати, що дозволяти співробітникам брати з собою домашніх тварин на роботу - це хороший бізнес, тому що це добре для морального духу співробітників та позитивно впливає на роботу колективу. Багато компаній бачать цінність у об'єднанні співробітників та проводять спільні заходи та вправи. Люди, здатні об'єднуватися та працювати добре, можуть співпрацювати більш ефективно та, по суті, більш продуктивно. Стійкість - головне зброя в боротьбі з психічними захворюваннями. Один з найкращих способів покращити продуктивність - виявляти та підтримувати те, що в нашому житті, яке приносить користь. Багатьом людям домашні тварини приносять значущу емоційну підтримку та радість. Умним керівникам слід пам'ятати про цей ресурс та створювати зручні для домашніх тварин робочі місця для своїх співробітників, які в них потребують.

### ***Relevance of the research topic***

It is important and up-to-date for modern science to study the tendencies of development of the international programs “ take your pet with you to work”, the peculiarities of the influence of the pets on our organism during the working day. Many scientists have carried out the research of the problem. A recent [study](#) by Nationwide Pet Insurance in partnership with the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) reinforces VCU's findings: More than three times as many employees at pet-friendly workplaces report a positive working relationship with

their boss and coworkers -significantly more than those in non-pet-friendly environments.

### ***Setting the tasks***

To carry out profound scientific analysis of the problem of the improving mental health with pets at work. We are to analyze the benefits of a Pet-Friendly Workplaces, to understand the **creative pet-friendly policies for using the idea in Ukraine.**

### ***Research methods***

For the purpose of the study the following methods were applied: study and analysis of different international sources ,psychological, sociological, medical literature; analysis of statistics; study and analysis of the problem in Ukraine.

### ***Analysis of recent researches and publications***

[The International Journal of Workplace Health Management](#) conducted a study where they looked at the stress levels of employees, and whether or not the presence of a dog made an impact. They did this by looking at the cortisol levels in the morning versus at the end of the day. The people who spent the day with a dog present had significantly lower stress levels at the end of the day versus those who did not.

### ***Presenting the research statement***

#### **The Health and Mood-Boosting Benefits of Pets**

Pets, especially dogs and cats, can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, ease loneliness, encourage exercise and playfulness, and even improve your cardiovascular health. Caring for an animal can help children grow up more secure and active. Pets also provide valuable companionship for older adults.

Adding a pet to your life is a big commitment. By getting a pet, you agree to take care of another creature for the rest of their life. You have to consider the time and money you'll need to invest in pet care. On the flip side, having a pet has a lot of rewards, including mental health benefits.

People of all ages find that having a pet improves their mood, lowers their stress, and eases loneliness. The responsibilities of pet care aren't a chore — they're a

soothing routine that helps people focus and organize their days. Pets provide love and companionship to their owners in good times and bad. [1]

Every pet owner instinctively knows that pets make them feel good. Whether it's a dog greeting you at the door or a cat purring contentedly in your lap, your pet is there to offer unconditional love and acceptance. But there is real science behind the benefits of owning pets. The benefits of animal companions range from heart health to helping with stress and anxiety.

**Companionship.** Living with a pet means you have someone with you whenever you're at home. Pet owners say that they feel less alone compared to people who don't own pets. Pets can also help you connect with other people around you. For example, dog owners tend to meet their neighbors and connect with people in their community.

**Mood booster.** Just looking at your pet might make you happier. Studies show that [eye contact with your dog](#) can release a hormone that makes you feel happy. This hormone is called oxytocin and is sometimes called the love hormone. It provides an immediate mood booster.

**Healthy routines.** Having a pet means having to take care of their needs every day. Setting up a schedule for feeding, grooming, and exercising a pet is a good way to provide stability and predictability in your life. For people struggling with anxiety or depression, routines offer an important feeling of control. For children, taking care of a pet builds a sense of responsibility. This may help kids with all kinds of relationships in life.

**Stress reduction.** Most pet owners know that petting your dog or cat is a quick way to de-stress, but there is a scientific explanation for how pets help with anxiety. Being around pets can lower the stress hormone cortisol, which helps reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. [2]

Pets make excellent companions; they're also good for your physical and mental health. However, if you are struggling to look after yourself, [talk to your doctor](#) before you take on caring for a pet.

Pets reduce stress

Many people feel [stress](#). Research shows that just patting a pet can ease stress and [reduce your blood pressure](#). Even watching fish swimming in an aquarium reduces stress. It can also help you [relax](#) and practice mindfulness.

Pets provide companionship

Pets can be affectionate, accepting, loyal, honest and consistent. If you feel isolated with little support, a pet can help reduce your [loneliness](#).

Pets fulfill the human need to touch

Most people feel better when they have physical contact with others. Simply patting a pet can lower your [heart rate](#).

Pets require routine and organization

Most pets require a routine of feeding, cleaning and exercise. This can give you purpose and motivation which can help your [self-esteem](#), wellbeing and [mental health](#).

Pets provide a sense of purpose

A pet can provide you with a sense of purpose, which helps improve mental health conditions like [depression](#) and [anxiety](#). If you have a pet, you are never alone and you are also responsible for looking after them.

Pets increase your social interaction

Pets create opportunities for better social interaction, especially if you join an animal club or attend pet shows. Going to pet-friendly events, beaches or parks can also help increase your social network. You could make new friends just by taking your dog for a walk or waiting at the vet, due to the shared interest in your pets.

If you have a fear of social situations, or [social phobia](#), a pet can help with slowly introducing you to other people who also have pets and enhance your mental health.

Pets improve your fitness (dog owners)

If you own a dog, they need regular walks, and this [exercise](#) is good for you too. [Exercise](#), like walking, has many benefits for your mental health and wellbeing. You can also use the time walking your dog to improve your fitness and make the most of the outdoors to help you further develop mindfulness and relaxation.

Studies have shown that dog ownership is linked with a lower risk of death over the long term, which is possibly due to a reduction in the risk of [cardiovascular disease](#).

If you have a fear of social situations, or social phobia, a pet can help with slowly introducing you to other people who also have pets and enhance your mental health.

If you are considering getting a pet, [the](#) specialists suggest you should think carefully about whether you can look after a pet. [3]

### **Six Benefits of a Pet-Friendly Workplace**

- Lower Stress Levels.
- More Happiness, Improved Morale. ...
- Boosts Productivity. ...
- Encourages Employee Interaction and Collaboration. ...
- Improved Mental and Physical Health. ...
- Attracts Future Talent. [4]

Studies continue to show that allowing employees to bring their pets to work is good business because it's good for employee morale, and that's good for the bottom line.

And there's no better time to take note of that than today—the 21st annual Take Your Dog to Work Day (TYDTWD).

TYDTWD was created by [Pet Sitters International](#) in 1999 to celebrate what great companions dogs make, and to promote their adoption. TYDTWD is always celebrated on the Friday following Father's Day.

Although the idea of a special day for taking pets to work originated in 1999, corporate America didn't really start to catch on until the publication of a groundbreaking 2012 [study](#) conducted by researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

That study found that dogs in the workplace helped reduce stress in their owners and made work more satisfying for other employees with whom the dogs came in contact.

A recent [study](#) by Nationwide Pet Insurance in partnership with the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) reinforces VCU’s findings: More than three times as many employees at pet-friendly workplaces report a positive working relationship with their boss and coworkers—significantly more than those in non-pet-friendly environments.

The Nationwide study also shows that pet-friendly companies are more successful at attracting and retaining employees, especially millennials.

Compared to their baby boomer and Generation X counterparts, millennials are far more likely to value a pet-friendly work environment.

More significantly, these employees are more likely to stay with a company long term.

In fact, the Nationwide study found that 90% of employees in pet-friendly workplaces feel highly connected to their company’s mission, are fully engaged with their work, and are willing to recommend their employer to others. In contrast, less than 65% of employees in non-pet-friendly workplaces made the same claims.

(The study defines a pet-friendly workplace as one that allows pets in the workplace—regularly or occasionally—and/or offers a pet-friendly employee benefit, such as pet health insurance.)

Companies interested in reaping the benefits of creating a pet-friendly workplace can find helpful tips and tools by checking out the latest episode of *The Woofice*, a pet-centric parody of hit sitcom *The Office*.

Released by Zoetis Petcare and HABRI as part of their [Pet Effect Campaign](#), *The Woofice* details research supporting the benefits of a pet-friendly workplace and offers practical tools for employers interested in creating one.

“With millennial pet owners driving demand for more pet-friendly offices, *The Woofice* is incredibly timely,” says Steven Feldman, HABRI executive director. “It is HABRI’s genuine hope [that] *The Woofice* videos and campaign content catch on and inspire people to take steps to create pet-friendly workplaces so the benefits of strong and healthy human-animal bonds can not only be experienced at home but also every weekday from 9 to 5.”



But if you're at an animal hospital, you already know all about the benefits of a pet-friendly workplace. [5]

Pet-Friendly Workplaces Are a Win-Win For Employee Wellbeing And For Business

Resilience is a major weapon in the fight against mental illness. One of the best ways to build resilience is to identify and support those things in our lives that revitalize us. For many people, pets provide significant emotional support and joy. Smart business leaders would do well to be mindful of this resource and create pet-friendly workplaces for their employees who need it.

Just in time for Mental Health Awareness Month, Mental Health America provides a helpful [guide](#) to the many benefits of pet companionship. Pet ownership can improve cardiovascular health, decrease stress, and lower blood pressure. Pets can also reduce loneliness, a critical factor in mental health, and many chronic health conditions. Animal-assisted interventions can play an especially important role for those facing severe mental and physical health conditions.

### **Benefits of pets in the workplace**

Although hard research into the benefits of pets in the workplace is limited, the studies that have been done show promising results.

A [study](#) by Virginia Commonwealth University found the presence of pets to be a significant stress buffer for their owners. The researchers found the benefits may extend to co-workers as well, who reported enjoying brief interactions with the pets and sometimes even asked to take them for a walk.

The Human Animal Bond Research Institute has studied the effect of dog presence on group problem-solving. Their [research](#) indicates improved cohesion, trust, and cooperation in groups with a dog. They have also conducted a nationwide survey showing greater employee engagement and retention in pet-friendly workplaces.

Finally, the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction is a [collaboration](#) between the nursing and veterinary schools at the University of Missouri. Their studies of the benefits of pet companionship for weight loss, for

treating veterans with PTSD, and for alleviating anxiety in those with autism may translate into the workplace as well.

Overall, workplaces that adopt a pet-friendly policy experience the benefit of attracting and retaining happier and healthier employees.

### **The logistics of pets on the job**

According to the Society of Human Resource Management, only seven percent of employers now allow pets in the workplace. While this is up from five percent a few years ago, it indicates that we have a ways to go in making the workplace pet-friendly.

Doing so requires careful [planning](#) and consideration. It is important, first of all, to get consent and buy-in from the whole team. Not everyone loves pets, and some may have allergies. However, having designated pet-free zones may be one way to accommodate both groups.

Appointed pet-friendly days can clarify expectations about when pets are and are not allowed on the job. A select pet committee can settle any disputes that may arise, and can also share the benefits of pets in the workplace. Finally, be sure to pet-proof the workplace to ensure that our furry friends are safe at work.

### **Creative pet-friendly policies**

Even if it is not feasible to welcome pets into your workplace, you can demonstrate support for pet-owning employees and build community and engagement with these alternative policies: host a picnic or happy hour at a dog park; sponsor a pet photo contest with pet-related prizes; organize a volunteer program at an animal-focused charity; provide a discount for pet insurance; offer "pawternity" time for those with new pets, and bereavement time for those saying goodbye to old pets.

Innovative companies such as Google, Sales force, Etsy, and Amazon playfully embrace the role of pets in the workplace. Dog-owning Googlers are called Dooglers, and the company's corporate code of conduct explicitly welcomes pets. "Google's affection for our canine friends is an integral facet of our corporate culture," the policy states.

Smart business leaders will see a pet-friendly policy as yet another opportunity to create a workplace and a culture that cares for and supports the whole employee. Holistically-minded and compassionate companies will not only boast better mental health—they will be magnets for the most loyal and innovative talent.

#### Top 4 Benefits of Pets in the Workplace

Are you trying to convince your place of work to go pet friendly? A 2015 [Society for Human Resource Management](#) survey found 8 percent of American workplaces allow employees to bring their furry loved ones to work, up from 5 percent in 2013.

It may seem like having your pet around is just going to be fun and games, but with the right considerations, more and more companies may want to consider the benefits.

#### **1. Stress Reducers**

Do you ever come home after a long, stressful day and pet your dog or cat? Just feeling their fur, having their presence close to you, you feel a sense of calm and relief. Who knows if anyone can explain exactly how this phenomenon works, but scientific studies back up the feeling that we experience.

[The International Journal of Workplace Health Management](#) conducted a study where they looked at the stress levels of employees, and whether or not the presence of a dog made an impact. They did this by looking at the cortisol levels in the morning versus at the end of the day. The people who spent the day with a dog present had significantly lower stress levels at the end of the day versus those who did not.

#### **2. Employee Retention**

Keeping your staff happy, and the overall moral high, is not always the easiest task to accomplish. When it comes to the overall success of an organization, retaining good employees is an important part of the formula. According to [Fortune.com](#), 53% of people working in a non-pet friendly workplace would consider staying with the company if they allowed them to bring their pet to work.

#### **3. Teamwork Makes the Dream Work**

Many companies see the value in coworker bonding and create team building outings and exercises. People who are able to bond and get along are able to collaborate more effectively and essentially are more productive.

An experiment conducted at the [Central Michigan University](#) looked at if the simple presence of a canine in the workplace would make people collaborate more effectively. They found that “those who had had a dog to slobber and pounce on them ranked their team-mates more highly on measures of trust, team cohesion and intimacy than those who had not.”

#### **4. Increased Productivity**

Imagine what a difference a walk after lunch would do. Instead of having the post lunch time crash, a quick walk with a dog outside in the fresh air, could give employees a boost of energy needed to get through the work day.

One study found that people who had their dog with them at work did not have anxiety about rushing home after work to take care of them. Therefore, they were able to put in longer work days. They also found that pet friendly companies also had less people call out for the day versus those who could not bring their pet to work.

#### **Things to Consider Before You Become a Pet-Friendly Business**

- **Allergies:** You want to be respectful of employees who do not care to be around pets, or may have allergies. If possible, these employees should have a pet free space to work in.
- **Space:** Will the work space allotted to employees be conducive to bringing a pet? Some businesses have set up cubicles with special offerings such as doggie gates.
- **Vaccinations and Flea Medication:** The last thing you want on your hands are pets getting sick or flea infested from coming to the office! It’s important to have a system in place to check the medical records of pets that are coming into the shared work space.

June 26 - World Day "Take a dog to work". Ukraine traditionally joins the action. The founders of this initiative in Ukraine, Kormotech and the premium food brand CLUB 4 LAPY, this year launched a social campaign calling on

Ukrainian employers to become dog-friendly. The Paws in the Office project helps Ukrainian companies make their dog-friendly offices as part of a corporate culture on an ongoing basis.

- Due to the epidemic, the organizers did not pre-register participants. Therefore, under quarantine, the event takes place in the format of an online flash mob.
- Ukrainians in different cities went to work with their pets. The participants of the action post photos with four-legged friends at workplaces on Facebook and Instagram with the hashtags #lapivofisi and # united by love.
- "Our company participates every year. This is one of the favorite events of employees. If it weren't for the quarantine, there would be about ten dogs in our office today. Due to the epidemic, most of the employees went to work from home, and even under such conditions, on this day in the office with us two dogs - Fluffy and Beagle Budyak. Everyone has a great time. There is a friendly and productive atmosphere. If the office is dog-friendly, it will definitely be great for people here as well," says Yana from the Lviv IT company Symphony Solutions.
- Ukrainians first came to work with dogs in 2013 in Lviv. And in 2019, 550 companies from 90 cities of Ukraine joined the initiative.
- "Thanks to pets, we are all united by love. These are our companions. Therefore, in today's world, a dog in the office is not only natural but also useful. Researchers have shown that this has a positive effect on the working atmosphere and health of workers.

Global companies are making dog-friendly offices part of their corporate culture. The tradition of hiring pets and thus making dog-friendly offices brings us closer to the best animal husbandry practices in the civilized world. From our experience, we are happy to help everyone turn their offices into dog-friendly ones, says Kateryna Kovalyuk from Kormotech, the founder of the Take a Dog to Work campaign in Ukraine. [6]

## ***Conclusion***

Pets, especially dogs and cats, can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, ease loneliness, encourage exercise and playfulness, and even improve your cardiovascular health.

The problem of the health and mood-boosting benefits of pets and the benefits of a pet-friendly workplace was analyzed and observed in this article. The authors of the article examined and analyzed the problem of mental health and its connection with pets and pet-friendly offices. Studies showed that allowing employees to bring their pets to work is good business because it's good for employee morale, and that's good for the bottom line. The Nationwide study also shows that pet-friendly companies are more successful at attracting and retaining employees, especially millennials.

Compared to their baby boomer and Generation X counterparts, millennials are far more likely to value a pet-friendly work environment. More significantly, these employees are more likely to stay with a company long term.

In fact, the Nationwide study found that 90% of employees in pet-friendly workplaces feel highly connected to their company's mission, are fully engaged with their work, and are willing to recommend their employer to others. In contrast, less than 65% of employees in non-pet-friendly workplaces made the same claims.

The study defines a pet-friendly workplace as one that allows pets in the workplace—regularly or occasionally—and/or offers a pet-friendly employee benefit, such as pet health insurance.

## ***Висновок:***

Домашні улюбленці, особливо собаки та коти, можуть знижувати рівень стресу, тривоги, та депресії, полегшувати відчуття самотності, спонукати до фізичної активності та гри, та, навіть покращувати здоров'я вашої серцево-судинної системи.

У даній статті авторами було проаналізовано та розглянуто проблему користі домашніх тварин для поліпшення настрою та здоров'я, а також переваг робочого місця, придатного для домашніх тварин. Автори статті розглянули та проаналізували проблему психічного здоров'я та його зв'язок з домашніми

тваринами та офісами, де дозволено перебувати з домашніми тваринами. Дослідження показали, що дозволити працівникам брати з собою домашніх улюбленців - це хороший бізнес, оскільки це добре для морального стану співробітників, а це добре для підсумків роботи. Загальнонаціональне дослідження також показує, що компанії, що працюють із домашніми тваринами, більш успішно залучають та утримують працівників, особливо нове покоління.

Порівняно з їхніми колегами того ж покоління X, набагато частіше цінують робоче середовище, придатне для домашніх тварин.

Що ще більш важливо, ці співробітники, швидше за все, залишаться в компанії на тривалий термін.

Фактично, загальнонаціональне дослідження показало, що 90% працівників на робочих місцях, де дозволено перебувати з домашніми тваринами, відчують сильний зв'язок з місією своєї компанії, повністю зайняті своєю роботою і готові рекомендувати свого роботодавця іншим. На відміну від цього, менш ніж 65% працівників на робочих місцях, не пристосованих до домашніх тварин, висловили ті ж претензії.

Дослідження визначає робоче місце, де дозволено перебувати з домашніми тваринами, як таке, що дозволяє домашнім тваринам перебувати на робочому місці-регулярно або час від часу-та/або пропонує допомогу працівникам, що мають домашніх тварин, наприклад, медичне страхування домашніх тварин.

### **Выводы:**

Домашние животные, особенно собаки и кошки, могут снижать уровень стресса, тревоги, и депрессии облегчать чувство одиночества, побуждать к физической активности и игре, и даже улучшать здоровье вашей сердечно-сосудистой системы.

В данной статье авторами были проанализированы и рассмотрены проблему пользы домашних животных для улучшения настроения и здоровья, а также преимуществ рабочего места, пригодного для домашних животных. Авторы статьи рассмотрели и проанализировали проблему психического здоровья и его

связь с домашними животными в офисах, где разрешено находиться с домашними животными. Исследования показали, что разрешение работникам брать с собой домашних любимцев -это хороший бизнес, поскольку это хорошо для морального состояния сотрудников, хорошо для продуктивности труда. Общенациональное исследование также показывает, что компании, работающие с домашними животными, более успешно привлекают и удерживают работников, особенно новое поколение. По сравнению с их коллегами того же поколения X, гораздо чаще ценят рабочую среду, пригодную для домашних животных.

Что еще более важно, эти сотрудники, скорее всего, останутся в компании на длительный срок.

Фактически, общенациональное исследование показало, что 90% работников на рабочих местах, где разрешено находиться с домашними животными, чувствуют сильную связь с миссией своей компании, полностью заняты своей работой и готовы рекомендовать своего работодателя другим. В отличие от этого, менее чем 65% работников на рабочих местах, не приспособленных к домашним животным, выразили те же претензии.

Исследование определяет рабочее место, где разрешено находиться с домашними животными, как такое, что позволяет домашним животным находиться на рабочем месте-регулярно или время от времени-и / или предлагает помощь работникам, имеющим домашних животных, например, медицинское страхование домашних животных.

**Keywords:** Pet-Friendly workplace, **pet-friendly policies**, stress, mental health, emotional support, the benefits, increased productivity, cardiovascular health

**Ключові слова:** робоче місце, облаштоване для тварин, політика щодо тварин на робочому місці, стрес, психічне здоров'я, емоційна підтримка, переваги, збільшена продуктивність праці, здоров'я серцево-судинної системи.

**Ключевые слова:** рабочее место пригодное для животных, политика, касающаяся животных на рабочем месте, стресс, психическое здоровье,



эмоциональная поддержка, преимущества, увеличение продуктивности труда, здоровье сердечно-сосудистой системы.

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