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A CASE STUDY ON VIRAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS 'HAR EK FRIEND ZARURI HOTA HAI' VS. 'HONEY BUNNY'

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ABSTRACT

In the current competitive business world every business owners look different methods to promote their business globally. The concept behind the viral marketing is internet word of mouth i.e. use influencers to make peer to peer product recommendations. Viral marketing refers to the "marketing phenomenon that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a marketing message voluntarily" via e-mail, blog, websites or other internet space in the form of video clips, interactive flash games, advergames, images, text messages or even e-mail messages. Customers act as advertisers by promoting a product through word-of-mouth. The research concerns the phenomenon of marketing, explores the existing literature of viral marketing and current trends followed by telecom industry. The research paper focuses on identifying the strategies by two most successful viral video jingles namely "Har Ek Friend Zaruri Hota Hai" and "Honey Bunny". The researchers have analyzed the role of social networkings like twitter, YouTube, Google+, face book in making these jingles goes viral. The aim of this research paper is to understand the possible ways of measuring and evaluating successfulness of a viral campaign through a case study of "Har Ek Friend Zaruri Hota Hai" vs. "Honey Bunny" viral campaigns.

KEYWORDS

Advertising, Social media, viral marketing, Video content, Word- of- mouth.

INTRODUCTION

Word-of-mouth publicity is a centuries old marketing technique. Once customers had a good experience with the product, they would tell their friends, who would often buy and use that product and then tell other friends dispersing information and recommendations about the product via social network.

The word-of-mouth has evolved with the influence of the internet into something we call viral marketing today. The term "viral marketing" refers to the idea that people will pass on and share cool and entertaining content sponsored by a brand, which is looking to build awareness of a product or service these viral commercials often take form of funny videos clips, or interactive flash games, images, tweets and even text messages. The goal of viral marketer is to generate a "buzz" about a product or idea, inducing users to relay the marketing message to others and create an exponential growth in the message visibility and effect. Viral marketing is popular because of the ease of executing the marketing campaign, relative low cost, good targeting and high rapid response rate. The strength of viral marketing is to obtain a large number of interested people at a low cost.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth in number of internet users has been dramatic ever since this platform came to existence. According to internetworldstats.com, European countries lead with highest internet penetration levels, with Scandinavian and Benelux countries topping the chart (Finland – 85.3 % of population). A lot has been said and written about how this has affected our everyday lives, interpersonal relationships and how we go about conducting business in the digital era. Viral marketing is one of the buzzwords that have been present in the realm of marketing for slightly more than a decade, yet there is not much written about it and that which is written is frequently incoherent – the definitions proposed to this date share the notion that viral marketing is a consumer-to-consumer process, and that it is related to word-of-mouth communication, however they differ in all other aspects (Vilpponen et al.2006). Nevertheless, we have witnessed a number of great success stories of viral marketing which inevitably challenge other marketers to give it a try and achieve the kind of ROI that traditional advertising barely ever could.

The term *viral marketing* was coined by Steve Juverson and Tim Draper in 1997 to describe the manner in which free e-mail service called *hotmail* was promoted. Namely, the signature line of every e-mail message sent through *hotmail*, the first online free e-mail agent, contained an invitation to create a free *hotmail.com* account. This method of promotion was understood to be *viral* in character as the message was being passed on by users themselves, thereby *contaminating* one another with this virus. The word *viral* obviously stems from the word *virus*, symbolizing the manner in which the message spreads, without the negative connotation of the word. Marketers soon saw the potential benefits of this form of marketing communication and today, 14 years later, there is a variety of viral marketing success stories, books, academic articles, research projects and even agencies specializing in viral marketing. Various terms have been used to describe this form of communication including: viral marketing (Juverson, 1997), buzz marketing (Thomas, 2004), word-of-mouth (Goldenberg et al.2001), viral

stealth marketing (Swanepoel et al.2009), referral marketing (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2004), viral advertising (Porter and Golan, 2006) etc. While most authors agree that all these synonyms refer to the same concept, they do not necessarily agree on the key element of it, namely *virality*, or the way in which the message spreads. Cruz and Fill (2008) claim that 'viral marketing communication concerns the informal, peer-to-peer electronic exchange of information about an identifiable product or service'. Furthermore, they suggest that viral marketing is not another form of advertising, therefore the distribution of a message should not be controlled by financial means. Viral marketing is using the Internet as a social network to promote a product or company through a web site, video, game, or other message spread by Internet users. The idea of a viral situation is that when a user sees the message, he or she will pass it along to his or her friends through online communication or verbal word of mouth; the message spreads like a virus and its goal is to "infect" as many users as possible (Lodish, Morgan, & Archambeau, 2007). Viral marketing usually encourages users to interact with an advertisement in order to capture consumers' attention in a time when they are able to choose what advertisements they want to see and when (Howard, 2005). Another reason for viral marketing is that it is generally cost effective. The interconnectivity with internet is a global phenomenon that facilitates the dissemination of both positive and negative word-of-mouth (Shankar, Smith, & Rangaswamy, 2003). However, marketers have noted the customer-leveraging possibilities the Internet offers (Brodin, 2000), among which viral marketing is amongst the most intriguing. Viral marketing exploits existing social networks by encouraging customers to share product information with their friends. Previously, a few in depth studies have shown that social networks affect the adoption of individual innovations and products (Rogers, 1995) or (David Starng and Sarah A.Soule, 1998). Social networks can be composed by using various information, i.e. geographic similarity, age, similar interests and so on (Yang and Allenby, 2003) showed that the geographically defined network of consumers is more useful than the demographic network for explaining consumer

behavior in purchasing Japanese cars. A recent study by Hill et al., (2006) found that adding network information, specifically whether a potential customer was already “talking to” an existing customer, was predictive of the chances of adoption of a new phone service option. Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993) surveyed a group of people and found that the stronger the moral hazard presented by the information, the stronger the ties must be to foster information propagation. Bowman and Narayandas, (2001) found that self-reported loyal customers were more likely to talk to others about the products when they were dissatisfied, but interestingly not more likely when they were satisfied. Viral marketing has become an increasingly popular promotional tool (Kirsner 2005; Walker 2004). According to a 2009 study by the media research firm PQ Media, spending on word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing rose at a compound annual growth rate of 53.7% from 2001 to 2008—from US\$76 million to US\$1,543 million—and is forecast to reach over US\$3 billion annually by 2013 (PQ Media 2009). Godes and Mayzlin (2009) used a large-scale field test to study how characteristics of WOM transmitters and their recipients (specifically, whether transmitters are loyal or less loyal customers of a restaurant, and whether recipients are their friends or acquaintances) are related to the effectiveness of WOM in a viral marketing campaign. De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) develop a model to identify the role that WOM plays during each stage of a viral marketing recipient’s decision-making process.

The main limitation of viral marketing is that it risks making the company look bad to the customers if the viral content looks too “fake,” forced, or similar to a conventional advertisement (Scott, 2007). In 2004, for example, the Sci Fi Channel “leaked” a story to the Associated Press that it would air a special called *The Buried Secret of M. Night Shyamalan*, hinting that the network had discovered a secret about the director in working with him to promote his movie *The Village*. Sci Fi later issued a statement saying that the whole ordeal was a hoax to create buzz, fearing a backlash over the fake news (Balter & Butman, 2005). At other times, viral ads have given a company negative press because the company had its name attached to an ad, but was not aware of the ad’s content. In early 2005, a British boutique agency called Lee and Dan made a fake commercial to send to Volkswagen in which a terrorist tried to set off a car bomb inside a Volkswagen Polo, but failed because the car was so sturdy (Balter & Butman, 2005). Volkswagen immediately received bad publicity for using terrorism in the ad, and its reputation was damaged until Lee and Dan admitted that it made the video). Due to its nature of trying to create immediate buzz among consumers, viral marketing is scheduled at least fairly close to the release of the product.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY ARE AS FOLLOWS

- To study the viral effectiveness and behavior of telecom customers towards these advertisements.
- To know whether the Indian customers are mature enough to associate themselves with the new concept developed by telecom companies time to time.
- To compare the promotional strategies of idea vs. Airtel vs. “Har Ek Friend Zaruri Hota Hai” Vs. “Honey Bunny”

VIRAL MARKETING OF ‘HONEY BUNNY’

Idea is known for creating catchy jingles that one can’t stop humming. The Honey Bunny sensation has gone quite viral as people are sharing and liking the jingle. The “Idea Rings All India” campaign depicts the diversity of India along with how people from different cultural backgrounds connect as one. In the initial phase, four teasers were launched to create curiosity for three days. Supported by timely radio and TV spots, the teaser campaign generated a lot of buzz, especially among the youth. Later, Idea launched the full 60-second TVC on both digital and television media. The minute-long TVC is developed by Lowe Lintas and the music is composed by renowned Bollywood music composer Amit Trivedi. The new TVC shows Indians from around the country, with varied cultural backgrounds, connecting as one big happy family of over 120 billion people, all of whom are seen humming one song - ‘Honey Bunny’ - albeit with a regional flavour! The campaign is aimed at highlighting the strength of Idea’s pan-India coverage which helps people of this huge Indian family stay connected with their Honey Bunny’s wherever they go – from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, Gujarat to Guwahati, Ladakh to Bengaluru, Rajasthan to Orissa, or Mumbai to Bihar!

What makes the song in campaign so special is something unknown, may be the usage of English freely (Butler English) as that of Kolaveri. The reason behind the popularity of the campaign is the following:

1. The service provider has released this campaign on the right time because at present no rival brands are focusing on “Network coverage service”. Consumers are having lots of complain against various service provider brands. Idea can take this opportunity & benefit by strong establishment of network (coverage).
2. When the other rival brands Airtel (Bharti Enterprise), Vodafone, Uninor, Reliance, Tata Docomo, BSNL etc. are majorly focusing on VAS service, price plan or promotional offers. Idea focused on increasing its subscriber base either by addition of new or by conversions from other brands.

People happened to see the new IDEA commercial, Honey Bunny on the net thanks to teasers on YouTube and links on Twitter. They had not heard it on radio or watched it on TV. If you were to go by the comments on Twitter, there are many who hate it. And then there are YouTube and Face book commenter’s who love it. When people first viewed it, while they found it amusing, they did a double-take and mentioned ‘nation-wide coverage’. Many couldn’t figure out the link between the ad and the message. Also, the brand communication has been pegged on providing new perspectives (Walk and Talk, Festivals, education) on social issues. Nevertheless the ad and the jingle have clearly become popular. The popular blog, Advertising Ka Kamaal saw a huge spike in traffic thanks to the ad sometimes there’s no rational explanation for what makes content go viral. The IDEA song is just no cerebral cuteness – there’s no deep messaging here or an urge for social change. It’s just a happy, catchy song. There’s one other aspect about videos that go viral – they have a huge repeat value and low ‘fatigue quotient’.

FIGURE 1



Source: <http://lighthouseinsights.in/idea-cellular-hello-honey-bunny-video.html>

Idea had a good piece of content in their hands the question was how to go about spreading the word without forcing it on their fans. And hence it created a unique content strategy for the SMM platforms and makes all their fans and followers a bit inquisitive as to “What is Honey Bunny?” And that worked wonders for them.

What started as a tantalizing teaser of the Honey Bunny ad, 29th November onwards, snowballed into a large scale guessing game thanks to an average of 200 shares and hundreds of comments for all Honey Bunny posts on Face book. The promotion campaign continued on Twitter and the Honey Bunny tag soon became commonplace. Soon the full version 2 min 31 sec video was posted through an unofficial source. YouTube users began clamoring for the lyrics of the song, the name of the singers and mp3 download links. The teasers they developed helped in generating huge curiosity, he believes a viral can't be created; it's the people who share it and make it viral.

REASONS BEHIND SUCCESS OF 'HONEY BUNNY'

(1) Refreshing Jingle: Idea is always known for catchy jingle that one can't stop humming. The honey bunny jingle has a refreshing and pleasant, pepping music composed by renowned bollywood music composer Amit Trivedi.

(2) Use Of 360 Degree Media: The advertising tool that idea opted for publicity of jingle was through 360 degree spread like T.V, Radio, Digital, Outdoor and Cinema. A big part was played by social networking sites. The song was shared on Twitter, Facebook and other networks like rapid fire. Radio stations have reported that more than 60% listeners have liked the jingle. . This is one of the smartest word of mouth marketing strategies adapted by jingle makers and the jingle became sensational, conversational track on Twitter, Facebook, and Traditional Media and beyond. The jingle was posted on Idea pages on Facebook, Twitter as well as on YouTube which were followed by lakhs of people.

(3) Shared By Fans On Social Medias-The most common version of intentional viral marketing occurs when consumers willingly become promoters of a product or service and spread the word to their friends; they are driven to do so either through an explicit incentive (e.g., financial incentives, need to create network externalities) or simply out of a desire to share the product benefits with friends (e.g., fun, intriguing, valuable for others). That what happened in case of honey bunny.

(4) The Concept – Idea holds a big happy family of over 120 billion people and the campaign is aimed at highlighting the regional flavor that how people of this huge family stay connective with their honey bunny (means their loveable) where ever they go from Kashmir to Kanyakumari because these days people are moving and relocating to towns and cities for education, career and family commitments

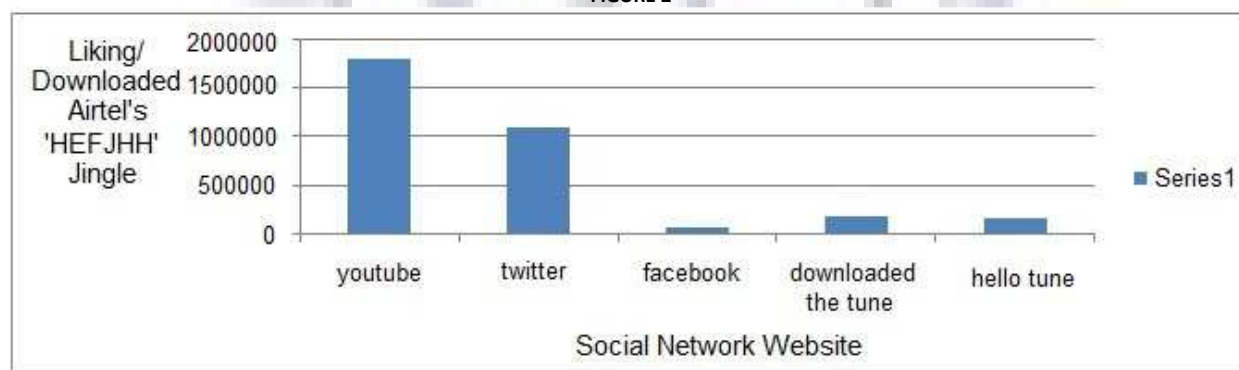
(5) Language- The jingle became a hit without having any element of glamour, adoption of a new concept that transcends the language boundary and the audience accepting an experiment that's different from the traditional genre of music. The usage of free English also known as Butler English as that was of Kolaveri di .

VIRAL MARKETING OF 'HAR EK FRIEND JARURI HOTA HAI': - A CASE ANALYSIS

Airtel launched its 'Har Ek Friend Zaroori Hota Hai' commercial, everyone sang along. Besides entertaining one and all with its catchy jingle, the ad served to position Airtel as a brand that stands for friendship, and helps one to stay in touch with all kinds of friends. Now, taking the same thought forward, the brand has rolled out a series of ad films introducing consumers to humorous characters that represent different types of friends. These include bhukkad friend, tubelight friend, chipkoo friend, kanjoos friend, status update friend, beep friend, dhinchik friend, vasooli friend, proxy friend, curious friend, music friend, and despo friend. Friends come in all shapes and sizes. But despite this, all friends are important, says the new Airtel commercial on air at the moment. Drawing on a teenager's ability to make friends and the importance he or she attempted to do two things - target a population, mostly in the 18-20 age-group, that is increasingly taking to data services faster than any other demographic and telling them that the service provider is the best option they have in doing so. "Airtel has always stood for human emotions and relationships. Friendship is one aspect of Taproot India, the agency which created the campaign. "The attempt was to reach out to a younger audience. There could have been no better way to do it than through friendship - something youngsters recognize and understand well. A jingle penned by film lyricist Amitabh Bhattacharya, makes use of 'Hinglish' and popular youth lingo, and has the story of different categories of friends, such as the one who wakes one up during the wee hours for help, or another who may give you company during your financial crunch days. Then, there are friends who are forced, effortless, classroom friends, bike-ride friends, shopping and 'exam hall copying' friends, movie buddies, the 'hi-bye' variety of friends, etc. The jingle ends with 'Har ek friend zaroori hota hai', and with the message that Airtel keeps one connected to their friends. 'Friendship' as a premise has been touched upon by other players in the category previously like Virgin Mobiles or Tata Docomo. Airtel attempts to go beyond frivolous fun, and continues to base its new slug around what it largely stands for – human connection.

Brand Airtel is doing now -- going beyond the admired brand, and becoming one that the youth wants to hang out with." The brief was to get the brand to step down from the pulpit and 'go to the back bench of the class'. Further the whole urban city, youth-ism route is a relatively easier one to take, and the real challenge was to make it edgy, memorable and relevant without being the senseless 'bubblegum' variety. The insight used here was simple: everyone has a different set of friends at a particular time in life, and technology and mobile phones connect a person to all of them. Even the jingle, launched in the form of an anthem, was made out to be raw and edgy to bring out this thought. To add the fresh angle, composer Sampath was briefed to avoid musical instruments and make use of typical 'college setting' sounds such as desks banging, chairs thumping, clapping and cheering, or even a dustbin for producing metallic sounds. The commercial is being supported by outdoor, radio, press, cinema advertising, on-ground initiatives and web media. A Facebook App has also been launched, which is presently running a contest inviting people to come up with different type or categories of friends (and tag their friends there), and the most unique answers shall have the winner get himself a trip to Las Vegas, among other prizes. The application received a creation of over 8,000 'friend types' within the first four days of its launch. The new Airtel ad works well because it triggers an emotional stimulus. It bonds well with the youth by talking to them in their language and more importantly creating connects with them to gain their confidence. However Airtel seems to have got the formula right this time around.

FIGURE 2



Source: <http://consumerbranding.blogspot.in/2011/09/airtel-campaign-har-ek-friend-zaroori.html>

Interpretation:-As shown in the above graph the likings and downloads done by different people from social networking websites. basically the graph shows the popularity of "HEFJHH" Jingle of Bharti Airtel which means youngsters can connect themselves with the jingle in their daily life.

REASONS BEHIND SUCCESS OF 'HAR EK FRIEND JARURI HOTA HAI' JINGLE

(1) The Magical Lyrics Of The Jingle: - It is the one which was on everyone lips with quirky, improvised lyrics went viral and get more than million hits. The jingle is loving, emotional focusing on the friendship concept.

- (2) **Popularity Among Young People:** The jingle has become a rage with the audience with youth being seen and heard humming the song. Given that, India is a young country with 35% of the population less than 28 years of age, anything that caters to the young tastes, is bound to go viral. Statistics of whether 25% or 35% of the population is young can be debatable, but what is no longer debatable, is the fact that the likes and dislikes of the youth cannot be ignored. The attention the jingle has received on the social media is solely responsible for it being such a humungous hit.
- (3) **Outstanding Promotional Strategies-**it is evaluated as the most successful running campaign in the history of Airtel which helped Airtel to re-position itself as a provider catering to the specific needs of the youth. The release date of the jingle made it more effective and remarkable (friendship day) and it instantly goes viral with friends sharing the new jingle with everyone around. The digital campaign on the other hand invites people to create different types of friend and tag their companions appropriately. The person who tags the most number of friends stands to win a trip to Las Vegas with bunch of acolytes.
- (4) **Mother Tongue Effect(The Youth Language)-** The song reached people across the INDIA speaking 1000's of languages and made everyone remember "MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE". It is experienced when youth starts speaking with his friends the language ultimately get changed. Even the song in the movie "Chashme Baddoor" is also influenced by this jingle.

COMPARISON OF 'HONEY BUNNY' AND 'HAR EK FRIEND JARURI HOTA HAI' VIRAL VIDEOS

Viral Elements	Honey Bunny	Har Ek Friend Jaruri Hota Hai
Unique Lyrics	Use of butler English	Hinglish was used
Humor Element	Fun loving, peppy jingle	Fun loving, peppy jingle
Sharing By Fans On Social Networking Sites	Fan following on YouTube, twitter, facebook etc	Fan following on YouTube, twitter, facebook etc
Marketing Strategies	360 degree media, only print media was missing	Majorly through T.V, Radio, Social Networking Sites.
Target Audience	Kids, youth, elder people	Youth
The Message	When you remember your loveable Idea is there-Whole network coverage	The message is hazy-not everybody understand the implication of each friend
Concept	Network and connectivity	Friendship

On the basis of the study of Honey Bunny & Har Ek Friend Jaruri Hota Hai viral videos, viral techniques can be considered by the organizations to design effective marketing campaigns.

1. **Free Products Or Services:-**Most viral campaigns give valuable products away to attract attention. Free software programs, free ringtones, free e-books are just some examples. Although they may not profit today, by freely giving away these products marketers hope to create a surge of interest they can profit from later. Both the organizations provide these jingles free of cost over internet
2. **Effortless Transmission Of The Message:-** The medium you choose to propagate your message must be able to easily transfer and replicate. Viral marketing works extremely well on the Web because instant communication is easy and cheap. The digital format makes duplication simple. The marketing message itself must also be brief so that it can be easily be transmitted without getting distorted.
3. **Doing Something Unexpected:-** This one is very obvious and well suits to video marketing through YouTube and others. What type of videos you would like to watch until you see the name of sponsor has to be hilarious or unexpected? If you want viewers to notice you campaign, you must be doing something surprising, something that is not expected.
4. **Using Existing Communication Networks:-** Except few basement-dwelling computer geeks most people are social. A person may have close networks of 8-12 people as well as the weaker networked relationships with hundreds; if not thousands. Airtel followed the same strategy by making a facebook app, inviting people to come up with different type or category of friends (tag their friends there) and most unique answer shall have the winner who will win a trip to Las Vegas.
5. **Allowing Effortless Transfers To Others:-** Sharing is what viral marketing is all about. In flu season, we are advised to stay away from people who cough and asked to wash hands often, not to touch eyes, nose, or mouth because virus can only spread when its easy to transmit! In the same way everything that makes the sharing easier, improves your viral marketing campaign.
6. **Viral Marketing Campaign Must Aim At Making People Feel Emotional:-** Viral marketing is totally based on emotions. While Airtel jingle was based on friendship which holds a theme of relationship on the other hand Idea's jingle was based on connectivity with everyone to whom you was to be with and wherever in India you are located.
7. **Select A Target Group And Led It Spread The Message:-** In case of airtel the target group was the youth of India whereas in case of idea the target audience was kids, youth, and elderly people. In India social networking sites are being used by everybody. The fans shared this video's, tag their friend on Facebook, Twitter, comments on YouTube.
8. **The Message To Be Passed To The Customers About A Product Or Service Should Be Effective And Appealing:-** The videos of both the jingles were simple; the music of Airtel jingle was even composed without music instruments but was appealing which made this jingle go popular.

CONCLUSION

Viral marketing is a business form of marketing as an organization doesn't have to pay a large amount of money to make its campaign successful because viral marketing is relative low-cost. Three types of content are identified by both the telecom companies which increase the likelihood of a video go viral and those include: entertainment (fun, music, and humor), positive message and relationship building. The study of "Har Ek Friend Jaruri Hota Hai" And "Honey Bunny" shows that customers are mature enough to connect themselves with the new concepts and ideas developed by different telecom companies time to time by the use of different techniques of social media marketing like Blogs, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ etc as we have analyzed in Advertising ka Kammal Blog page that day on day the number of viewing customers is rapidly increasing. The customers are using the jingles as their hello tunes and ring tones. The promotional strategies adopted by both the companies are different to some extent as the Airtel is focusing on Brand Image whereas Idea is focusing on Network Coverage but both are successful because of their emphasis on customer requirements and effectiveness with which they are satisfying them. For business organizations in order to make marketing campaign successful viral marketers have to create buzz about a product, must start with a product that encourages conversation because it is contagious, evokes an emotional response, and creates visual curiosity or becomes more useful as more people use it. In addition, marketers must insure that there is some personal benefit for the target audience to become engaged in the marketing effort. Thus viral marketing can help an organization in achieving competitive advantage even in turbulent times.

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