

• *Case Study* •

Integrate the Three Major Leadership Styles to Accompany the Industry Champion CEO

Innovation and Practice of the Industry Champion CEO Leadership Enhancement Coach Program

Haijiang Yin^{1,*}, Haoyu Wan²

¹ Shenzhen Haijiang Private Dong Technology Co., Ltd., Shenzhen 518052, China.

² Zhihui Future Information Technology Co., Ltd., China.

***Corresponding Author:** Haijiang Yin **Affiliation:** Shenzhen Haijiang Private Dong Technology Co., Ltd., Shenzhen, China.

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Abstract: This article explores the distinctive leadership attributes of industry champion CEOs and introduces an innovative coaching approach designed to enhance their leadership capabilities. Drawing on foundational leadership theories from Stephen Covey, Paul Hersey, and Kouzes & Posner, the study contextualizes leadership development within the unique demands of industry-leading enterprises. The author presents the Industry Champion CEO Leadership Enhancement Coach Program, rooted in the Organization Running Companion methodology, which integrates assessment tools and executive coaching practices. Through direct engagement with industry champion CEOs and aspirants, the program demonstrates significant efficacy in strengthening strategic leadership and execution. This article delineates the definition, core elements, and practical application of leadership coaching for industry champions, offering a replicable model for senior executive development in high-performance organizational contexts.

Keywords: Industry champion CEO; Leadership enhancement; Executive coaching;

1 Preface: Origin of the Industry Champion CEO Leadership Coach Program

Why do industry champion CEOs stand out in the practice of leadership among countless corporate

CEOs? What is the difference between the leadership of industry champion CEOs and CEOs of other companies? What are the key factors that affect the leadership of industry champion CEOs? This series of questions has sparked my curiosity

and motivation to research and share.

Industry champion enterprises are unique among the 160 million market entities in China, therefore, studying the leadership of industry champion CEOs is particularly meaningful.

When it comes to leadership research, from a global perspective, there are countless masters. According to the author's personal research perspective, the benchmark work for personal leadership research is "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by the master Stephen Covey, the benchmark work for leadership research of middle-level managers is "Situational Leadership" by Dr. Paul Hesse, and the best work for leadership research of senior managers is "Leadership: How to Achieve Excellence in Organizations" by Bosner&Kuzes.

These three leadership masters started their research on leadership from the perspective of objects and specific scenarios, proposing the application and successful modeling of leadership in different work, learning, and life scenarios of specific objects. As of now, research on leadership based on the three major objects has been ongoing for over thirty years and remains enduring. We pay tribute to our predecessors.

The author's research on the leadership of industry champion CEOs also starts from practice. Since the introduction of the concept of Organization Running Companion in 2016, I have interacted and learned from many industry champion CEOs and those who aspire to embark on the path of industry champions. Especially in the Organization Running Companion project, improving CEO leadership has

become the top priority. The effectiveness of using assessment and coaching methods to assist industry champion CEOs in enhancing their leadership is very significant.

The core content of this article starts from the definition of leadership of industry champion CEOs, to the elements of leadership of industry champion CEOs, and then to the practice of coaching projects to enhance leadership of industry champion CEOs. It provides a detailed description and sharing of the author's practice in the Organization Running Companion coaching project to enhance leadership of industry champion CEOs.

This article is a practical result of the leadership coaching program for industry champion CEOs, as well as a multidimensional study and validation of the unique charm of industry champion CEOs.

2 Overview: A Global Perspective on Leadership Development

In the process of global leadership research, there are still few leadership strategies targeting a specific group. Except for the part of Chinese imperial techniques that lean towards leadership, most leadership targets have universality, that is, the purpose of leadership research is universal, and everyone can learn and practice leadership.

Since the forty years of China's reform and opening up, when it comes to the proposal, theory, and practice of leadership, the Chinese business community has mainly focused on learning and borrowing from Western leadership. From a broader historical perspective, the brilliant Chinese civilization and the leadership research of ancient

philosophers are also worth exploring. Because the origin of leadership research in both the East and the West is how to lead people to complete challenging work or tasks.

There is not much literature on the leadership of industry champion CEOs, except for a brief description by renowned management guru Professor Herman Simon in his book “Invisible Champions”. Since 2014, the author has been engaged in private board entrepreneurship and has found that industry champion CEOs are the main group actively participating in private board entrepreneurship from the perspective of big data. They provide sample research and learning reflections for this study.

The topic of leadership is rich, full, and diverse in a global perspective, like the vast and profound ocean . Whether it comes from the brilliant traditional historical civilization of China or the magnificent development of modern industrial civilization in Western leadership research, it is worth learning and thinking about.

This is the core content that this chapter wants to express.

Today, an overview of leadership must start from a global perspective. Below, I will share with you the main achievements of my research on leadership.

Leadership masters have formed different leadership research and contributions based on their respective research interests and perspectives. In various theories and models of leadership research, the author has summarized the ability theory, trait theory, behavior theory, and influence theory, each

of which has its own representative masters.

The author will now answer three questions about leadership: why, what, and how. Everyone who studies leadership has their own research intentions and methods. The question I am thinking about when studying leadership is: why should there be leadership? Is it okay without leadership?

Firstly, let’s return to the origin and explain why. The birth of leadership is closely related to the sustainable development of human society today. In the process of human society’s development, it has always appeared in a social mode. When people appear in groups or teams, the presence of leadership directly determines the survival and development of the group or team. Groups and teams without leadership are unable to resist or control external environmental challenges, and on the other hand, they will form scattered sand and fall apart.

So, although there are different schools of thought among global leadership masters, the reason for leadership is consistent, that is, leadership is about solving the problem of combat effectiveness after group and team cohesion, so as to enable the survival of the fittest among groups and teams.

Secondly, let’s return to what leadership is. The author went through the entire process of searching for the definition of leadership, from professional orientation in 2007 to the field of leadership development. From the primitive theory of ability, it is believed that getting things done is leadership. Moving on to trait theory, Mark Swell believes that leadership is due to the charisma of the leader. There are also representatives of

leadership behavior theory, such as Kuzes&Bosner in their book “Leadership: How to Achieve Excellence in Organizations”, who believe that excellent leadership has five habitual behaviors: leading by example, sharing vision, challenging the status quo, inspiring others, and motivating people. Warren Bennis, a representative figure of the theory of influence, believes in his book “Becoming a Leader” that a leader is someone who can fully express themselves.

As for the author, I firmly believe that leaders must behave similarly in order for the group and team to “see” their actions, gain trust, and embark on the path of victory. So, in terms of the definition of leadership, I agree with the definition of two American leadership masters, Cousins and Bosna: “Leadership is the art of mobilizing people to work hard for a common vision.”

Finally, let’s return to how to do leadership. Leadership masters also express their own opinions on how to learn and practice leadership. The author continues to start from the theory of

behavior and adopts the views of Kuzes&Bosner, that is, leaders who have these five behaviors are excellent managers, as shown in Figure 1.

Of course, leadership from Eastern wisdom is also worth learning and researching. For example, Mr. Wang Yangming, the representative of the Three Saints, became a sage after achieving enlightenment in the Longchang. In his book “Dogma Reveals to All Life in the Longchang,” he wrote the eight character motto: “Be determined, diligent in learning, correct mistakes, and take responsibility for goodness,” which is concise and thought-provoking.

The core of “The Great Learning” also reflects the Eastern understanding of leadership: “The way of the great learning lies in clear virtue, being close to the people, and reaching the ultimate good. Knowing to stop leads to determination; determination leads to stillness; stillness leads to peace; peace leads to contemplation; contemplation leads to attainment. Things have their roots and endings, and things have their endings. Knowing the order of things is the closest way.”

After answering three questions about leadership, we propose a question: Why What How would the leadership of industry champion CEOs be? This is exactly what this article will practice, study, and share.



Figure 1: Five Behaviors of Excellent Managers

3 Special Leadership Target: Industry Champion CEO

The author mentioned that leadership with a global perspective generally leans towards leadership that everyone can learn, apply leadership, and

help individuals, teams, and organizations achieve their goals. However, there is still limited research on leadership for a specific group, especially for the group of CEOs in enterprises, which urgently needs to be improved.

The author's research on the leadership of industry champion CEOs was also accidental, not intentional. Since the establishment of Shenzhen Haijiang Private Board College by the author in 2014, the private board has been put into practice and operation. In 2016, it was found that most of the members who ultimately paid for the private board were CEOs who were industry champions or were on their way to becoming industry champions.

This arouses my curiosity, what are the differences between CEOs who lead companies to become industry champions and CEOs of other companies? What role does a CEO play for

an industry champion? Starting from a series of questions, conduct research on industry champion CEOs, including research on their leadership skills.

Starting from the theory of enterprise life cycle, the stages of enterprise development are divided into establishment period, growth period, maturity period, and decline period (transformation period). The requirements for a CEO are completely different at different stages of development, and it can be clearly stated that not every CEO of a company can be called a CEO.

Because the competency models of CEOs in different stages of development are different, if the CEO of a company does not have the competency model for that stage, the company cannot have sustainable development. So, what are the different requirements for CEOs in companies at different stages of development? Refer to Figure 2:



Figure 2: CEO Evolution Path

For example, the essential core competency for a CEO in the start-up phase is business thinking, the essential competency for a CEO in the growth phase is the full capability of the value chain, a CEO in the mature phase begins to intervene in industry integration, and a CEO in the decline phase (transformation phase) must be a leader in the industry.

What are the characteristics of the company where the industry champion CEO is located? What the author can confirm is that the annual revenue of physical enterprises is over 1 billion yuan, which belongs to the top of the industry and leads the development of other enterprises in the industry.

Through close communication and observation with industry champion CEOs, the author will find the following commonalities:

Firstly, it is intentional or unintentional mission driven. When starting the company, either it was interest driven and involved in the industry. Either it's the senior management experience that has been immersed in the industry for many years, actively discovering the mission, and then embarking on the path of industry champion.

Secondly, most of the backgrounds come from technical backgrounds. The leader's technological research and enthusiasm for the industry have become key elements on the path to becoming an industry champion, that is, the "fun" brought by technological research has become the biggest driving force for industry champion CEOs to face difficulties.

Once again, the learning ability is astonishing.

I have had close communication and interaction with no less than ten industry champion CEOs, and found that they are passionate and enthusiastic about new technologies, trends, and the future. Combined with IQ Online and mission driven, they have enabled industry champions to forge ahead in their ten-year journey of learning and never tire of it.

Finally, resilience, that is, strong resilience in adversity. Entrepreneurship is not easy, and the path to becoming an industry champion is even more difficult. The global big data on the survival rate of startups is 5 years, while the survival rate of Chinese startups is 2.5 years. The road to becoming an industry champion requires at least ten years of preparation, which requires CEOs to be resilient and stand out in their ability to lead their companies on the path to becoming industry champions.

Given the limited space, the author directly raises the core question of this article, which is how the leadership of industry champion CEOs is enhanced? How is it different from traditional leadership styles? What are some areas worth learning and emulating for the author? What is special about coaches in enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs?

4 Practice and Innovation: A Coaching Model Integrating Three Leadership Methods

Below are my best management practices for enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs. On the one hand, industry champion CEOs

are indeed a relatively special group with their own unique characteristics. On the other hand, coaching industry champion CEOs is indeed different, especially for accompanying running coaches.

The leadership enhancement of industry champion CEOs is distinguished from other leadership groups from the initial intention and motivation. The driving force of an industry champion CEO is mission driven, and in the early stages it is budding, a seed driven by an inexplicable and unknown mission. As the short video “Teacher Huang” once sang on social media, the CEO of an industry champion is “digging and digging in segmented industries, planting the seeds of mission, and blooming the flowers of an industry champion”.

Similarly, the industry champion CEO leadership coaching program does not exist in isolation. The author stands on the shoulders of their predecessors, bravely moving forward and daring to practice, which is the best practice. TA not only includes the essence of western leadership masters, but also the essence after the baptism of eastern civilization. It is also the innovation and action practice of the author to help enterprises embark on the road of industrial champion.

At present, the industry champion CEO leadership coaching program is still in its infancy after breaking ground. Although the framework, practice, and model have been formed, there are still many details worth the author and everyone’s joint efforts to improve.

Although I am already 52 years old, I am

still prepared to continue learning from the masters, deeply cultivating for thirty years, and unwaveringly completing the best practices of the industry champion CEO leadership coaching program. Its core is to integrate the three major global leadership models, form a coach run model for enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs, and assist in improving the leadership of industry champion CEOs. So, what are the three major leadership methods specifically?

Firstly, there is the Leading Leadership, which refers to the five behaviors of outstanding leaders by two leadership masters, Kuzes and Posner, as detailed in the previous section. From the author’s personal practice and ten years of teaching leadership, it can be seen that behavior drives individuals, teams, and organizations to achieve excellence, which is the essence of leadership, just like the subtitle of the book “Leadership: How to Achieve Excellence in Organizations” by the two masters.



Figure 3: Awakening Leadership Roulette

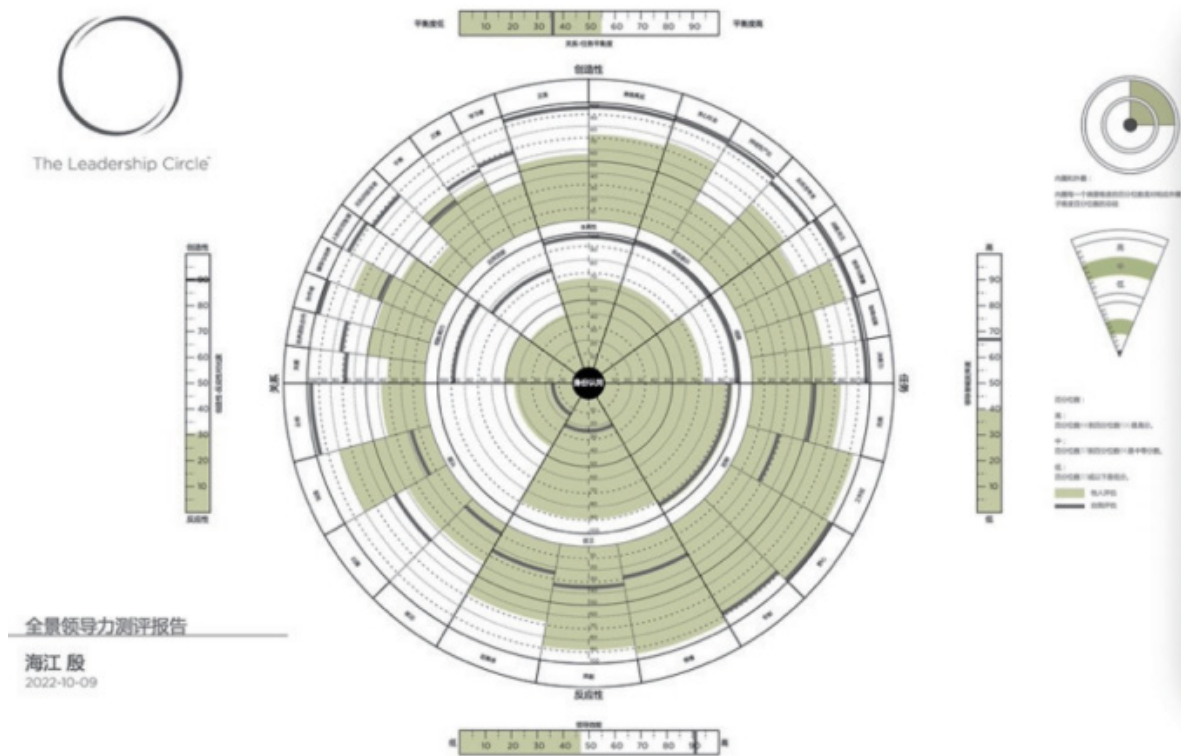


Figure 4: TLC panoramic leadership compass

Next is awakening leadership, which is John Mattoni’s awakening leadership model. The theory proposed by Professor Mattoni that the core drives the outer core is the origin of leadership, which is highly practical and practical. External behavior depends on internal factors, including mission, vision, values, etc. Therefore, awakening leadership is worthy of praise.

Finally, there is panoramic leadership, which is the core leadership model mentioned in Robert Anderson and William Adams’ book “Nurturing Blue Leadership”, as shown in Figure 4:

In the TLC panoramic leadership system, Anderson and Adams modeled the key factors that affect leadership effectiveness as the panoramic leadership compass through research and inno-

vation. The inner circle dimension measures the creative leadership style in the upper half and the reactive leadership style in the lower half. Among them, the inner circle of creative leadership includes five aspects: interpersonal skills, self-awareness, authenticity, system awareness, and achievement, while the reactive leadership style includes three aspects: obedience, defense, and control.

The relationship between the inner and outer circles is mutual achievement. On the one hand, the inner circle determines the accuracy of the outer circle’s measurement dimensions, and on the other hand, the outer circle’s measurement dimensions make the inner circle more diverse and detailed. The positions of each dimension within

the circle demonstrate their interrelationships: adjacent positions indicate similar behavioral patterns with positive correlation. Opposite positions indicate opposing behavioral patterns with negative correlation.

The core viewpoint is impressive, that is, leaders who change rapidly belong to the creative mode, and leadership improvement belongs to the trend. Among the group of leaders, 80% belong to the reactive mode, and leadership improvement is extremely difficult because to overcome motivations, traits, and values below the iceberg, coaches need to accompany them for at least three months.

The commonality among these three leadership models is the 360 degree assessment, which allows leaders to clearly understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as specific directions for improving their leadership skills. The difference lies in the different paths for enhancing leadership.

However, from the perspective of industry

champion CEOs, on the one hand, mission driven leadership is the starting point of leadership. Leading leadership, awakening leadership, and panoramic leadership are discussed from the perspectives of behavior, core driven external core, and focusing on 80% of the population to enhance leadership. On the other hand, the improvement of leadership requires correct training and time to promote changes in leadership behavior from the inside out.

5 Industry Champion CEO Leadership Coach Program Framework

In the practical implementation of the industry champion CEO leadership enhancement coaching project, the author did not stick to a certain leadership model, but integrated the three major leadership styles together and embedded them into a running mode as a coaching running project with a cycle of nine months to one year, forming

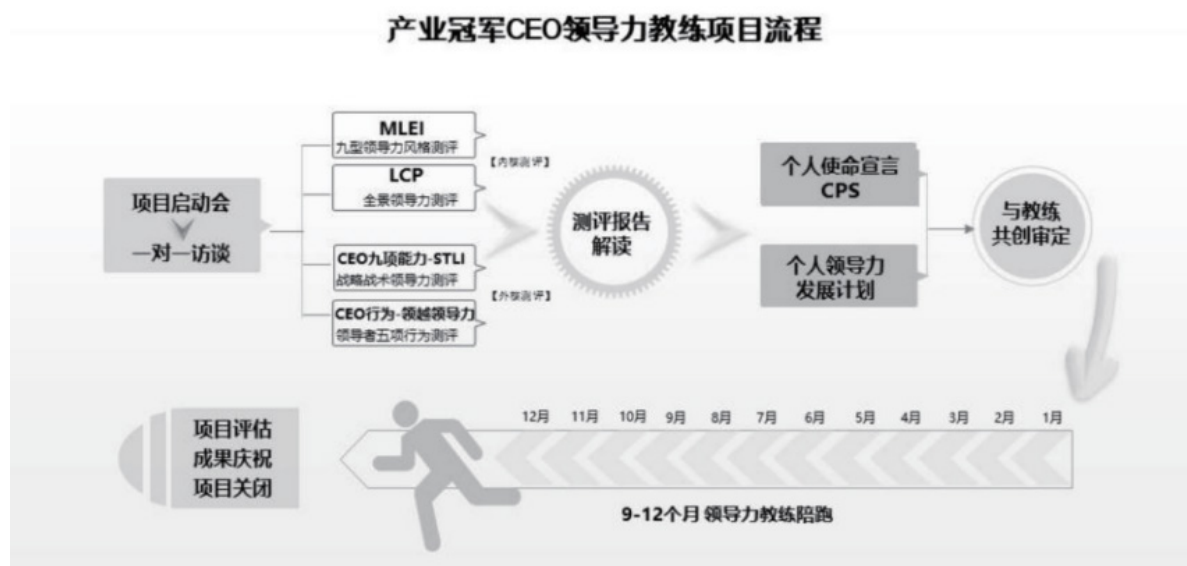


Figure 5: Process of Industry Champion CEO Leadership Coach Project

a unique industry champion CEO leadership coaching model, as shown in Figure 5.

First, to enhance the leadership of industry champion CEOs, the first step is to address the issue of motivation, which is the top level mission driven motivation. Therefore, the author embeds the CPS (Core Mission Statement) of Awakening Leadership into this model, and simultaneously incorporates the four step vision of inspiring leadership. Through this approach, the mission and vision issues of industry champion CEOs are perfectly solved.

Second, evaluation is an essential part of the leadership enhancement project for industry champion CEOs. On the one hand, the author introduces the core assessment of awakening leadership (Type 9 personality) and the outer core assessment (STLI) to solve the problem of identifying talents and assessing the nine essential leadership abilities of CEOs. On the other hand, the author introduces the panoramic leadership assessment, which starts from the mindset of industry champion CEOs through 360 assessments, identifies the reactive challenges that limit them, and synchronously mirrors their past leadership advantages, namely creative leadership, thus forming a big picture of enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs, laying a solid data foundation, technical foundation, and development path map for leadership improvement plans.

Third, after passing the first two core assessments (Type 9 personality+panoramic leadership assessment) and the outer core assessment (STLI), the coach needs to have in-depth talks

with the industry champion CEO on key aspects, comprehensively interpret their assessment report, and explore their mission and vision. The requirements for coaches in this stage are relatively high. On the one hand, it is necessary to have the ability to interpret the evaluation report and integrate the three major evaluation reports. On the other hand, it is important for coaches to present their high-level abilities because dialogue occurs instantly. When industry champion CEOs think and perceive their mission and vision, it is particularly important for coaches to be good at capturing and staying with them.

Fourth, in principle, the discovery of mission and vision will not be achieved overnight, nor will it be easily solved just because of evaluation and report interpretation. The author will continue to introduce the fermentation period of awakening leadership, that is, after the in-depth dialogue in the evaluation report, a month should be reserved for industry champion CEOs to reflect and have enlightenment time and space. Therefore, the core of this stage is to wait quietly and respond promptly to the questions and interactions of industry champion CEOs during the fermentation period.

During the fermentation period, the author will also have industry champion CEOs develop leadership development plans based on their individual situations, using the nine leadership aspects of STLI, panoramic leadership, reactive leadership, and creative leadership.

Fifth, one month later, the coach had the first in-depth conversation with the industry

champion CEO during the fermentation period after interpreting the evaluation report, as agreed, to further explore the mission and vision, and to discuss the effectiveness and pertinence of the personal leadership development plan. This stage is not only the stage of determining the mission and vision of the industry champion CEO, but also the stage of personal leadership improvement plan for subsequent accompanying runs. Therefore, the general time is not less than three hours.

I remember in 2020, the author and a group CEO spent 5 hours in this session, fully exploring and discussing their mission and vision issues, as well as personal leadership improvement plans.

Sixth, with the first five steps, the journey of enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs has officially begun, entering the specific practical stage of personal leadership enhancement. In this session, the author will make an appointment with the industry champion CEO to have a coaching dialogue once a month, with a duration of a round one hour. Can we increase the frequency of coach conversations? Certainly. Always remember one of the core principles of the Private Director's Companion Program — "Anything that helps achieve strategic goals must be done." In this session, the coach, also known as the shadow coach, is always by the side of the industry champion CEO, responding to leadership issues of the industry champion CEO in a timely manner through online or offline means.

Seventh, in the process of enhancing the leadership of industry champion CEOs, the author generally recommends a period of about one year.

On the one hand, correcting human behavior takes time, and on the other hand, improving leadership is not that easy and requires a lot of time.

6 Reflection and Prospect

Conducting leadership research and practice for a unique group belongs to the category of innovation, therefore, there are still many immature and urgent areas for improvement in the industry champion CEO leadership coaching program.

This article, as an innovative exploration of coaching practice, can also be considered as an innovation. We hope to receive criticism and corrections from industry champion CEOs and coaching colleagues, so that there are better best practices for improving the leadership of industry champion CEOs.

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Availability of Data and Materials

The authors confirm that all data generated or analyzed during this study are either collected by the authors themselves or derived from the

published articles cited in the references.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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