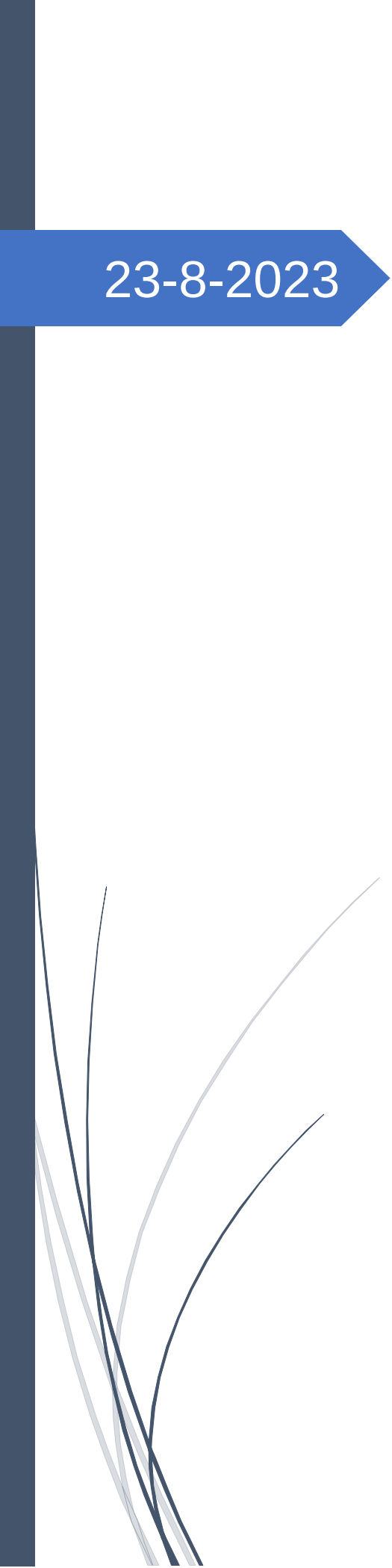




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Developing Workplace Critical Thinking (BMSW5101_LON)

Part 1 – Individual Business Report

Part 2 – Reflective Journal

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1. Part 1- Individual Business Report

2. Executive Summary

This document describes the whole of ALDI, in a few pages applying the appropriate theories and their main characteristics for its correct functioning, the differences in beliefs, values, and attitudes and how they affect the behaviour of workers in the ALDI workplace, identifying someone with different beliefs, attitudes and values, would think differently.

3. Introduction

In this report we have researched from different sources of websites to write the ALDI report, being a successful supermarket chain that stands out for its focus on efficiency and customer value. Founded in Germany, the company has earned the loyalty of consumers through a strong set of beliefs, values and attitudes that define its organizational culture. ALDI embraces key principles, inspired by management theories such as those of Frederick Taylor and Henry Fayol, to guide its approach to operation and leadership: Taylor's theory of scientific management: ALDI embraces the idea that efficiency can be improved by applying scientific methods to work processes. This theory is reflected in ALDI's precise procedures and systems to optimize work organization and reduce waste, (Birt, 2023).

Fayol Management Principles: ALDI embraces several of Fayol's management principles, such as unity of command, division of labour, and discipline. These principles contribute to an efficient organizational structure and fluid communication throughout the chain of command. ALDI's beliefs in simplicity, responsibility and quality are also manifested in its core values and decision-making attitudes. The company maintains a focus on removing superfluous elements to provide customers with the essentials at affordable prices. We will also look at How to address the challenges of adapting changes in the workplace to the post-COVID mindset. How do beliefs, attitudes and organisational value systems affect ALDI behaviour in the workplace? critical evaluations of theories, characteristics of ALDI systems theory, conclusion and recommendations with their references.

4. Overview of ALDI

A brief description of my company starts with the address of the ALDI store is 570-592 High Road, Tottenham. In 1945 the brothers Theo and Karl Albrecht in a small family food business in which they had clear objective was to know customers well to provide them with what they needed at the best price, and thus from the surname Albrecht and the word "discount", the ALDI that we have today was created. The hierarchical order of the ALDI market consists of a Manager, Head of Marketing, Head of Administration and Head of Purchasing. They are the internal factors consisting of management and other departments of the company and the external factors are the economy, taxes and subsidies. ALDI is a renowned supermarket chain known for its focus on efficiency and customer value. With a commitment to providing quality products at affordable prices, ALDI has become a popular destination for shoppers looking for savings and an optimized shopping experience.

5. Key Management Theories

The theories of Henri Fayol and Frederick Taylor have influenced the way ALDI manages its operations and teams. Below are some ways in which these theories could be applied in ALDI: Henri Fayol's Theory; In charge of the division of labour in ALDI, we could apply this principle when assigning specific tasks to employees in their stores and distribution centres to optimize efficiency. Fayol emphasized authority and responsibility as the need for clarity in authority and accountability. ALDI could apply this when defining roles and responsibilities within the organization. ALDI can establish rules and procedures to ensure a disciplined and orderly work environment. ALDI could ensure that all efforts are directed towards common goals, ensuring alignment in decision-making in a management unit.

The Frederick Taylor Theory (Scientific Management); In the study of times and movements of ALDI we could apply scientific methods to analyse and improve efficiency in work tasks, such as the arrangement of products in stores to optimize the purchase process. ALDI's performance standards could establish clear performance standards for employees, ensuring consistent production and service. ALDI could also apply performance-based incentive systems to motivate employees and improve productivity. At this point we could apply labour specialization when designing specific roles for certain tasks, which could contribute to efficiency in daily operation, In the

study of times and movements of ALDI we could apply scientific methods to analyse and improve efficiency in work tasks, such as the arrangement of products in stores to optimize the purchase process.

ALDI's performance standards could be set in clear performance standards for employees, ensuring consistent production and service. ALDI incentives and rewards could apply performance-based incentive systems to motivate employees and improve productivity. We would apply ALDI's labour specialization to design specific roles for certain tasks, which could contribute to efficiency in daily operations and, as a result, obtain job success. We have been inspired by management theories in certain aspects of the ALDI supermarket, we have also incorporated other approaches and adapted its management approach to meet the specific needs of its business model and organizational culture.

6. Application of the theories

6.1 Impact of organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems on ALDI behaviour in the workplace.

ALDI's significant impact on organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems affects employee behaviour and workplace dynamics. Here are some ways these factors can influence behaviour: ALDI focuses on operational efficiency and cost reduction to offer competitive prices, beliefs and values that emphasize the importance of efficiency and savings can influence employee behaviour. Employees may be motivated to find ways to optimize processes and reduce waste. The attitude towards customer service; Beliefs and attitudes that value customer satisfaction and the shopping experience can lead to customer-oriented behaviour. Employees can strive to provide exceptional service and maintain a positive attitude toward customers.

If organizational values promote collaboration and teamwork, employees may be more inclined to cooperate to achieve shared store goals. Quality and product standards: Beliefs and values that emphasize product quality can influence employee behaviour in terms of proper product handling, compliance with hygiene standards, and ensuring that products in the store meet established quality criteria. If the culture values

innovation and adaptability, employees might feel more motivated to bring new ideas and be open to changes in processes or products.

Organizational values include social responsibility and sustainability, and employees being more engaged and motivated with ethical and environmentally friendly practices in their daily work. ALDI's leadership beliefs and attitudes and the way organizational values are communicated could influence in some way, how employees interpret them and incorporate them into their behaviour. The values that support employees' professional development and growth greatly influence their level of commitment and dedication to the organization. In summary, organizational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems at ALDI can influence how employees interact with customers, work as a team, meet quality standards, and contribute to the overall operation of the store. These factors contribute to the culture and work environment at ALDI and affect the experience of both employees and customers.

6.2 Addressing the challenges of adapting workplace changes to the post-COVID mindset

To address the challenges and adapt to ALDI's workplace changes in the post-COVID mindset, it is important to consider a few key strategies: Communication should be transparent to encourage open and constant communication with employees to inform about changes, safety measures, and new policies. Work flexibility: Provide remote work options or flexible schedules when possible, recognizing the changing needs of employees. We will focus on mental well-being to offer resources and support to address pandemic-related stress and anxiety, such as counselling and well-being programs, and provide training opportunities to help employees acquire new digital skills and adapt to the changing demands of the work environment.

Policy adaptation helps us review and adjust internal policies to reflect the new labour reality, including safety measures and hygiene protocols. The use of technology in ALDI helps us implement technological solutions to facilitate remote collaboration, task management and efficient communication between teams. To foster resilience, we should promote a mindset of resilience and adaptability among employees, encouraging them to face change with a positive attitude. Continuous evaluation is important to conduct periodic reviews of the strategies implemented and solicit feedback from employees to make necessary adjustments. Remember that every organization is unique, so tailoring these suggestions to ALDI's specific culture and needs will be essential to achieving a successful transition to the post-COVID mindset in the workplace.

7. Characteristics of systems theory in ALDI

Systems theory in ALDI with a comprehensive approach would consider the organization as a complex system, taking into account both its internal components (departments, processes) and its external environment (suppliers, competitors, customers). The interconnection of components highlights the interdependence and relationships between different parts of the organization, such as the efficient supply chain that contributes to the operation of stores. Systems theory in ALDI will also include feedback mechanisms to evaluate store performance and adjust strategies based on customer response, with efficiency and effectiveness we will focus on achieving optimal efficiency in supply chain operations, as well as the effectiveness of marketing and management strategies.

Adaptability is very important in ALDI since it operates in multiple markets and can face different economic conditions, systems theory could consider the adaptability of the organization to different contexts. With this theory, we will examine how different hierarchical levels and subsystems, such as the management of individual stores, contribute to the overall success of the organization. The focus on results with systems theory could be oriented towards achieving tangible results, such as cost optimization, customer satisfaction and profitability.

The process approach is about paying attention to the optimization of internal processes, from product selection to distribution logistics and store operation. Balance and fairness with systems theory could address how to maintain a balance between different aspects of the organization and how to ensure fairness in decision-making. Continuous learning and improvement with systems theory we could emphasize constant organizational learning and continuous improvement, based on results and feedback, with these general characteristics, depending on how we apply systems theory will vary in ALDI depending on its organizational objectives. Balance and fairness with systems theory could address how to maintain a balance between different aspects of the organization and how to ensure fairness in decision-making.

8. Critical evaluation of the theories

The Contingency Theory of Leadership, for example. This theory suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership and that the effectiveness of a leadership style depends on several factors, such as the situation, the team, and the qualities of the leader. Now, imagine someone with collectivist beliefs, who values group harmony and consensus. They might interpret this theory differently compared to an individualist who emphasizes personal goals. The collectivist might see contingency theory as reinforcing the idea that leadership must adapt to maintain harmony within the group, while the individualist might see it as a validation of the need for a leader to focus on his or her effectiveness, regardless of group dynamics. These different interpretations stem from the different attitudes and cultural values of individuals.

Critical evaluation of management theories is crucial for a complete understanding. It involves examining the strengths, weaknesses, and implications of a theory. For example, considering Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as it offers insights into human motivation, he has been criticized for cultural bias and the assumption that needs are universally prioritized in the same order. Similarly, bureaucratic management theory emphasizes rules and hierarchy, which can lead to efficiency but could stifle creativity and adaptability in rapidly changing environments. Understanding these nuances helps practitioners apply theories carefully, adapting them to suit various situations and challenges. It is vital to consider both the merits of the theory and the potential limitations to effective decision-making.

ALDI's key skills for good critical thinking are analysing business data: and having the ability to examine sales, inventory and performance data to identify trends, patterns and areas for improvement in in-store operations. The evaluation of cost strategies: to be able to analyse the costs associated with the supply chain, operations and promotions to ensure that efficiency and value for the customer are maintained.

Customer feedback interpretation: is understanding customer opinions and feedback on products and services, and using this information to make decisions that improve customer satisfaction, Strategic thinking: is the ability to analyse the market, competition and industry trends to adjust ALDI's strategies and maintain its competitive position.

Data-driven decision-making: Use analytics and objective data to make informed decisions about product selection, inventory management, and business expansion.

Operational problem solving: Critical thinking is applied to address everyday problems in store management, from optimizing product layout to workforce planning. Effective

communication: It is about being able to explain decisions and strategies clearly and coherently both to the internal team and to suppliers and customers. Innovative thinking: Generating creative ideas to improve operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and brand expansion.

Adaptive Leadership: Being able to adapt the leadership style according to the situation and the team, encouraging collaboration and commitment among employees. Respect for Diversity and Ethics: Consider different cultural perspectives and values in decision-making, and ensure that practices are ethical and aligned with ALDI's values. These skills are essential to apply critical thinking effectively in ALDI's unique environment and contribute to the company's continued success.

9. Part 2- Reflective Journal - The Workplace

10. Introduction

In this report, we will talk about management theories, a brief definition of values and beliefs and then find the differences and similarities between beliefs and values. In the changing business environment, Bono's Six Hat, and bureaucratic management, we also present a brief definition of critical thinking as an essential skill that involves analysing, evaluating and questioning information deeply and reflectively. It goes beyond accepting ideas without questioning them and focuses on understanding the basis of arguments, identifying underlying assumptions, and considering different perspectives before forming opinions or making informed decisions. Critical thinking fosters mental acuity, creativity and evidence-based decision-making, thus contributing to intellectual growth and a fuller understanding of the world around us, is curious, aware of the fact that things are often not what they seem at first glance and is receptive to new information, even if it turns out to be contradictory to their own opinions. Their opinions are provisional and can be adjusted again and again. He knows that he, like anyone else, has blind spots and takes them into account. In short: a critical thinker is someone willing and able to sharpen his mind, and who is willing and able to form a sound judgment.

11. Background

11.1 Management Theories

Happened that productivity grows because leaders, and supervisors, using theories, take advantage of their team members, growing productivity and personalising their performance much more to improve it. Decision-making is simplified to be carried out by leaders, there is greater collaboration among team members and with management theories leaders are encouraged to make scientifically proven changes by looking at various sources, instead of relying on one's judgment, that way there is greater objectivity. Frederic Taylor was present in taking a scientific approach to job

performance, being one of the first to study management at work scientifically in the last 1,800 years. (Birt, 2023).

Workplace management theories help manage employees more effectively, evolving to emphasize the authority and structure on which employees focus. Working through the corporate culture and not trying to control it exchanges informal information and norms of behaviour. Scientific management theory, Taylor's actions, was to reduce tasks to increase productivity, with the principles of administrative management theory, Henry Fayol developed this theory and believed that it had five main functions: forecasting, planning, coordinating, commanding and controlling. Bureaucratic management theory, developed by Max Weber, focuses on structuring organizations hierarchically. The theory of human relations was developed by Elton Mayo to increase productivity and lay the foundations of human relations. In systems management theory, managers study patterns for a better view of management.

The result is logic, which is the study of right thinking. It consists of two types; Inductive reasoning, which consists of starting with generalizing thoughts, with a theory or general conclusions and then ending with a particular assumption. It is a demonstration of soft skills such as emotional intelligence, memory and projection forecasting, also known as "cause and effect" For example; A salesperson tells real stories of their current customers to advise potential customers that their products are of high quality and that they should be purchased. And deductive reasoning starts with an assumption, is known as "top-down" and uses this logic to solve a problem and better understand the world. Example; Syllogism: all living things are born and die (major assumption), plants are living things (minor assumption), plants are born and die (conclusion).

- **Beliefs** in the workplace encompass the values, attitudes and principles that workers and employers uphold and contribute to their professional environment. In every action, there are beliefs, which are composed of emotional thoughts kept since childhood. These beliefs could affect various aspects of the workplace, company culture, communication, management and decision-making, and cooperation among team members. In the UK it is illegal for an employer to treat a jobseeker or worker with less preference than others, because of their religion or belief that is direct discrimination. Positive beliefs in the workplace are; Respect and equality with all employees, diverse views and ideas, leadership trust and transparency and focus on continuous learning and personal development.

- **Values:** People's values in the workplace guide their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours or behaviours as workers. It is necessary to reflect on one's values as part of professional development and success in the company, understanding corporate and workplace values will help you think about your values in connection with your employer. Workplace culture is linked to values and they are important both at home and at work.

11.2 Differences and similarities of beliefs and values.

Differences:

- Beliefs are assumptions about the world. Values are how we give value to objects and behaviours.
- Beliefs are our life experiences, religious beliefs, and culture. Our beliefs are the experiences of babies, which strongly influence our values.
- Beliefs may waver in prejudice, and values may show that prejudice.
- Beliefs affect our morals. Values are how we live our morals through behaviour, character, and personality.

Similarities:

- External environments affect beliefs and values.
- Beliefs and values affect our workplace behaviour and how we experience the world.
- Beliefs and values give us a shared sense of identity and community.
- Beliefs and values may change over time

- **Attitude:** The attitude itself is not positive or negative, it is the way we express our beliefs and values, also the feelings of some aspects of our work environment, affecting the behaviour of an employee in the workplace, such as organizational commitment and satisfaction in the work environment.

For example; I get very angry when I hear about cases of labour exploitation.

- **Emotions: Positive** emotions have no limitations in optimistic feelings. Examples; calm, comfortable, energetic, enthusiastic, excited, happy, cheerful,

relaxed and satisfied. Negative emotions do not help good productivity at work. Examples; upset, anxious, bored, disinterested, dissatisfied, frustrated, gloomy, miserable, sad, stressed, tired, uncomfortable, worried.

12. Critical thinking

Socrates was present 2500 years ago, (Foundation of Critical Thinking, 2019) Discovering critical thinking by probing a method of probing, asking questions, about why, people could not rationally justify their claims with secure knowledge.

It has happened that Critical thinking is the grouping of intellectual skills and psychological routines that help to give good solutions to problems, find truths in reliable sources and communicate openly. It is also necessary in the disciplines and stages of the research process of this report, it helps us to analyze the possible solutions. Critical thinking skills to resolve conflicts at work we will follow the following points; We describe a conflict or issue, make assumptions about the conflict and how we can solve it, gather data through research, manage the data found, develop and enforce solutions, and determine pathways to refine the solution. Critical thinking is necessary instead of work because it helps the company run smoothly, it also helps employees have independence and self-reflection. To perfect critical thinking in working life; We gain time, communicate efficiently between team members and departments, drive different points of view, problem decisions in the workplace.

13. The Changing Business Environment

It is the totality of people in the organization and other factors that are external to the industry such as technological advances, but could affect production, It is in continuous change, evolving to adapt and innovation is key for the company to be successful. Critical thinking helps to identify the opportunities and threats that exist in the business environment is everything external to the company, It also helps us to take advantage of inputs and products. The specific forces that affect the company in a straight line, for example; suppliers, customers, financiers, and competitors. The general forces that indirectly alter the company such as the economic, social, political and technological. Companies are interrelated.

Creative thinking instead of work is about creating modern ideas to solve problems in the workplace and critical and logical thinking are of two types; inductive logic, which consists of grouping general theories by observing specifically and deductive logic; Group conclusions determining to begin with general premises.

14. Bono's 6 Thinking Hat; The six techniques of Edward de Bono Hats:

objective data (white hat), emotions, and feelings (red hat), critical and negative point of view (black hat), optimistic and factual point of view (yellow hat), of new and creative ideas (green hat), organize the phases and summarize the conclusions (blue hat).

People who have enough experience to contribute to the goal of the meeting, will be able to participate, as those who value the steps of continuous improvement and invest time in hats and those who have studied or/and understand the technique of the Six Hats to Think. It always starts with the blue hat and ends with the blue hat. The phases of hats have to do with the goal of the meeting, for example, if the goal is to find new ideas, we use the green hat for creativity before the yellow hat for optimism and the black hat for judgment. We first locate the idea and then evaluate it. If we evaluate an idea or situation as the goal, then we should wear the yellow and black hat before the green hat. The yellow hat and the black hat will evaluate the idea and the green hat will discover solutions for the risks that the black hat captured.

15. Bureaucratic Management

The most influential of these theorists was Max Weber's (pronounced *Vay'-ber*) bureaucratic theory, the system based on charismatic power, i.e. the power of a leader, the system based on traditions and customs and the system of modern states which is the efficient and effective rational state is based on explicit rules such as the legal character of norms; everything that happens is properly regulated, the formal nature of communications; Everything that is requested is done formally through the appropriate communication channels. The impersonality of relationships; Another person can replace another with different abilities and attitudes, It is designed so that corruption is not generated, rational division of labour, and each person is assigned a role or function according to their technical, professional and meritocratic training. Hierarchies and attitudes might ask for help in agreement. In the standard routines, there is a set of rules to follow, which facilitate the process, and generate certain problems; such as the

paralysis of decision-making due to the excessive class of regulations that must be followed.

Henri Fayol and his basic functions of management theory; Technical functions; refers in modern enterprises to the production department, where the methods for producing a good or service are defined, thus all related to producing a good or service commercial functions; There is the marketing department aiming to increase sales, focusing on collecting data on habits, tastes and preferences with each interaction, financial functions; One of the main objectives is to increase the monetary value of the company, security functions; the first has to do with the security of the information of the software is responsible for protecting and preventing the material and intangible assets of the company and also of the people ensuring the well-being and health of the workers, it is known as Safety and health at work administrative. Among them, they defined the characteristics of organizations and the roles of managers that we still accept today. (Lumen, 2023)

16. General Systems Theories

Loopwithn's most important theory was in 1940 within the realm of organizational biology, he realized that it was an open system that was constantly changing with its environment. A system is a set that has elements that are related to the end of a goal, The general theory of systems is the reflection of the total of the analyses and totalities of the internal interaction of its parts as a powerful tool that allows us to explain different phenomena of reality, it also helps us to create tools for other systems, because we not only use it for biology but also other sciences. Each system contains elements and the theory helps us to understand each element and its function. We have two types of systems; The open system is the one that is in a constant exchange of information and energy with the work environment. For example; departments, working groups, business units, facilities, and the closed system; it is where there is no interaction with the environment.

Systems theory is a set of objects linked together, which have interacted with each other. For example, the human body is made up of different organs, and elements: liver, heart, kidney, skin, etc.

17. Recommendations

- One recommendation is that ALDI incentives and rewards could apply performance-based incentive systems to motivate employees and improve productivity.
- One recommendation is to reinforce the importance of personal and collective responsibility in health protection. It encourages the use of masks, social distancing and compliance with hygiene rules among both staff and customers.
- One recommendation is to communicate specific measures to ensure the quality and safety of products, as well as the reliability of hygiene and cleaning practices. This will strengthen customers' confidence in the ALDI brand.
- Recommendation to have a resilient and positive attitude in the way you approach problems. Share stories of success and achievements in adapting to changing circumstances.
- Recommendation to address COVID-19 issues in ALDI aligned with the beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours of the company, you will strengthen organisational cohesion and trust both internally and externally.

18. Conclusion

In conclusion, ALDI fuses Taylor and Fayol's theories with its own beliefs, values and attitudes to establish a distinctive organizational culture focused on operational efficiency, quality and customer satisfaction.

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