EXPERIENCE AND TRADITIONALISM IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze the impacts of communication management on project (administration) from the point of view of PMI certified members in Brazil.

Theoretical framework: The literature review addressed the fundamentals of communication, determining factors for effective communication, human and organizational factors and communication management in projects.

Method: As a methodology, an exploratory, descriptive, bibliographic and field study was used. For data collection, an online semi-structured questionnaire was made available to Brazilian members affiliated with PMI.

Results and conclusion: The project manager's ability to manage communications is crucial to project performance. Effective communication management ensures that the right information is accurately delivered to stakeholders, regardless of the tool used.

Research implications: The research makes a contribution, and it is still effective, the need for professionals specialized in social communication to work in project management.

Originality/value: The results obtained in this study are original and relevant to communication management in project management.

Keywords: PMO, Management, Project, Communication.

RESUMO

Objetivos: O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar os impactos da gestão da comunicação no gerenciamento de projetos de acordo com a visão dos membros certificados pelo PMI no Brasil.

Referencial Teórico: A revisão bibliográfica abordou os fundamentos da comunicação, fatores determinantes para uma comunicação eficaz, fatores humanos e organizacionais e o gerenciamento das comunicações em projetos.

Método: Como metodologia foi utilizado um estudo exploratório, descritivo, bibliográfico e de campo. Para o levantamento de dados foi disponibilizado um questionário on-line, semiestruturado, para membros brasileiros filiados ao PMI.

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Experience and Traditionalism in Effective Communication Management

Resultados e conclusão: A habilidade do gerente de projetos em administrar as comunicações é crucial no desempenho do projeto. A gestão da comunicação eficaz garante que as informações corretas sejam entregues com exatidão às partes interessadas, independente da ferramenta utilizada.

Implicações da pesquisa: A pesquisa traz uma contribuição, e ainda efetiva a necessidade da atuação de profissionais especializados em comunicação social na gestão de projetos.

Originalidade/Valor: Os resultados obtidos no presente estudo são originais e relevantes para a gestão da comunicação no gerenciamento de projetos.

Palavras-chave: PMO, Gestão, Projeto, Comunicação.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges in managing a project is the cooperation of companies from different segments. Because it covers many areas from different organizational units, the managers' decisions directly affect the success of the project. With so many professionals involved, the information flow is also high. This is a key element in the project manager's role: communication. Organizations with effective and efficient communication processes are more likely to be compliant with scope, have satisfactory quality standards, and deliver business benefits; and no matter how data is exchanged, effective communication is the foundation of any project.

Communication tools are very important in themselves, although they are only means to an end: the success of the project. And with the spread of the Internet, most tools are available to companies of all sizes at a low cost. Tactical and strategic level teams can use the software without problems, and no special training is required. However, the biggest hurdle is managing all the tools and media for the success of the project.

Most project problems stem from communication failures, and there is a strong correlation between project performance and the project manager's ability to manage communication (Fernandez, 2018). Certo (2017) emphasizes the importance of communication in projects, especially those that are large and complex. He believes that during projects, companies should transition from using communication processes to using communication resources.

Communication studies focus on information dissemination, selection, efficiency of media and genres. There is a degree of confusion about the difference between physical means of communication (media) and typical communication behaviors (types). Communication types are defined as typical communication actions invoked in response to recurring situations, such as memos, meetings, or performance reports, which can be physically created, transmitted, and stored in a variety of media.

According to Certo (2017), regarding the project communication process, an important issue is the quality of the reports, especially regarding the communication links between team members, which are the main sources of status information for project managers. The author argues that there is a link between the quality of reporting and the outcome of the project.

One has that the project committee will report success to top management, even if the system does not meet the user's needs and does not achieve the project objectives. Jamali et al. (2016) point out that project reports should be documented and disseminated; which include
project status, problem logs, closeout reports, and results from other project management knowledge areas, lessons learned, and best practices.

To mitigate the detrimental impact of incorrect reporting, Certo (2017) recommends that program directors establish a trust-based communication environment with multiple sources of status information and regularly audit the environment to identify potential problems. Since ancient times, information and communication have been the ingredients of victory. Today, victory means success and profit.

In organizational environments, communication barriers can be easily detected when problems of information concentration and problems associated with questionable interpretations are apparent. Such obstacles are difficult to overcome, since even the smallest noises from malicious employees can affect power in the workplace. Communication skills go beyond the ability to encode, transmit, and decode information; and are necessary but not sufficient prerequisites for effective project communication (PMI, 2014). The sender and receiver must also be imbued with a shared feeling, as mutual understanding does not always happen.

The lack of effectiveness in the communication process may be a result of communication barriers that arise in everyday organizational life; as communication encompasses personal skills and relies on the personal networks of those involved (Kang & Sung, 2017).

As digital communications become more dominant in organizations, face-to-face interactions are increasingly reduced, which affects the development of trusting relationships at work. Several studies have shown that an environment of trust is fundamental to communication (PMI, 2014).

When trust is lacking, people focus more on their assumptions and fears, which creates a lot of noise. On the other hand, when there is trust, people seek help, talk openly, take risks, take on new challenges, and conduct business with less anxiety and stress. An environment of trust is supported by at least two basic principles - encouragement (encouraging others to express their ideas) and respect (listening to others effectively) - which are essential if a solid foundation for communication is to be built.

To create an environment of trust, Kang & Sung (2017) emphasize the importance of five activities that engage people and ensure a shared understanding of ideas, actions, and outcomes. These activities are sharing thoughts and feelings, making commitments that can be kept, admitting mistakes, asking for and receiving feedback, and identifying and testing hypotheses. The systematic use of these techniques in an organization encourages their dissemination among employees.

During project execution, participants send and receive messages, and it is critical that all team members understand how communication affects the project. For the sender, the message should be as understandable, clear, and objective as possible, and the sender needs to be cautious about the recipient's lack of relevant knowledge (Kang & Sung, 2017). Information generated and received during project development should be identified, managed, and distributed by the project manager. Managers must muster a range of skills and methods to keep the team together, solid, and establish good communication.

Communication within an organization and the dissemination of interdisciplinary resources in the academic field of social communication and its specific techniques are necessary for project success. Thus, there is room for the performance of professionals specialized in social communication in project management (such as journalists, public relations, advertising and marketing professionals, etc.).

This study aims to analyze the impacts of communication management in project management according to the view of PMI certified members in Brazil. As for the objectives, this study was exploratory, since it sought to broaden the knowledge about the theme, and
descriptive, since it was useful to identify, report and compare the effectiveness of communication management in projects. The study is classified as bibliographical as to the procedures for the development of theoretical foundations and, for the field study, a questionnaire was provided to the Brazilian members certified by PMI.

We sought to answer the following question-problem: What is the best communications management model in project management for companies, according to the point of view of PMI certified managers in Brazil? To this end, we also identified the tools used by managers for project communication management, the processes or tools that enable greater effectiveness in the communication process, the factors that interfere in the communication process, and how the process can be improved aiming at the fulfillment of the project’s deadline, cost and scope.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Project management gained momentum due to the high level of competitiveness of industry in the 1940s-80s, this time experiencing a traditional bureaucratic structure that could not cope with rapid market changes, constant changes inside and outside the project management organization that required agile responses (Certo, 2017).

Managing a project is applying the skills, knowledge, tools, and techniques assigned to it. According to PMI (2017), this application is achieved through the integration of management processes that contain a set of tools and techniques that people use to describe, organize, and monitor the progress of project activities, that is, through communication, with project managers being responsible. Based on this integration, the Project Management Institute presents the project’s life cycle, as shown in Figure 1.

As per PMI’s project management guide (2017), to be successful, a project must follow a series of activities known as project management process. Organizations should adopt different strategies when developing the life cycle of a project, depending on its specific characteristics. In a project overview, the life cycle presents progressive phases from inception to completion.

Project management consists of a series of activities that must be practiced and carried out using the tools and knowledge contained in the PMBOK. Therefore, 49 processes are presented, grouped into 10 knowledge areas, describing the main aspects involved in projects and their management for effective project management.
Vargas (2018) presents the decomposition of the PMBOK guide through mind maps, because these maps start with a central idea, where the branches of the map symbolize the unfolding of the main idea, which is based on a visual mental model of how the brain works and seeks visual and tactile stimuli, to increase creativity and reduce the time to develop and understand ideas.

For Certo (2017), the mind maps or Mind Map were created by the Englishman Tony Buzan in the late 60's, through the analysis of students who used colors, illustrations, symbols and arrows and presented better memory and creativity. Usually, maps are used in the teaching area, and now this tool is being used by managers in the project management area. Figure 2 highlights a mind map for the ten knowledge areas of project management.

![Mind Map of the ten knowledge areas](image)

**Figure 2:** Mind map of the ten knowledge areas  
**Source:** Vargas (2018, p. 19).

Communication is an essential factor of organizational relationships through which key information in working relationships is established, maintained, and facilitated. Thus, communicative behavior develops between more complex social agents - publics, institutions, governments, departments (El Yamami *et al.*, 2018). Communication promotes harmony between top management and employees, as it seeks to articulate different interests, expectations, and needs, facilitating talent development and production optimization. It has that, currently, studying and understanding communication is the key to understanding organizations.

The trend of interim management has increased the need for each employee to take more responsibility for their own actions, from quality and efficiency to the organization's brand. For Hinostroza *et al.* (2019), in addition, social development has produced organizations characterized as uncontrollable, chaotic, flexible, and disorganized. In these organizations, understood as post-bureaucratic and knowledge-intensive, each employee is expected to actively contribute to the organization's processes. As a result, communication is increasingly seen as a core competency for all members of an organization (Yunofri & Kurniawan, 2018).

Furthermore, several researchers (Valdes *et al.*, 2022; Yap & Skitmore, 2020; Yunofri & Kurniawan, 2018; Muszynska, 2015) have highlighted the fact that employee communication remains an understudied aspect of strategic communication in organizations; yet there is no shortage of arguments as to why employee communication is so important.

### 2.1 Project Management and Communication

For Lopes *et al.* (2017), project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques, to meet your requirements and the customer's requirements; to develop and obtain products. It is accomplished through processes such as: Initiation, Planning, Execution, Control, and Closure. Effective communication builds a bridge between stakeholders, who may be from different cultural and organizational backgrounds, regardless
of experience levels and perspectives and interests that may affect or influence the execution or results of the project.

The importance of good communication has become key to the success of projects and business organizations. By identifying important procedures that should be considered in the management of communication between project participants, the analysis of the impact of communication management allows to optimize its development, because all information transfer that is reflected in the execution in cost, quality and time must be successful in the work (Opitz et al., 2018).

2.2 Communication as a Motivator for Relationships in Organizations

In an organization, it is important to have a democratic organizational climate, prosperity, peace, harmony, respect between top management and other employees. Work recognition and motivated employees is also essential (Opitz et al., 2018).

According to Fernandes et al. (2019), another way to achieve growth and success in an organization is to channel communication at all levels for better performance and more job satisfaction, allowing individuals to understand their work and be more aware of what they do.

Organizational communication is the flow of internal communication (up, down, and horizontal) that occurs within an organization to build relationships among the individuals who make up its membership (Opitz et al., 2018). Information as an essential resource for the development of interpersonal relationships must be timely, as it is an essential tool for obtaining synergies, for participants of different organizational processes, for the dissemination of policies, cultural, economic, social and academic development of companies, which can enrich the quality of work.

In this line of thought, communication is a management tool, since it reduces future uncertainty and develops perceptions about the individual's social behavior. When communication is flowing, the exchange process is assigned, roles are delegated, and commitments are made at all levels. The research reinforces this approach by seeing communication as an exchange - of information, feelings, or knowledge; seeking to enable knowledge and transformation that grows with everyone involved. In other words, communication is a decisive force in the business transformation process (Jamali et al., 2016).

It can be inferred that communication within an organization is a working relationship that develops in an environment of sincerity, listening to the other and dissemination of information, for which corporate communication must be dynamic, planned and specific, becoming a tool of collaborative guidance or guidance based on constant feedback.

2.3 Managing Project Communications

Communication can be understood as the nervous system of a company. Organizations must control and direct communication, as it is a vital factor in achieving established goals. Therefore, communications management defines everything related to communication in an organization by directing goals, strategies, leading to the definition of the company's global policies. In turn, Fernandes et al. (2019) state that communications in an organization is a condition for the proclamation and implementation of communication techniques that allow to truly broaden the concept of audience, audience, and not just information receiver, but also generates visions and activities that favor organization to meet its goals.

Project communications management includes the processes needed to ensure that information is generated, collected, distributed, stored, retrieved, and finally disposed of in an appropriate and timely manner. Project managers spend most of their time communicating with team members and other stakeholders, whether they are internal or external to the project.
Effective communication builds a bridge between the different parties involved in a project, connecting different cultural and organizational environments, different levels of experience, and different perspectives and interests in project execution or outcomes, according to Sharkov (2017).

Responsibilities and authorities should be defined at all levels and phases of the project. It is important to establish procedures through internal audit during its execution phase to ensure the correct functioning of the management plan. After doing the same, a corresponding analysis should be conducted to determine the weaknesses and strengths detected (Garcia et al., 2023). The management system should ensure the coordination of all project activities to facilitate the proper preparation of documents, as well as the identification of documents, the approval, control, classification and archiving of the documents generated (Sharkov, 2017).

2.4 Determining Factors for Effective Communication

Certo (2017) argues that, on the one hand, communication is a key element of the functioning of an organization and, on the other hand, it is very important in the interaction with the external environment. It becomes an essential element of the internal functioning of companies as they integrate administrative functions. In short, communication can be understood as the relationship that occurs between two or more people inside and outside an organization, when information, feelings, and ideas are passed on to bring about some change. From this concept of communication, one must understand the important role it plays and how this process happens. The best way to do this is to represent it through a model that contains the elements that participate in communication.

So far, the communication process may seem simple, but it is not. In addition to noise, there are factors that can hinder and distort communication and inhibit successful communication, called communication barriers. Such barriers can occur in senders, information channels, and receivers (Lopes et al., 2017).

For Lopes et al. (2017), effective communication occurs when the sender achieves the result expected by the receiver. In it, his goal is to influence the receiver to obtain the influence he wants. On the other hand, good communication occurs when the receiver's understanding coincides with what the sender wishes to convey. In good communication, understanding is the goal. This is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective communication.

Despite the desire to communicate effectively, the elements of good communication are sometimes overlooked, resulting in numerous errors and misunderstandings. Analyzing the essential elements for good communication in management at all levels of the organization will help achieve the goal of effective communication: getting results through others. For Fernández (2018), effective communication is related to a type of intelligence: interpersonal communication, understood as the ability to make substantial distinctions in context. Knowing how to distinguish the different aspects involved in the exchange of information between people, and applying this knowledge in practice, means having more ability to persuade and influence others. Effective communication helps build deeper and deeper trust and understanding, and helps move beyond the constraints of the job.

Successful organizations recognize that excellence depends on a set of skills and values. Organizational units are kept small to create a sense of belonging and problem solving together. By balancing financial and non-financial factors, they provide a better understanding of company performance and help managers align all employees with key strategic goals (Fernandez, 2018).

It should be emphasized that true success can only be achieved when all members of the organization do their best to internalize and learn this ability to communicate and listen. That is why in every organization it is essential to establish a close relationship between theory and
practice, not only in the work environment, but also in individuals, in order to reduce problems and confrontations (Fernández, 2018).

In conclusion, based on the theories and cases analyzed, just as organizations highly value intellectual capacity, it is essential to train their members on important topics such as effective communication, since their company's competition will be considered one of the keys to organizational success (Lopes et al., 2017). Therefore, in addition to the theoretical review, this article exposes the fundamental role of managers and led, as well as the essential tools for effective communication used to achieve organizational success, so that the importance of the analyzed topics is understood.

3 METHOD

The objective of this research is to analyze the impacts of communication management on project management, addressing the fundamentals of communication, human and organizational factors, and the management of communications in projects. It was conducted a study classified as exploratory, due to the need of the theoretical foundation to expand the knowledge on the subject (Gil, 2018); and descriptive, due to the use of standardized techniques of data collection (Rudio, 2015).

As for the procedures, the research is classified as bibliographic, since all research must be based on bibliographic research (Gil, 2018); and field research; where an online, semi-structured questionnaire was made available to a universe consisting of 57 Brazilian members affiliated to PMI.

The sample selected is non-probabilistic, being that the selection was made by accessibility and typicality, since the elements researched are considered representative of the target population (Vergara, 1997).

The approach to the problem is classified as qualitative, as it does not require statistical methods and analysis and ascertains how people perceive ideas, experiences, thoughts, or events; and quantitative, based on numerical data, suitable for detecting patterns and correlations, making estimates, checking relationships, and extracting broad data from large groups (Gil, 2018).

After collecting the data coming from the theoretical research, the questionnaire was applied and the analysis and cross-checking of the collected data with the theoretical framework was performed. The data analysis used qualitative methods, since interpretations of information were made based on the answers given by the informants and the researched literature; and quantitative, since the answers were analyzed using graphs and percentages.

The validation of the research and acceptance of the results is essential and depends on the methodology used, which answers the problem and achieves the research objectives without the intervention of the researcher, in addition to suggesting guidelines on the procedures to be adopted and, for this, a formal procedure is required, carried out in a systematized way, employing peculiar techniques and appropriate methods (Rudio, 2015). The use of a specific method to organize the information acquired with the development of the research is essential to meet the purpose of the work and achieve what was planned (Aragão et al., 2022).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The sample public of the proposed study was concentrated in the South (55%) and Southeast (42%) regions of the country. Most of them were men, 65%, and were concentrated in the age bracket above 41 years old. It was also possible to observe, as to the degree, that 50% of the respondents are post-graduates and 27% are masters. In addition, 53% have more than
15 years of professional experience, and 42% have more than 10 years of experience in project management, as can be seen in Figure 3.

Management tools are important instruments to achieve effectiveness in project management. Figure 4 shows that, among the respondents, among the most used tools are the alignment meetings (16%), followed by sending e-mails (12%), communication technologies (11%) and recording the meetings in minutes (11%) - ensuring that what was agreed upon will be complied with throughout the project schedule. It is necessary to make sure that the message sent reaches the receiver with as little noise as possible, avoiding ambiguities in communication.

The communication strategies involve the definition of the information that will be communicated, the interval and frequency with which it will be distributed; the language that will be used; the person responsible; the time and budget available to manage the...
communications. These strategies vary according to their complexity, and the type and size of the team involved. As for the most effective tools presented in Figure 5, according to the respondents, there are alignment meetings (14%), project management information systems (12%), communication methods (11%) and stakeholder analysis (11%). When presenting other tools, they were cited as used and effective in managing project communication: *MS Teams* channels/groups, *workflow* and collaboration solutions 365, *Online* Interaction Tool, Team Management System, *WhatsApp* and phone calls, and the RACI Matrix.

![Figure 5: The most effective tools in project communication management](image)

**Source:** Authors.

It is noteworthy that it is also necessary to think about communication about the changes and impacts of the project on the organization, making it clear to all involved which benefits will be obtained with the outcome of the project. The communication methods - whether formal or informal, as pointed out by the respondents, are efficient means to ensure success.

As can be seen in Figure 6, for this group, meetings are still the most used; because they are seen as more efficient in managing communication in projects.

![Figure 6. The most used and most effective tools for project communication management](image)

**Source:** Authors.
In the communication process, there are barriers that prevent or hinder the clear reception of the message, presented in Figure 7. According to the respondents, communication noises (18%) and the project manager's leadership ability (18%) are the main factors that interfere in this process. Among the attributions of the project manager is the definition and execution of an action plan that is efficient, effective and efficient with regard to the generation, collection, disclosure, storage and distribution of project information. Other factors such as the team's communication skills (17%), their motivation and involvement (16%) and the availability of the interested parties (16%), mentioned by the respondents, are also related to the manager. Trust between people on the team and overlapping long, non-continuous projects / processes were also cited as other (1%) factors that interfere with the communication process.

![Figure 7. Factors that interfere in the communication process](source)

**Figure 7. Factors that interfere in the communication process**

**Source:** Authors.

About the possibilities of improvement in the communication management process, the respondents were approached about the following perspectives: meeting the deadline, *budget* and scope.

Conducting frequent alignment meetings (25%) and using more effective communication tools (25%) as interactive, active or passive channels are cited as improvements for meeting project deadlines by 50% of the respondents, as shown in Figure 8. The training of the team (19%) - responsible for the good performance in the stages of the projects, the use of communication technologies such as chatbot, applications, 360 content, pointed out by 14% of respondents and the involvement of the *sponsor* (14%), are also actions that lead to improvements in communication processes and consequent compliance with the schedule. It was also highlighted by others (3%), the creation of the *Mastermind* Consensus; the engagement of the team, working on Change Management, starting from the "why" to get to the "what, how, and when"; the correct identification of the media that will achieve the goal; the change in *Mindset*; and the sense of priority and engagement of those involved.
The achievement of cost improvement in the communication management process ensures elements that will support the management of communication with stakeholders. As can be seen in Figure 9, according to 30% of the respondents, the better alignment and definition of the scope with the customer/sponsor is the main responsible for meeting the budget - and subsequent improvement; 21% cited team integration, 21% team training, 15% mentioned the use of technology in the processes, and the reduction of meeting duration time as a way to maintain project costs was cited by 11% of the respondents. Other ways to improve project cost were also mentioned (2%), with waste elimination and productivity gain; detailed budget and team engagement.

About the processes that can be improved aiming the project scope, 24% of the respondents emphasize the better detailing of the scope for the team, and the construction and more detailed definition of the scope are treated as primordial, each item mentioned by 22% of the respondents, visualized on Image 10. These procedures have the advantage of providing solid guidelines and instructions to define the ways in which the scope will be managed throughout the work to be developed.
The project management software collaborates with the team management, helps in the organization of time and resource management, in the creation of reports on the performance of the business and employees, in monitoring the status and especially in the detection of failures. According to the respondents and, according to the profile already presented, it can be seen in Figure 11 that Excel (29%) and MS Project (25%) are the most used software. Trello (15%), Planner (12%) and Power BI (12%) were also tools indicated as important resources used in project management, as well as other software cited: Asana, Easy Canvas, ERP, GPAer, Mic, Runrun.it, State government's own system, Corporate Systems, Slack, Teamwork, Trace GP, Wbs and Xmind.

The results reported in the field research reaffirm the prominent role of communication management for project success. The tools and processes used by project managers vary according to their profile and, in essence, seek to overcome the challenges of communication barriers. In times of constant adaptation and learning, the interaction of stakeholders is necessary to achieve the goals set for the projects. Communication goes beyond all the project areas, interconnecting them, and when this does not occur, the project is exposed to failures and risks that can delay deliveries, affect the budget, and decrease the quality of the results.
5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Effective project management can help organizations and any individual achieve established goals, have a greater chance of success, respond to risks, manage change, solve problems, optimize the use of company resources, and deliver products or services on time in a timely, predictable manner that meets stakeholder expectations.

Most project problems arise from communication failures, and there is a strong correlation between project performance and the project manager's ability to manage communications.

In this study, it was evidenced that project managers use constant alignment meetings with the team, considered the most efficient resource in the management of communication in projects, with registration in minutes and issuance of reports.

In recent years, the world has adapted to a new reality in which the use of technology has become increasingly present. The work format has changed and gone beyond borders. This reality was no different in project management, the management tools have evolved; but they have not lost the essence of traditionalism. However, communication continues to be essential for the fulfillment of the requirements defined for the project.

Among the possible solutions to improve internal communication in Project Management are the establishment of a simple and concrete communication methodology between the involved departments; language determination, sharing of technical vocabulary; assignment of specific roles among those involved, for example, through a responsibility assignment matrix and incorporation of interlocutors among the different departments.

Research on experience and traditionalism in effective communication management has important limitations. Over-reliance on experience can lead to confirmation bias and resistance to change, restricting innovation. In addition, traditionalism can result in creative stagnation and lack of proper measurement of communication outcomes. It is recommended that future work focus on more innovative approaches, conduct comparative analyses between traditional and progressive organizations, emphasize impact evaluation, and track trends and innovations in the field, as this will enable a more comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of communication management.

One can conclude that effective communication management is one that ensures that the right information is delivered to stakeholders at the right time and efficiently, regardless of whether it is carried out through traditional tools or with the use of advanced software.

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