

The Effectiveness of an E-Marketing Program in Achieving Sales Targets for Mobile Phone Companies

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Abstract

Electronic Marketing (e-Marketing) has become an integral part of the marketing mix. Potential mobile phone customers prefer to do online research themselves. Therefore, mobile phone companies should be ready that search engines, corporate web pages, and profiles on social media sites should strengthen the image of mobile phone companies and ensure better communication with customers. The aim of this paper is to explore the results of quantitative research regarding mobile phone online marketing activities and sales target achievement. It has been found that mobile phone companies' websites provide customers with qualitative information. Some companies offer an online communication experience. Several companies have created their profiles on Facebook and Twitter but not all of them use social media in an appropriate way.

Keywords: E-Marketing, Sales Target, Marketing Enhancement, Mobile phone Industry, smartphones, Marketing Mix.

1. Introduction

Digital technology has “shaken marketing at its core” with almost all of the current marketing subsumed into some form of digital marketing across most businesses and industries. The widespread availability of the Internet and its continued user growth over the past few decades have influenced consumer behavior in communication techniques, information acquisition, and search and purchase behaviors [1]. One of the most ubiquitous effects of the “digital revolution” is in the way innovations and developments in digital, social media, and mobile marketing disrupts and “shake up” industries by creating new experiences that allow buyers and marketer behaviors that had not been previously possible. As digital environments have evolved, they have influenced the buyer’s search behavior [2]. In the mobile phone industry, a competitive and fast-paced industry highly dependent on gathering and distributing smartphone details in order to generate sales, digitizing the mobile phone selling/buying process has been positively transformative and has affected how sellers and the mobile phones agents who represent them market retail. Digital marketing encompasses the use of diverse digital technologies and techniques available to promote and market brands or products. The diversity of these media choices is a “blessing to marketers” who can then use them to help consumers move more quickly along their path to purchase. Online searching, in general, shortens the stages of the consumer journey specifically in the

consideration (e.g. search) and evaluation stages and reduces search costs. The nature of the mobile phone and smart devices market is such that the “products,” the for-sale phones, are not homogenous, and thus, the search process can be tough for both buyers and sellers as they seek optimal matches for their preferences and properties [3]. Buyers incur search costs (e.g. time spent collecting information), and sellers incur holding costs while waiting for a buyer. Internet usage during the buyer’s journey has been determined to reduce search costs while simultaneously increasing buyer search intensity [4].

2. MARKETING MIX

The term "marketing mix" is a foundation model for businesses, historically centered around product, price, place, and promotion (also known as the "4 Ps"). The marketing mix has been defined as the "set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market", See figure 3 [5].



Figure 3: Marketing Mix

i. Product:

Thinking strategically about your product goes beyond considering its usefulness to your target customers. It entails a full vision of the way consumers interact with it. Are there warranties to be offered? Guarantees to be met? What kind of customer service experience will you create both upon the transaction and throughout the product’s life? And what kind of return or refund policies will unhappy customers be met with? Will these policies and processes make them consider you again, or leave them cold on your product? Work on sharpening your vision for the product you offer by considering more than the tangible good or intangible service itself.

ii. Price

Whether you are marketing a good or a service, the perceived value of the product will determine what consumers are willing to pay for it, and the lengths they will go to make it theirs. Consumer perceptions of a product's value often have little to do with the real costs of producing it. It is instead grounded in factors such as how useful the product seems, a customer's brand loyalty, or the perception of a product as a luxury good. Of course, calculate any manufacturing, marketing, or distribution costs into your price point. Beyond that, remember that you can exert some control over the product's perceived value with your marketing efforts. Continue to evaluate and reevaluate your product's perceived value as your business and your market evolve. In the digital age, it's also key to consider what payment options you will offer the customer. Will you accept PayPal or another payment service provider? Will you partner with a company like Square to expedite payment processing needs outside of a traditional storefront? How will the payment option you offer shape your customer's experience? Once more, take a step back from the most fundamental question—price point—and consider the context that surrounds your pricing decisions.

iii. Promotion

The type and frequency of advertisements a customer interacts with will determine their willingness to investigate your product. Careful promotion presents you with the opportunity to mold the perceived value of your product, and to project your business ethos. Remember that where you promote your product is just as important as the type and frequency of the ads. Consumers are, by nature, multi-channel and they consume content through multiple screens every day. Marketers need to better align their consumer engagement efforts with this multi-channel behavior.

iv. Place

Just as you need to adapt your approach to product promotion in the digital age, so too must you consider the ways your customers access your product. The ease with which customers interact with your digital interface can make or break a sale—I know that I've personally left a full digital shopping cart out of pure frustration with poor website design just as many times as I've walked out of a store after poor customer service or avoided a store altogether due to its inconvenient location. Again, you must consider the full context of a customer's experience when buying your product. Create a fluid, comfortable buying experience, whether your customers interact with your product in a physical or digital space.

3. ELECTRONIC MARKETING

The development of digital marketing or e-Marketing is inseparable from technology development. One of the first key events happened in 1971, when Ray Tomlinson sent the first email, and his technology set the platform to allow people to send and receive files through different machines [6]. However, the more recognizable period as being the start of Digital Marketing is 1990 as this was where the Archie search engine was created as an index for FTP sites. In the 1980s, the storage capacity of computers was already big enough to store huge volumes of customer information. Companies started choosing online techniques, such as database marketing, rather than limited list brokers. These kinds of databases allowed companies to track customers' information more effectively, thus transforming the relationship between buyer and seller. However, the manual process was not as efficient. In

the 1990s, the term Digital Marketing was first coined, With the debut of server/client architecture and the popularity of personal computers, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM), see figure 4 [7], applications became a significant factor in marketing technology. Fierce competition forced vendors to include more service into their software, for example, marketing, sales and service applications. Marketers were also able to own huge online customer data by eCRM software after the Internet was born. Companies could update the data of customer needs and obtain the priorities of their experience. This led to the first clickable banner ad going live in 1994, which was the "You Will" campaign by AT&T and over the first four months of it going live, 44% of all people who saw it clicked on the ad [8].

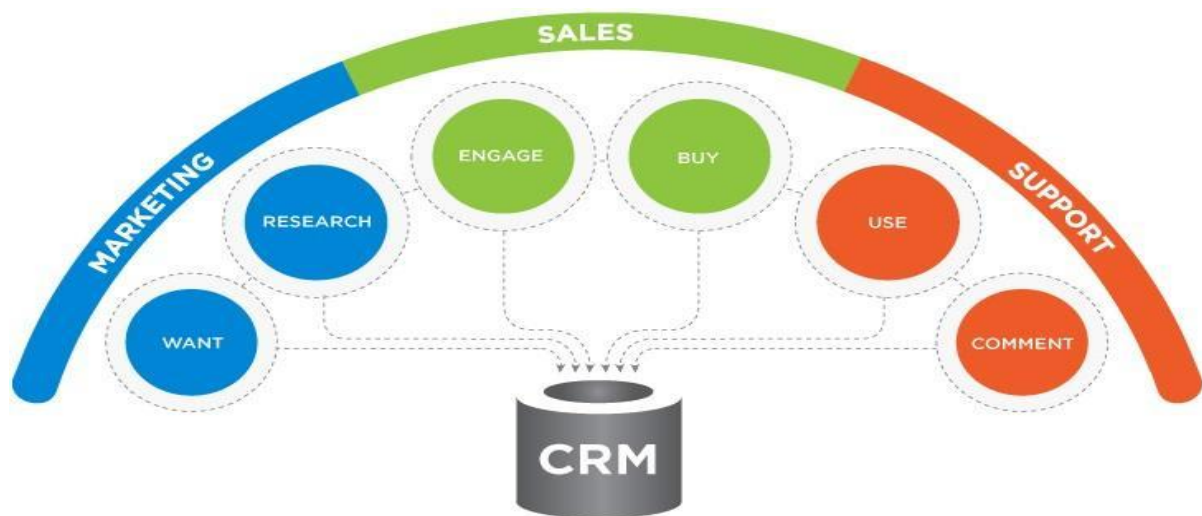


Figure 4: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) - Domains

In the 2000s, with increasing numbers of Internet users and the birth of the iPhone, customers began searching products and making decisions about their needs online first, instead of consulting a salesperson, which created a new problem for the marketing department of a company. In addition, a survey in 2000 in the United Kingdom found that most retailers had not registered their own domain address. These problems encouraged marketers to find new ways to integrate digital technology into market development [9]. In 2007, marketing automation was developed as a response to the ever evolving marketing climate. Marketing automation is the process by which software is used to automate conventional marketing processes. Marketing automation helped companies segment customers, launch multichannel marketing campaigns, and provide personalized information for customers [10], based on their specific activities. In this way, the user's activity (or lack thereof) triggers a personal message that is customized to the user in their preferred platform. However, despite the benefits of marketing automation many companies are struggling to adapt it to their everyday uses correctly. Digital marketing became more sophisticated in the 2000s and the 2010s, when the proliferation of devices' capable of accessing digital media led to sudden growth. Statistics produced in 2012 and 2013 showed that digital marketing was still growing. With the development of social media in the 2000s, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, consumers became highly dependent on digital electronics in daily lives. Therefore, they expected a seamless user experience across different channels for searching product's

information [11]. The change of customer behavior improved the diversification of marketing technology. Digital marketing is also referred to as 'online marketing', 'internet marketing' or 'web marketing'. The term digital marketing has grown in popularity over time. In the USA online marketing is still a popular term. In Italy, digital marketing is referred to as web marketing. Worldwide digital marketing has become the most common term, especially after the year 2013. Digital media growth was estimated at 4.5 trillion online ads served annually with digital media spend at 48% growth in 2010. An increasing portion of advertising stems from businesses employing Online Behavioral Advertising (OBA) to tailor advertising for internet users, but OBA raises concern of consumer privacy and data protection. E-marketing is a process of planning and executing the conception, distribution, promotion, and pricing of products and services in a computerized, networked environment, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web, to facilitate exchanges and satisfy customer demands, see figure 5 [12].



Figure 5: E-Marketing Types

Digital Marketing Channels (DMC) are systems based on the Internet that can create, accelerate, and transmit product value from producer to a consumer terminal, through digital networks. Digital marketing is facilitated by multiple Digital Marketing Channels, as an advertiser one's core objective is to find channels which result in maximum two-way communication and a better overall ROI for the brand. There are multiple digital marketing channels available namely [13]. Affiliate marketing - Affiliate marketing is perceived to not be considered a safe, reliable, and easy means of marketing through online platforms. This is due to a lack of reliability in terms of affiliates that can produce the demanded number of new customers. As a result of this risk and bad affiliates, it leaves the brand prone to exploitation in terms of claiming commission that isn't honestly acquired. Legal means may offer some protection against this, yet there are limitations in recovering any losses or investment [14]. Despite this, affiliate marketing allows the brand to market towards smaller publishers and websites with smaller traffic. Brands that choose to use this marketing often should beware of such risks involved and look to associate with affiliates in which rules are laid down between the parties involved to assure and minimize the risk involved. Display advertising - As the term implies, online display advertising deals with showcasing

promotional messages or ideas to the consumer on the internet. This includes a wide range of advertisements like advertising blogs, networks, interstitial ads, contextual data, ads on search engines, classified or dynamic advertisements, etc. The method can target specific audience tuning in from different types of locals to view a particular advertisement, the variations can be found as the most productive element of this method. Email marketing - Email marketing in comparison to other forms of digital marketing is considered cheap; it is also a way to rapidly communicate a message such as their value proposition to existing or potential customers. Yet this channel of communication may be perceived by recipients to be bothersome and irritating especially to new or potential customers, therefore the success of email marketing is reliant on the language and visual appeal applied. In terms of visual appeal, there are indications that using graphics/visuals that are relevant to the message which is attempting to be sent, yet less visual graphics to be applied with initial emails are more effective in-turn creating a relatively personal feel to the email. In terms of language, the style is the main factor in determining how captivating the email is. Using a casual tone invokes a warmer and gentle and inviting feel to the email in comparison to a formal style. For combinations; it's suggested that to maximize effectiveness; using no graphics/visual alongside casual language. In contrast, using no visual appeal and a formal language style is seen as the least effective method. Search engine marketing - Search engine marketing (SEM) is a form of Internet marketing that involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (SERPs) primarily through paid advertising. SEM may incorporate Search engine optimization, which adjusts or rewrites website content and site architecture to achieve a higher ranking in search engine results pages to enhance pay per click (PPC) listings [15]. Social Media Marketing - The term 'Digital Marketing' has a number of marketing facets as it supports different channels used in and among these, comes the Social Media. When we use social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, etc.) to market a product or service, the strategy is called Social Media Marketing [16]. It is a procedure wherein strategies are made and executed to draw in traffic for a website or to gain the attention of buyers over the web using different social media platforms. Social networking service - A social networking service is an online platform which people use to build social networks or social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. In-game advertising - In-Game advertising is defined as the "inclusion of products or brands within a digital game. The game allows brands or products to place ads within their game, either in a subtle manner or in the form of an advertisement banner. There are many factors that exist in whether brands are successful in the advertising of their brand/product, these being: Type of game, technical platform, 3-D and 4-D technology, game genre, congruity of brand and game, prominence of advertising within the game. Individual factors consist of attitudes towards placement advertisements, game involvement, product involvement, flow, or entertainment. The attitude towards the advertising also takes into account not only the message shown but also the attitude towards the game. Dependent on how enjoyable the game is will determine how the brand is perceived, meaning if the game isn't very enjoyable the consumer may subconsciously have a negative attitude towards the brand/product being advertised. In terms of Integrated Marketing Communication "integration of advertising in digital games into the general advertising, communication, and marketing strategy of the firm. Is important as it results in a more clarity about the brand/product and creates a larger overall effect [17].

Online public relations - The use of the internet to communicate with both potential and current customers in the public realm. Video advertising - This type of advertising in terms of digital/online means are advertisements that play on online videos e.g. YouTube videos. This type of marketing has seen an increase in popularity over time. Online Video Advertising usually consists of three types [18]: Pre-Roll advertisements which play before the video is watched, Mid-Roll advertisements which play during the video, or Post-Roll advertisements which play after the video is watched. Post-roll advertisements were shown to have better brand recognition in relation to the other types, where-as "ad-context congruity/incongruity plays an important role in reinforcing ad memorability". Due to selective attention from viewers, there is the likelihood that the message may not be received. The main advantage of video advertising is that it disrupts the viewing experience of the video and therefore there is a difficulty in attempting to avoid them. How a consumer interacts with online video advertising can come down to three stages: Pre attention, attention, and behavioral decision. These online advertisements give the brand/business options and choices. These consist of length, position, adjacent video content which all directly affect the effectiveness of the produced advertisement time, therefore manipulating these variables will yield different results [19]. The length of the advertisement has shown to affect memorability where-as a longer duration resulted in increased brand recognition. This type of advertising, due to its nature of interruption of the viewer, it is likely that the consumer may feel as if their experience is being interrupted or invaded, creating negative perception of the brand. These advertisements are also available to be shared by the viewers, adding to the attractiveness of this platform. Sharing these videos can be equated to the online version of word by mouth marketing, extending number of people reached. Sharing videos creates six different outcomes [20]: these being "pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control". As well, videos that have entertainment value are more likely to be shared, yet pleasure is the strongest motivator to pass videos on. Creating a 'viral' trend from a mass amount of a brand advertisement can maximize the outcome of an online video advert whether it be positive or a negative outcome. Native Advertising - This involves the placement of paid content that replicates the look, feel, and oftentimes, the voice of a platform's existing content. It is most effective when used on digital platforms like websites, newsletters, and social media. Can be somewhat controversial as some critics feel it intentionally deceives consumers [21]. Content Marketing - This is an approach to marketing that focuses on gaining and retaining customers by offering helpful content to customers that improves the buying experience and creates brand awareness. A brand may use this approach to hold a customer's attention with the goal of influencing potential purchase decisions [22]. Sponsored Content - This utilizes content created and paid for by a brand to promote a specific product or service. Inbound Marketing- a market strategy that involves using content as a means to attract customers to a brand or product. Requires extensive research into the behaviors, interests, and habits of the brand's target market. SMS Marketing: Although the popularity is decreasing day by day, still SMS marketing plays huge role to bring new user, provide direct updates, provide new offers etc. Push Notification: In this digital era, Push Notification responsible for bringing new and abandoned customer through smart segmentation. Many online brands are using this to provide personalized appeals depending on the scenario of customer acquisition [23]. It is important for a firm to reach out to consumers and create a two-way communication model, as digital marketing allows consumers to give back feedback to the firm on a

community-based site or straight directly to the firm via email. Firms should seek this long term communication relationship by using multiple forms of channels and using promotional strategies related to their target consumer as well as word-of-mouth marketing.

4. MOBILE PHONE INDUSTRY

The mobile industry is a subset of the telecommunications industry focused on mobile phones, phone service, and peripheral devices. In the 1990s and 2000s, this industry experienced rapid growth as a result of significant advances in mobile technology and increasing consumer demand for mobile products [24]. There are a number of elements to the mobile industry. Mobile phone producers are one aspect, covering everything from companies supplying raw materials to distributors fulfilling orders for mobile phones. Service providers are another category of the cellphone industry; many of these partner with specific manufacturers to make branded phones and devices with special features [25]. Manufacturers of smart phones, specialized modems for computers, tablet computers with mobile functionality, and similar devices are also part of the mobile industry. Likewise, with producers of accessories. Members of this industry include a number of multinational corporations with very wide reach, in addition to smaller companies offering localized services, like regional mobile phone providers. They are represented by a number of lobbies and professional organizations who work with regulatory agencies, manufacturers, and other interested parties to develop standards and practices for the cellphone industry as a whole. For example, in the 2000s, there was a push toward universal charging devices to make mobile phones easier to charge [26]. As with other aspects of the tech sector, the mobile industry in the 2000s attracted a great deal of investor attention and was pressured to rapidly roll out new products, as well as improvements to their existing products. Global coverage with mobile phone service also became a topic of interest; in some regions, people skipped landline service altogether for telecommunications, jumping directly to mobile phones because the network was cheaper and easier to implement [27]. Stock indexes focusing on telecommunications and the mobile industry provided a method for investing easily in companies of interest, stimulating trading in shares related to this industry, as well as telecommunications in general. Employment opportunities in this industry are highly varied. Engineers, technicians, repair personnel, and similar workers are needed for building and maintaining devices and cell towers. Marketing professionals are involved in the development of ad campaigns, and customer service personnel are needed to sell products and services. Creative professionals interested in visual design and aesthetics are also in demand in the industry for companies working on developing phones with specific aesthetic characteristics.

5. MOBILE PHONE COMPANIES

The global smartphone market is witnessing incremental growth opportunities owing to the rising demand for electronic devices. The above information was shared by Fortune Business Insights in a report, titled “Smartphone Market Size, Share and Global Trend by Operating System (Android, Windows, iOS and Other), By Price (High Range, Medium Range, Low Range), By Ram Size (Below 2GB, 2GB-4GB, up to 8GB), By Distribution Channel (Online, Offline, Multi-brand, Single Brand) and Geography Forecast till 2028.” The demand for smartphones is increasing at a rapid pace as people look for improved connectivity on the go

[28]. Smartphones usage can offer integration with other platforms by allowing installation of apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, Duo among others. These platforms help users to make instant video calls, email and other purposes. The analysts in the report say that internet penetration is increasing in developing and developed nations. This, in turn, is expected to increase the global smartphone market revenue in the forecast years. Top players list [29]:

- Apple
- OPPO
- Panasonic USA
- Samsung Electronics
- LG Electronics
- Nokia
- Sony
- HTC
- ONE PLUS
- Huawei Technologies
- Motorola Solutions
- Google
- Microsoft
- Lenovo

These developments give tailwinds to the market. With the introduction of in-flight connectivity technologies in international flights, users can use smartphones while flying. This contributes to the growth of the market. Also, the adoption of virtual and augmented reality by telecom companies is increasing. In addition to this, companies are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) technology to enhance customer interaction better. Such technologies are likely to improve the back-end operations such as predictive maintenance, chatbots and others. These technologies provide better security of a user's personal data [30]. These factors, together with the rising adoption of biometrics, are anticipated to drive the global smartphone market growth. This will further increase demand for different operating systems such as Windows, iOS, Android, Blackberry OS, Sailfish among others. The process of camera lenses and sensors are declining, which compels people to buy smartphones. Also, several telecom companies are developing Smartphone network to fulfil the changing needs of customers [31]. This is further expected to propel the growth of the market during the forecast period.

6. ELECTRONIC MARKETING FOR MOBILE PHONES COMPANIES

Apple is now a \$753 billion company. It likely holds more than \$203 billion in cash – more than twice the liquid cash of the US government. So read on to learn the seven secrets of the greatest product marketing campaigns plus a few epic marketing fails you definitely don't want to imitate [32]. Below 7 powerfully effective ways to market a product [33]:

i. Tell a (True) Story About Your Product

Many product marketers fall into the trap of “selling the product, not the experience.” No one wants your product. No one wants any product. They want a solution to their problem. Only talk about the benefits, features, and facts, and you’re missing out on glaring opportunities for engagement. When you discuss these, you only engage Broca’s and Wernicke’s area of the brain. These areas simply decode words into meaning. That’s it.

ii. Don’t Work Against Product Brand Perception (or Product Category)

Many product marketing campaigns fail. Some catastrophically. Big brands sometimes go too far outside their market’s perception. But once sold nationally, it tanked. It turns out, consumers thought they’d be drinking liquid candy. Sounds delicious to me, but the market as a whole didn’t like the idea.

iii. Do What Product Competitors Won’t Do

Back in the heyday of Nike’s first explosion in growth, they fearlessly tried what other companies wouldn’t do. They failed. Sometimes, in big ways. In the 1980s, they attempted to enter the casual shoe market. And it caused them to fall behind Britain’s Reebok, America’s athletic sneaker leader. But Nike didn’t let that stop them. In the 1970s and early 1980s, they used a then-unknown, and sometimes scoffed at, marketing tactic: celebrity athlete endorsements.

iv. Market to The Existing Customers

In the early 1990s, Pepsi and Coke dominated the beverage market. Both spent more than \$100 million to advertise just one of their brands. At the same time, milk consumption was on the decline in California. And what was so special about milk anyway? It was white. That’s it. Boring. Not much to say about milk. So, things didn’t look good for California’s dairy farmers. Nonetheless, the National Dairy Board and California Advisory Board had to try something with their miniscule \$23 million advertising budget. Eventually, they approached ad agency Goodby, Silverstein and Partners (GS&P). Previous campaigns attempted to draw in people who didn’t drink milk. But research by GS&P led it to believe it would work to advertise to current milk fans. Through focus groups, they found consumers only drink milk with something else. Also, they never think about it until they run out of it.

v. New Product? Try a New Brand Name

Think of the Life Savers soda again. Say you have a product that’s perfectly within your ability to produce. And you’re confident your market will like it. However, your product rests on the fringes of your market’s perception of your brand. They might think you rock at making the product (but they might not either). You don’t want to waste time and money creating a product no one uses.

vi. Make an Exciting Promise

A “big promise” makes all the difference to your customers. But company must deliver on it. Because today’s consumers will read reviews at Amazon and other websites to see how well company’s product actually works. Making a promise, without delivering, means you’ll only survive until your market figures that out.

vii. Fail Fast and Move On

Trying to find a market for your product, before you know the market exists, is a practically guaranteed recipe for failure. Many new product marketers fall for this because they believe their product rocks. Unfortunately, they never checked with the market.

7. CONCLUSION

Digital marketing has permeated the mobile phones industry. With the ever-evolving innovation of marketing technology and Digi-savvy buyers, it is imperative to have empirically based evidence to help determine which digital marketing efforts have a favorable impact on market outcomes, and thus justify the additional expenses and investment for sellers and agents. Research results indicate that mobile phone companies understand the importance of Internet presence. Mobile phone companies have websites that present all the necessary information to customers and inform them about companies' additional services. Companies present qualitative information about their selling objects – information is clear, complete and potential customers can easily understand the presented information. Some mobile phones companies are open to establish closer relationships with customers and offer online communication. Unfortunately, there are not many successful Facebook or Twitter usage examples by mobile phones companies. Communication in social networks is insufficient. Future research could be related to the analysis of mobile phones customers' opinions – how potential customers evaluate digital marketing methods and content.

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