

Smarty Pants Running Gear Communication Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Client Introduction: Smarty Pants Running Gear is the first company to create GPS enabled athletic clothing for runners. The company was established in May 2017 by former elite runner Christopher Smith and high-fashion clothing designer Sarah Roberts. In October 2017, they first went to market and sold out online within 90 minutes.

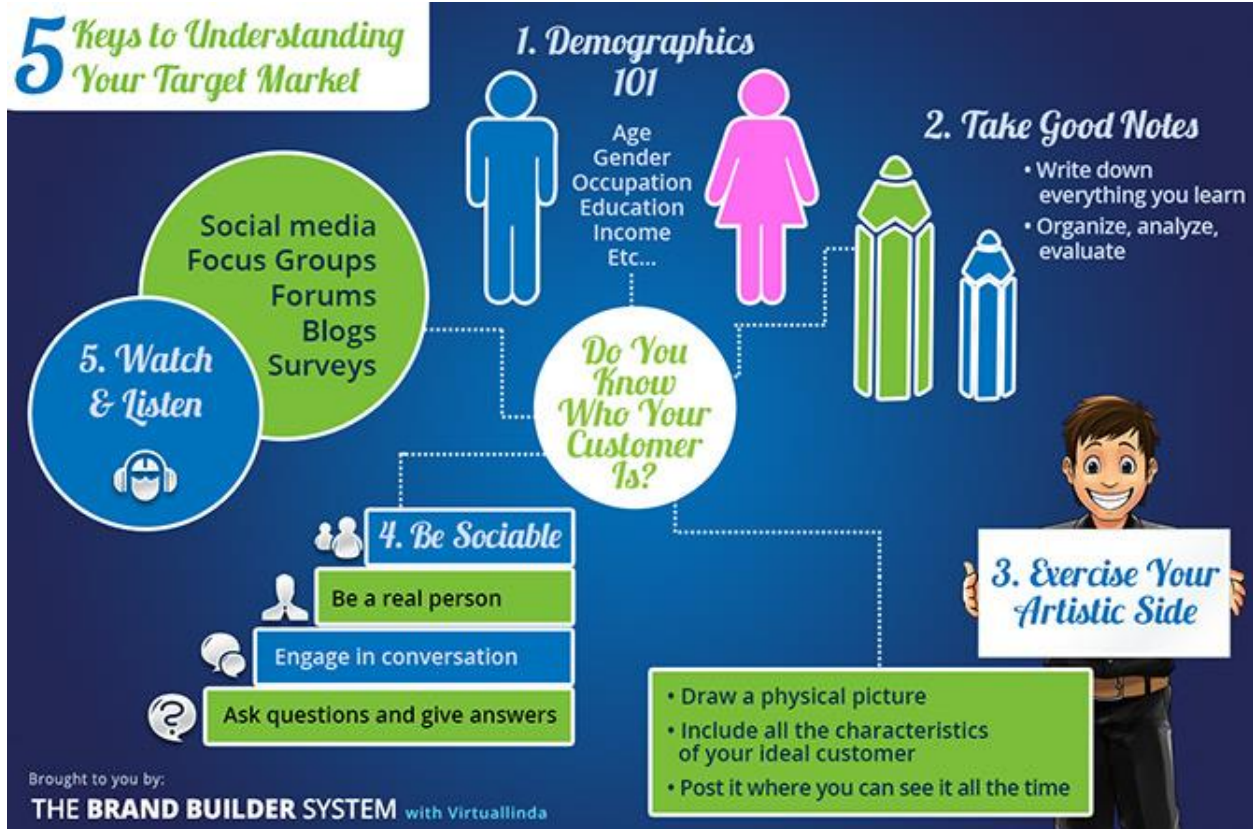
Smarty Pants Running Gear is looking to increase brand awareness to lead to an increase in sales. Most of the growth so far has been through word of mouth from friends and family but media placement in magazines (print and digital), online blogs and websites, and video media will increase their reach. This plan will cover the first three months of media communication strategies and will begin on April 9, 2018 and run through July 9, 2018. Future media communication plans will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Goal: Over the next three months, the goal is to increase overall brand awareness, customer base, and sales for Smarty Pants Running Gear by gaining media traction through strategic placement.

Objectives: This communication plan has a few target objectives:

- To increase brand exposure by gaining media placement in a minimum of three different publications, blogs, websites, or similar platforms.
- To increase online sales by 15 percent over the three-month period by developing campaigns and referral programs.
- To increase engagement on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter by aiming for a total of 10,000 likes, views, or shares across all platforms.

TARGET AUDIENCE AND KEY MESSAGES



Target Audience: Smarty Pants Running Gear caters to all ages and sizes. The target audience for this specific plan will be runners who are middle class, 25-45 years old, and run for leisure and those who also compete in road races. However, special consideration and focus will be directed towards female runners due to increasing numbers of women participating in road races. Females accounted for 57% of all road race finishers in 2016. The audience is considered to already be engaged and interested in running and is actively seeking new products to help them gain a competitive edge, or to make their running experience more enjoyable.

To guide our strategy and tactics in the communication plan, we have created three personas of individuals that fall into the category of runners we are targeting.

Karen: Karen is 45 years old and has been running off and on for ten years. She is looking to train for her first triathlon and wants to update her outdated running gear. She is

married with two children and is a manager at a sales agency. She is active on social media, primarily to check in with family and friends, but also follows brands that she enjoys.

Adam: Adam is in his early 40's and has been a runner and triathlete his entire life. He is training for his third Boston Marathon and will compete in an Ironman race later this year. Adam is a self-proclaimed "technology nerd" and is always searching for the latest running gear that can give him a competitive edge. He is an avid blog reader and reads the newspaper daily.

Jessica: Jessica is 25 years old and recently graduated with her master's degree. She is new to running and has completed a couple of charity 10K races. She is looking to train for a half-marathon later this year but is unsure what gear she needs. She often looks to the internet for online reviews and recommendations from popular social media fitness personalities.

Key Messages:

- Smarty Pants Running Gear was founded with a specific need in mind: to create running apparel that is not only fashionable but is also technologically functional for today's runner. Smarty Pants Running Gear meets this need by integrating GPS tracking technology in the clothing, eliminating the need to carry around a bulky phone or wear a running watch.
- Many runners are looking for a competitive edge in their running. By integrating GPS tracking technology directly into the clothing, runners are able to ensure they receive accurate and extensive data about their workouts, without investing in expensive watches or applications with limited data.
- Smarty Pants Running Gear is low cost and has a dual purpose, making it practical for runners who would like to save money on gear essential for runners.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Strategy: We are implementing our media campaign for Smarty Pants Running Gear for multiple reasons. Smarty Pants Running Gear has gained traction online through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, but does not have much traction in mainstream media. We chose our target audience of 25-45 year-old runners because, in our research, this is the largest growing segment of runners. Additionally, we have a specific focus on women because they comprise more than half of runners competing at road races in the United States. We see this as an opportunity to not only raise brand awareness within this demographic but to also build a community of runners to share similar running stories. Our strategy is to:

- 1) Reach out to reporters and journalists to gain media exposure in a minimum of three publications, websites, or blogs.
- 2) Build and grow relationships with journalists and reporters. It is important to be a resource for them not only with our products but also for athletic gear in general.
- 3) Increase sales online through the Smarty Pants Running website and encourage repeat purchases from current customers.
- 4) Engage with current, and attract new, audiences on social media with targeted campaigns for specific audience subsets.

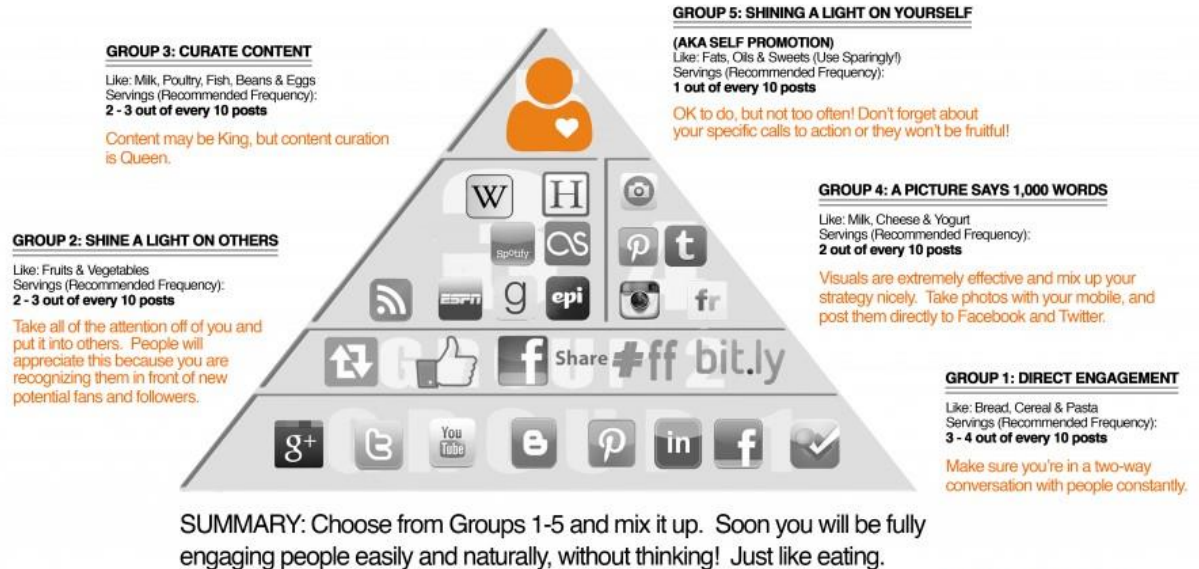
Tactics: Over the course of three months, we will use a variety of tactics to reach our target audience and gain media traction. We will implement traditional and social media to disseminate our messaging, but also use creative strategies to bring more attention to Smarty Pants Running Gear. The following tactics will be utilized:

- 1) Reach out to reporters and journalists from national and local news outlets (Appendix A) to share information about Smarty Pants Running Gear. This includes sending out press

releases (Appendix B), submitting op-eds/ letters to the editor (Appendix C) and sending pitch emails or phone calls (Appendix D).

- a) Expand media traction by identifying key influencers in the target demographic who either blog, podcast or produce video content relating to running. We will seed them with product to test out and write about their experiences if they choose to. (Note- we will seed them with products of their choosing but no additional compensation will be made.)
- 2) Create a newsroom page on the main Smarty Pants Running Gear website to be a resource for reporters and journalists looking for more information about the brand. This page is to include press releases, backgrounders, high-resolution images, contact information, and other resources useful for the press.
- 3) Develop a referral/ ambassador program to grow online sales. Current customers who are engaged online and in their communities will be invited to join an ambassador program. Through this program, these individuals will be provided product in exchange for posting on social media, wearing the brand at local races/ runs and be invited to attend future events. Each ambassador will be provided with unique codes to distribute to future customers inviting them to take 10 percent off their first order.
 - a) Work with the factory supplier to ensure inventory numbers are accurate and up to date. This will help minimize styles being out of stock and missing out on sales.
- 4) Develop a social media editorial calendar, highlighting key postings, referencing the social media pyramid. This calendar will have a list of scheduled post grouped by day of the week, time, and the content it will contain. The calendar will help the public relations team to target posts by audience and to ensure posts will receive maximum attention.

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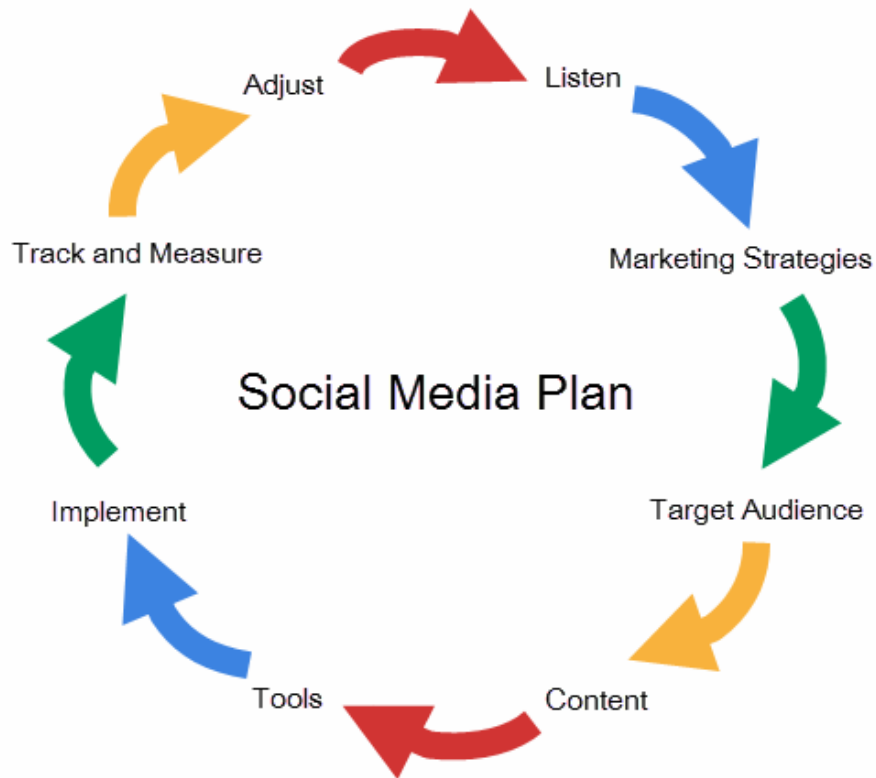
- a) Create a blog on the main Smarty Pants Running Gear website to help customers interact more with the brand, provide product feedback and to share their stories about how Smarty Pants have helped their running.
- b) Create quality photos and video to share and post on the Smarty Pants Running Gear website and social media platforms. Additionally, create engaging content on social media platforms to spark conversation and shares (see Appendix E and Nike case study).
- c) Invite runners to show us how they have “smartened up their run” (using hashtag #smartenyourrun) by sharing their own stories on Facebook. If their story is featured, they will win a pair of Smarty Pants Running Gear shorts.

- d) Develop a campaign specifically targeting women to highlight the strength and power of female runners everywhere. This will consist of stories submitted by women and highlight 2 or 3 of them in a video campaign. This will be released on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13th.
- 5) To help localize the brand, we will have a pop-up experience in Charlotte, NC on May 7th. This will not only celebrate the one year anniversary of the brand but will also allow media and key influencers to get to know the brand better and how it started in North Carolina. Members of the media (local and national) will be invited to attend.

EVALUATION

To measure our success in this initial media traction plan, we will use the following evaluations to determine how successful we were in the implementation of our plan. The feedback received will help guide future media plans for Smarty Pants Running Gear.

- To measure overall brand awareness prior to the media efforts outlined in this plan, a series of focus groups will be conducted to gather feedback and a baseline of knowledge to help tailor key messages moving forward. Furthermore, additional focus groups will be conducted at the end of the three months to measure change.
- To measure audience comprehension, we will employ a third-party group to follow-up with readers of publications that publish our media placements. They will conduct readership surveys to determine recall of messages and topics discussed in the articles.
- To measure the success of online sales, we will look at the overall online sales over the three-month period of this plan and compare them with the previous three months. We will additionally track web analytics to see how many individuals utilized the unique code designated for the ambassador program versus how many codes were distributed.
- To measure our digital footprint effectiveness, we will look at engagement with Smarty Pants Running Gear's social media platforms. We will measure the number of likes, shares and views the posts receive (impressions). We will utilize the social media plan to constantly evaluate and refine our social media strategy.



- To measure overall message exposure, we will look at the total number of media impressions and mentions received in channels such as print, radio, television, and digital. We will track the publication, tone of coverage (positive, negative or neutral), and any quotes and mentions of our key messages. We will use Google Alerts to track any mentions of the brand.

CONCLUSION

Over the next three months, we are confident that we can get significant media traction for Smarty Pants Running Gear. Through a combination of digital and print media on a national and local level, Smarty Pants Running Gear will see a rise in brand awareness, online sales, and social media engagement. We are committed to the brand and look forward to celebrating in the successes that are to come in the future.

APPENDIX A: Media List

Publication:	Contact Name/ Information:	Title:	Beat:	Media Type:
Runner's World Magazine	Molly Ritterbeck Molly.Ritterbeck@rodale.com	Fitness, Training & Health Director	Fitness/ running gear reviews	Magazine (print/ digital)
Women's Running Magazine	Rebecca Warren rwarren@competitorgroup.com	Editor-in-Chief	Women's running, product reviews	Magazine (print/ digital)
Trail Runner Magazine	Michael Bengé mbenge@bigstonepub.com	Editor	Trail running product reviews, etc.	Magazine (print/ digital)
ESPN W	Tara Chozet tara.c.chozet@espn.com	Communications Manager	Women's sports	Online/ digital video
UltraRunner Podcast	Eric Schranz eric@ultrarunnerpodcast.com	Host, Editor in Chief	Running podcast, product reviews, etc.	Podcast
iRunFar	Bryon Powell bryon.powell@irunfar.com	Editor in Chief	Product reviews, race reviews	Blog
The Ginger Runner	Ethan Newberry thegingerrunner@gmail.com	Owner	Product reviews	Blog/ YouTube
DC Rainmaker	Ray Maker contact@dcrainmaker.com	Editor	Running tech product reviews	Blog
The Charlotte Observer	Mike Persinger mpersinger@charlotteobserver.com	Executive Sports Editor	Sports	Newspaper (print/ digital)

APPENDIX B: Sample Press Release

Smarty Pants Running Gear
262 Acceleration Road
Speed, NC 27881
Contact: Katy Sputo
Phone: (252) 867-5309

For Immediate Release

NEW ATHLETIC SHORTS TRACK RUNNING DATA AND METRICS

SPEED, N.C., Apr. 9, 2018 – A new athletic clothing line that integrates fashionable running shorts with GPS tracking technology has been developed by Smarty Pants Running Gear. The clothing line, which was first released online in October 2017, has already sold over 15,000 pairs and aims to help athletes simplify their running while helping them gain a competitive edge.

The new shorts have a small sewn in sensor in the waistband that tracks a variety of metrics including running cadence, overall time and distance run, and pace. After a workout, the data can be wirelessly downloaded to any Bluetooth enabled device via a free phone or desktop application. The sensor has a 24-hour battery life, is rechargeable via USB cord, and is water and sweat proof. The clothing can be washed and dried with no risk of damaging the sensor.

“We wanted to integrate technology into clothing to help runners eliminate the need to purchase expensive watches or to carry bulky phones with them,” said Christopher Smith, president and co-founder of Smarty Pants Running Gear. “Our goal was to create inexpensive GPS enabled running shorts that catered to a wide variety of runners.”

The company offers four different styles of shorts for men and women, ranging in price from \$25-\$30 dollars, and come in sizes extra-small to extra-large. Currently, Smarty Pants Running Gear is available exclusively online on their website at www.smartypantsrunning.com.

Smarty Pants Running Gear, founded in May 2017, is the first company to create GPS enabled athletic clothing. After successfully raising \$100,000 in four days online, the company was able to fast track and develop their first collection of shorts. Additional information about Smarty Pants Running Gear is available at www.smartypantsrunning.com/newsroom.

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APPENDIX C: Earned Media Piece (Op-Ed- the benefits of GPS technology for runners)

What was once considered to be a luxury reserved for elite runners has now become common among runners of all abilities. GPS enabled technology has developed over the past decade and is now in anything from cell phones to car navigation systems and even in running watches and fitness trackers. In fact, by the end of 2017 over 77 million adults in the United States were predicted to own a smartwatch or other GPS enabled activity tracker.

The cost of GPS enabled watches and trackers has decreased significantly over the years making them cost-effective for many Americans. While high-tech running watches with features such as wrist enabled heart rate monitoring, smart notifications and multi-sport mode will set you back \$650, basic running watches with GPS start at around \$130. For most recreational runners, the basic features these watches offer are more than enough. Alternatively, many runners are turning to their smartphones and using applications to track their workouts and logging data. These applications do have limitations, but it is a cost-effective way to receive some feedback.

With GPS technology and wearables becoming more cost-effective for most runners, there is no better time than ever to take advantage of the technology. Utilizing GPS tracking for every day runs benefits a runner and allows them to receive immediate data about how their run went. Even the most basic of systems will allow a runner to see their overall distance, pace and time. This data can help a runner tailor their training programs and work to improve. This feedback can be helpful to keep pace during a track workout, know how far a runner is going during a long run, or it can also signal that a rest day is needed the following day.

I personally have used GPS technology for my running for over seven years. When I first started running, I was looking for a way to quickly lose the 30 pounds I had gained after giving birth to my first child. Shortly after I started, my husband gave me a GPS tracker to help keep me accountable. Having the data feedback (which is now limited, compared to the data output that is

available now) has helped me in my training. I was able to log workouts more accurately and provide better details to my trainer at the time. I eventually did lose the weight and have gone on to train for three marathons. My GPS tracker kept me honest and provided me with the data feedback I would never have received without it.

GPS technology has developed since I received my first tracker back in 2010. New applications and technologies such as chips you put in your shoe or wear on your body, have evolved and have pushed the limits of what is available for runners of all levels. The amount of information that is available from these devices continues to push the boundaries. The cost of GPS enabled technology continues to drop, making owning even the simplest of activity trackers commonplace for many adults today. Whether you are at the beginning of your health journey or are a seasoned athlete, I encourage you to do your research and find a GPS technology that serves your needs. You may find that it helps you to further unlock your potential.

Sarah Roberts
Co-Founder of Smarty Pants Running Gear
262 Acceleration Road
Speed, NC 27881
(252) 867-5309

Our target audience is middle class, 25-45 year-old runners. To ensure the best possible placement and reach for our target audience, we are focusing on having this op-ed placed in one of the notable running magazines. Since we have a specific focus on women, the primary goal is to have this placed in Women's Running Magazine. This op-ed has been written with their submission guidelines in mind. We will reach out to Editor-in-chief Rebecca Warren to submit the op-ed via email and will follow-up via phone call in a timely fashion after submitting the piece (within 24-48 hours).

APPENDIX D: Sample Pitches***Pitch E-mail: (Sent to Runner's World Magazine)*****SUBJECT: New running shorts integrate GPS technology**

Dear Molly,

I recently read your article on the seven items that will help you survive the last few weeks of winter. I had never heard of the Secret Freshies but I went out and purchased one for my gym bag. This is definitely a new favorite!

I wanted to send along an apparel company that might interest your readers. Smarty Pants Running Gear offers an alternative to GPS tracking technology for runners by sewing the tracker in the shorts. With over half of all runners utilizing a GPS tracker of some type, this new product can simplify running and reduce the need for bulky equipment, especially as the spring race season approaches.

We are launching our summer 2018 line-up soon which is expanding on the current line. I would love to tell you more about the company if you have time and I am happy to pass along any additional information.

Thanks,
Katy Sputo

Pitch Phone Script: (Addressed to The Charlotte Observer)

“Hi Mike, my name is Katy Sputo from Chain Reaction PR. I have a story about a new technology integrated athletic clothing brand that is local to North Carolina. Do you have a few minutes?”

“Smarty Pants Running Gear is the first brand to integrate GPS tracking technology into clothing, eliminating the need to carry a heavy cell phone while running or wearing a bulky watch. The founders wanted to simplify running and keep the cost of gear low. We are hosting a pop-up experience in Charlotte on May 7th to celebrate the one year anniversary and to reveal the new summer line-up. It is going to be a lot of fun and a chance for people to learn more about the brand and their roots to North Carolina.”

“I would be happy to send along more information and additional contacts. I will also provide you my cell phone number for any follow-up questions you may have. Thank you for your time.”

APPENDIX E: Social Media Examples

Facebook:

 **Smarty Pants Running Gear** Like Page
Sponsored

No longer is it wrong to be called a smarty pants.

Smarty Pants Running Gear allows you to run freely with no wires, no watches and no expensive gear. With a GPS enabled sensor in the shorts, your running data is collected, and wirelessly downloaded to your smartphone after your run.

So smarten up your run and tell us below, where will your next run take you?



   323 414 Comments 98 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share

Twitter:

 **Smarty Pants Running Gear** @smartypantsrunning · 

Sometimes it's good to be a smarty pants! Simplify your running without watches or wires. Let your shorts do the tracking. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/smartypants>. #smartypantsrunning #smartenyourrun

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 Promoted

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