

HOW CAN COMPANIES IMPROVE CUSTOMER LOYALTY THROUGH BRANDING?

Pang Yue, Dr Oo Yu Hock, and Pang Yue

Binary University of Management & Entrepreneurship

E-mail:

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the factors—brand identity, brand consistency, and customer experience—that contribute to customer loyalty and provide recommendations on how businesses may improve these areas. In order to shape client perceptions and cultivate emotional connections—both of which are crucial for loyalty—a clearly defined brand identity is vital. Maintaining cohesion across all customer touchpoints with the same message and visual elements helps build confidence and reliability in the brand. One of the most important things you can do to keep customers coming back is to have a consistent branding strategy. Smooth interactions, efficient problem solving, and personalized treatment define a client's customer experience, which greatly influences their level of happiness and loyalty. A loyal client base is the result of delighted customers who are satisfied with their purchases, who are likely to buy from the company again, and who are likely to tell others about their excellent experience. Businesses may establish long-term relationships with their customers and enjoy consistent success by incorporating a strong brand identity, being consistent, and providing outstanding customer experiences. This all-encompassing method highlights the need for consistent branding techniques in cultivating long-term client loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Identity; Brand Consistency; Customer Experience

1. Introduction

The complex branding process fosters an organization's unique identity and consumer connections (Iglesias et al. 2020). The core of branding is creating and

sustaining an enduring reputation and image that resonates with a particular target audience. It contains a number of programs and strategies that will help get the word out about the values, aims, and objectives of the business. This pillar of branding is critical for molding how customers see and engage with a business, which impacts their dedication and loyalty.

No branding plan can be successful without first establishing the brand's identity. This word suggests what differentiates one brand from another. This category encompasses both graphic components such as logos, color schemes, and typefaces, as well as vocal components such as brand messaging and tone. Customers are more likely to remember and identify with a well-designed brand because it reflects the values and objectives of the business.

Developing a memorable brand name requires in-depth familiarity with the company's mission as well as the wants and demands of its intended consumers (HR, & Aithal, 2020). In terms of visual identity, a tech firm would highlight innovation and state-of-the-art design, whereas a luxury brand might prioritise exclusivity and elegance. Consumers are more likely to remember and have faith in a brand if its visual identity is consistent and engaging.

Building a brand's reputation necessitates consistent branding efforts. When a customer interacts with a brand in more than one way, it's important that their messaging, visual elements, and experience are consistent throughout (Waqas, et al. 2020). This category includes everything from advertising to social media to packaging to customer service to in-store experiences. Customers learn to trust and rely on the brand more when it stays true to its original mission and values.

Customers have high expectations for their experiences with a consistent brand. For instance, a brand that consistently delivers high-quality goods and outstanding customer service can earn a dependable reputation (Bintoro, et al. 2023). On the flip side, consumers could become confused and lose faith in a brand if there are discrepancies in its branding, such as different messaging or visual aspects. As a result, businesses must coordinate their branding initiatives to provide a consistent and

trustworthy brand experience.

From the first moments of brand awareness and consideration to the interactions that occur after a customer makes a purchase, it is all part of the customer experience (Becker, & Jaakkola, 2020). It encompasses a wide range of points of contact, including ease of use of the website and products, encounters with customer service, and assistance provided after the transaction. Positive experiences increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Efficient problem resolution, customised service, and smooth interactions are the hallmarks of a wonderful customer experience. One example is a well-designed website that facilitates simple product discovery and purchase, which in turn improves the user experience. Similarly, if customer service is quick and polite, it can make a negative situation better and show that the brand cares about its customers.

When customers have a negative experience, like a badly designed website or inadequate customer assistance, it can make them frustrated and unhappy (Baier, et al. 2021). Differentiating a brand and establishing long-term loyalty in today's competitive market is dependent on delivering an outstanding customer experience. Customers have many alternatives.

To foster client loyalty, it is crucial to consider the interaction between customer experience, brand consistency, and brand identity. All of the parts work together to give consumers a complete impression of the brand. Maintaining coherence across all interactions strengthens a brand's identity. The customer experience gives life to this identity by providing consumers with real-world encounters that mirror the brand's ideals and guarantees.

The use of high-end packaging, an upscale in-store experience, and messaging that highlights the brand's commitment to sustainability and excellence can all contribute to achieving brand consistency (Hammers et al. 2020). Shoppers would appreciate not only the high-quality coffee but also the welcoming atmosphere and helpful staff. All of these factors contribute to a memorable brand experience, which ultimately leads to customer loyalty.

The relationship between customer loyalty and aspects like brand consistency, customer experience, and brand identity can provide valuable insights for companies looking to improve their branding strategy. By developing a distinct and engaging brand identity, maintaining cohesion across all touchpoints, and delighting customers at every turn, businesses can forge deeper ties with their clientele and inspire greater loyalty. In a market where customer expectations are always changing, these branding elements are essential for long-term success and staying ahead of the competition.

1.2 Problem Statement

Branding initiatives often receive substantial funding from corporations in today's fast-paced, highly competitive business climate, with the goal of establishing and maintaining strong consumer loyalty (Islami, et al. 2024). In spite of all this spending, many companies still can't seem to get the outcomes they were hoping for. Many times, the main issue is that it is not always clear which parts of the branding have the greatest impact on generating client loyalty. Misaligned branding tactics, lost opportunities, and strained relationships with customers can result from a lack of mutual understanding.

Among the many facets that make up the field of branding are the following: brand consistency, customer experience, and brand identification. All of these factors are crucial since they determine how consumers feel about and engage with a brand. Finding the right way to use these factors to encourage loyalty, though, is a problem for many businesses. Businesses risk not connecting with their target audience or not staying true to their brand's values if they don't know how customer experience, brand consistency, and brand identity work together to build customer loyalty.

When we think about a brand, we see and hear its identity. Logos, colour palettes, typefaces, and messaging are all part of it. In order to craft a powerful brand identity to convey the principles, objectives, and goal of the brand, aiming to establish a unique and unforgettable impression in the eyes of consumers (Mogaji, & Mogaji, 2021), a distinct personality for your company is critical, but it won't keep customers coming back. Businesses should check that the people they're trying to reach have similar tastes and expectations for their brand.

When all points of contact with a brand are consistent in terms of message, visual identity, and overall experience, we say that the brand is consistent. Maintaining a consistent approach strengthens the reputation of the company and fosters trust among consumers (Chuah, et al. 2020). When customers see a brand consistently displayed in a consistent and trustworthy manner, they develop trust and loyalty. Conversely, inconsistent branding can undermine attempts to establish strong customer relationships by causing confusion and eroding trust.

From brand discovery to post-purchase interactions, it's all part of the customer experience. This includes website usability, product usability, customer service interactions, and after-sale support. Smooth interactions, quick problem-solving, and individualised service define a positive customer experience. When it comes to building consumer happiness and loyalty, this aspect of branding is crucial. Positive interactions with a brand enhance both customer loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion (Al-Zyoud, 2021).

These branding aspects are crucial, but many businesses don't fully grasp how to use them to their full potential in order to increase consumer loyalty. Consider a scenario where a corporation goes to great lengths to establish a visually appealing brand identity but neglects to guarantee that all channels utilise the same messaging and graphic components. In a similar vein, a company may provide first-rate customer service but fail to connect it with its established brand.

Because of the intricate interplay between brand identity, brand consistency, and customer experience, there is a lack of comprehension (Pina, & Dias, 2021). Even though businesses recognise the significance of these factors individually, they may not fully understand how they influence consumer loyalty when taken as a whole. Because of this haziness, branding tactics may not meet client expectations or neglect important areas of concern.

An organisation may, for instance, strive to establish a refined brand identity that highlights exclusivity and opulence. If the quality of the brand's customer service falls short of the expectations set out by the brand's image, disillusionment among

consumers is possible (Viscomi, 2023). On the flip side, a company that is excellent at satisfying customers could have trouble becoming well-known if its brand is disjointed.

Opportunities to deepen relationships with customers and foster loyalty may go awry due to this imbalance. Businesses risk unintentionally turning off potential customers if they don't provide a consistent and captivating brand experience (Rodriguez, 2023). They also risk missing out on opportunities to set themselves apart from the competition and forge meaningful relationships with customers by capitalising on their brand's identity and customer experience.

This study aims to address this issue by investigating the relationship between customer loyalty and brand consistency, identity, and customer experience. The study's overarching goal is to help companies enhance their branding strategy by providing a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which different branding elements affect customer loyalty. Firms that understand the interplay between these components can achieve better branding, strategy alignment with customer expectations, and increased customer commitment.

Because they don't know which aspects of branding genuinely create loyalty, many companies that invest heavily in branding fail to achieve and sustain high levels of customer loyalty. To address this information gap, this study investigates the interplay of customer experience, brand consistency, and brand identity in determining customer loyalty. The study's primary goal is to assist businesses in developing better branding strategies and closer relationships with their customers by identifying these relationships.

2. Impact Of Social Responsibility On Loyalty

Consumers in the modern market are increasingly thinking about the moral implications of the things they purchase, which raises the question of how social responsibility affects consumer loyalty. Businesses that give back to the community are more likely to retain consumers. A growing number of consumers are placing a premium on brands that share their own beliefs, reflecting a larger cultural shift. Customers are more devoted to a brand when they feel that it shares their ethical beliefs,

which creates a bond between the two parties that goes beyond the traditional buyer-seller dynamic.

Repeated studies have demonstrated that customers are more loyal to businesses that not only provide excellent goods and services but also actively support charitable causes. Companies that do charitable deeds for society foster a sense of community among their consumers, according to Glaveli (2021). This, according to Bhattacharya and Sen, is a huge advantage. The development of enduring loyalty depends on the cultivation of emotional ties, which in turn give rise to a shared sense of purpose. When two parties' values align, the bond between a business and its clientele goes beyond a transaction. It develops into a partnership when both parties value one another and work together for the common good.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a noticeable effect on consumer behavior, according to research by Wang (2020). Of those who participated in the survey, 87% said they would buy from a company if it meant drawing attention to a cause that meant something to them. This picture does a fantastic job of showing how CSR may influence customer choices. Among the many significant things that brands can do to improve society, two stand out: supporting social justice and encouraging environmental sustainability. Through these efforts, brands have the opportunity to increase their credibility and gain the trust of consumers. If consumers believe a business cares about more than simply generating a profit, they are more inclined to stick with the brand. Trust is an essential component of loyalty.

Emphasizing the need for transparency in CSR projects is vital. When we talk about transparency, we mean being honest and upfront about the results of the company's social responsibility initiatives. Being open and honest about a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives increases customer trust in the company's honesty and dedication to having a positive impact. Being transparent helps to establish trust, which is an important factor in client retention. "Greenwashing" refers to the fraudulent claim of environmental sensitivity by businesses, which can result in consumer skepticism and undermine a brand's credibility. In their research on CSR, Afzali and

Kim (2021) stress the significance of being genuine. They make the valid point that consumers are able to discern when a business is only making token attempts at social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs should be based on honest actions that align with the company's fundamental values to enhance consumer loyalty.

One more thing that sets a business apart in a competitive market is its commitment to social responsibility. People who shop with integrity will show their support for businesses that are actively working to improve society (Chatzopoulou & de Kiewiet, 2021). Businesses with high levels of competition may find this disparity particularly striking when comparing items with similar features and costs. Incorporating corporate social responsibility into branding allows businesses to address consumers' ethical issues and establish a distinct identity that connects with them on a more profound level.

Integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives into company strategies has the potential to enhance customer loyalty over time. Consistent efforts to complete social responsibility duties and excellent progress communication can help firms build long-term connections with their clients. When customers participate in these relationships, they feel more connected to the business because they believe the brand shares their values and helps with causes they care about. When consumers have strong feelings for a brand, they are more inclined to stick with it, despite offers from competitors. The emotional connection is a major factor in brand loyalty (Shahid, et al. 2022).

Another indicator of the impact of social responsibility on customer loyalty is the way in which consumers support companies that participate in CSR. People are more inclined to provide positive word-of-mouth—which includes recommending the brand to others and defending it in conversations—when they have a deep emotional connection to a company's social responsibility programs. Not only does this promote the brand's image, but it also attracts new consumers whose beliefs align with the brand's. Good corporate social responsibility (CSR) can significantly enhance a brand's market position and long-term performance through the positive feedback loop of brand

loyalty and advocacy (Fatma, & Khan, 2023).

Branding tactics that incorporate social responsibility greatly affect customer loyalty. Companies actively participating in corporate social responsibility projects can foster deeper and more loyal consumer connections. This is because there has been a recent uptick in the number of people looking to make sure their money is going towards causes they believe in. Businesses can build trust and foster loyal customers by actively participating in social concerns, being honest and open with their customers, and standing out from the competition by committing to positive change. In addition to helping the company maintain a dedicated customer base, this strategy reflects the evolving role of businesses in today's society by contributing to society as a whole.

2.1 Brand Identity

Building a strong brand identity is essential for firms to stand out in the market, since it influences how customers see them and encourages them to be loyal. A company's brand consists of several different visual and verbal components that work together to convey the company's values, mission, and unique selling points to consumers. This set includes logos, color palettes, typefaces, and messaging to distinguish the brand.

The sum of a company's distinctive branding aspects is what gives it its identity in the eyes of consumers (Srivastava, et al. 2022). It forms the foundation for all interactions and perceptions related to the brand. A distinct brand identity has a significant impact on consumers' perceptions of the company and their interactions with it, going beyond visually appealing marketing materials. A memorable brand identity is one that evokes a certain emotion in the target audience via the strategic use of visual elements and language. For example, when a company has a consistent color scheme and a unique logo, it can boost brand recall, familiarity, and trust among consumers.

Eslami's (2020) research further highlights the significance of brand identity in influencing customer loyalty. An integral component of brand equity, which impacts customer loyalty, is the degree to which a brand is known and positively viewed, according to Eslami's (2020) brand knowledge model. We talk about "brand awareness"

when we say that people remember and can identify a brand, and we talk about "brand image" when we say that individuals have a mental picture of the brand. Both of these contribute to the product's memorability when consumers encounter it through a unique and memorable brand identity.

When people have a little trouble identifying and remembering a brand, they are more likely to associate it positively. Building a consistent image that appeals to the values and preferences of target consumers is easier with a strong brand identity. This emotional connection is crucial for developing long-term commitment since it goes beyond basic acknowledgment and creates a deeper sense of kinship and trust.

According to Boafo et al. (2020), a well-defined brand identity can help a company stand out in the market by conveying its core values and objectives. An example would be a company that finds success in attracting and retaining consumers that share its principles of sustainability and environmental responsibility by using its identity to promote these causes. By aligning their identities with their beliefs and aspirations, companies may make their brands more captivating and attractive to customers.

Furthermore, brand equity is an important component in creating customer loyalty (Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022). A brand's identity significantly influences its value. Buyers' favorable impressions of a product or service are what give it its "brand equity," or monetary worth. A strong brand identity contributes to positive brand equity by making a distinct and positive impression that increases customer satisfaction and loyalty. When customers are trusting a company's offerings, they are more likely to be loyal customers and spread the word about the business.

Research on brand distinctiveness and competitive advantage supports the link between brand loyalty and identity. Companies require memorable brand identities that set them apart from rivals if they want to bring in and retain consumers (Boafo et al. 2020). Differentiating oneself from rivals through unique branding elements is one strategy for attracting and retaining customers.

In addition to these factors, a solid brand identity helps reduce the perceived risk for consumers. A well-established and consistent brand increases consumers'

confidence in their buying decisions. Assuring consumers that their products will be of excellent quality and delivered reliably by a well-known and trusted brand is critical to client retention.

The power of a company's brand determines how it can influence customer perceptions and foster loyalty. Using visual and linguistic aspects to create a unique and unforgettable image can help businesses increase brand recognition, emotional connections, and consumer trust. Studies by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) have highlighted the significance of brand identity in determining brand equity and customer loyalty. In addition to communicating the core values of a company, a distinct brand identity helps create an engaging and unforgettable brand experience, which boosts customer loyalty.

2.2 Brand Consistency

Consistency in branding, when executed successfully, is a crucial part of successful branding that influences customers' perceptions of the firm and fosters their loyalty. Consistency in the brand's messaging, visual identity, and interactions is key to providing a consistent and reliable experience across all touchpoints for customers. The establishment of credibility and the strengthening of brand loyalty are both aided by consistency (Šerić et al. 2020).

Having a constant logo or color scheme across all platforms is just the beginning of what is required for consistent branding. Message, tone, and customer service are all in sync with one another to form a unified brand. Customers are more likely to have a positive impression of the brand if they consistently receive the same message and have a positive experience across all channels. Keeping everything consistent helps establish the company's identity, which makes it easier for consumers to recognize and love the brand.

According to Shin et al. (2020), customers are more likely to be loyal and trusting of a company when there is cohesion in their brand experience. To create a unified experience, all touchpoints with a brand—ads, social media, packaging, and customer service—must be in line with the company's message and principles. This alignment

facilitates the development of a distinct brand name that resonates with customers and instills trust in the service or product. Customers who have trust in a company's promises and values, reinforced by consistent and predictable experiences, are more loyal to that brand.

According to Gao and Fan (2021), maintaining a consistent brand image is crucial for client retention. According to the research, customers are more likely to form favorable connections with a brand when they have reliable and consistent experiences with it. In contrast, if the branding isn't cohesive, customers may lose faith in the brand and their commitment to it. Inconsistencies in a brand's visual identity or messaging across different media could lead to a decline in trust and loyalty from consumers.

According to Salvietti et al. (2021), customers are happier when their experiences with a brand are consistent and integrated across all channels. Consistency in branding, visual identity, and customer interactions increases the likelihood that consumers will have a positive image of a brand. A positive perception helps establish emotional connections and boosts the company's reputation, both of which are crucial in establishing and sustaining customer loyalty.

With customers interacting with brands across several platforms (e.g., websites, social media, mobile apps, and physical stores), maintaining brand consistency is more important than ever. If could develop divided views of the brand and eventually lose trust in it if there are inconsistencies across any of these touchpoints. Consistent use of all brand aspects across all platforms increases customer loyalty (Fang et al. 2021).

Maintaining brand consistency can manage customers' expectations and reduce perceived risk. Consistent interactions with a brand help consumers form opinions about the brand's reliability and value. As a result of this clarity, customers are happier and more confident in their interactions with the company, which in turn helps to lessen uncertainties. On the other hand, inconsistent branding can cause customers to be irritated and possibly lose allegiance if their expectations aren't met.

Consistency in branding is essential for making an impression on consumers and winning their loyalty. Companies can build trust and confidence with their customers

by making sure the brand's visual identity, messaging, and interactions with customers are consistent across all touchpoints. Research by Khan, et al. (2022) highlights the significance of maintaining a consistent brand identity, managing consumer expectations, and establishing long-term customer loyalty. To succeed in today's complex and interdependent market and keep customers coming back, brands must remain consistent.

2.3 Customer Experience

A customer's impressions and interactions with a brand are vastly varied and interconnected; together, they make up what is known as the customer's experience. It is critical to determine the extent to which consumers will be loyal to the brand. Customers' positive or negative experiences greatly affect their perceptions of the brand and their likelihood to remain loyal, making customer experience a crucial factor in customer loyalty (Akoglu, & Özbek, 2022).

The key to a fantastic customer experience is making sure that every interaction is smooth, quick, and tailored to the customer's needs. These encounters encompass everything from the first point of contact all the way through the sales and marketing phases and beyond, to the support and service provided after the purchase. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with it in general when they have a positive experience with it. Customers have a more favourable impression of the brand as a result of the reduced friction and improved ease of engagement brought about by seamless interactions (Wang, et al. 2023). Solving problems effectively is another important part of the customer experience. In addition to taking care of the issue at hand, a quick and satisfying response shows that the business cares about its customers. Customer satisfaction and trust are increased when a business responds quickly.

By adapting interactions to suit specific needs and preferences, personalised service goes above and beyond to enhance the client experience. A deep emotional connection can form between a brand and its consumers when the latter believe that the former knows and meets their unique needs. Thanks to the extra effort made to satisfy their particular needs, clients are even more satisfied and loyal as a result of this personal

touch.

Oliver's (1999) theory of customer satisfaction highlights the high degree of correlation between happy customers and loyal ones (Jahmani, et al. 2020). Oliver asserts that satisfying encounters greatly influence favourable word-of-mouth and repeat purchases. When a brand meets their requirements and exceeds their expectations, customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and share their positive experiences with others. Promoting a business through positive word of mouth helps keep current consumers and bring in new ones, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty.

Findings from the study conducted by Dam, & Dam, (2021) emphasise the strong correlation between high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Research shows that satisfied customers are more likely to stick around and recommend your business to others. Client satisfaction increases the likelihood that a consumer will remain a loyal customer and make additional purchases. This improved retention rate results in a more successful and stable company over time.

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of customer experience in cultivating loyalty. By fostering interactions that are both memorable and rewarding, a pleasant customer experience lays the groundwork for loyalty. When the brand treats its customers with respect and appreciation, their loyalty to it grows. This emotional connection fosters a sense of brand affinity, surpassing transactional connections and fostering long-term commitment.

Loss of loyalty can occur due to an unpleasant client experience. Customer dissatisfaction, anger, and trust erosion can result from poor interactions, unsolved problems, and impersonal service (Ghosh, & Mandal, 2020). Bad experiences tend to go around, and when they do, they can damage a brand's reputation and make it less appealing to future consumers. Thus, to escape these traps and guarantee ongoing client loyalty, it is vital to maintain a high standard of customer experience.

The customer experience, encompassing all encounters and impressions with a brand, significantly influences a consumer's overall satisfaction and loyalty. Seamless

interactions, effective problem resolution, and personalised service are the hallmarks of a pleasant customer experience. These factors combine to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Delivering outstanding experiences is crucial for fostering long-term commitment, since both Oliver's (1999) theory and Zhong, & Moon, (2020) study emphasise the strong association between customer pleasure and loyalty. Therefore, it is essential to generate and retain brand loyalty by ensuring a fantastic client experience. This will lead to positive word-of-mouth and repeat business because it creates lasting emotional ties.

3. Overview of Research

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative research method will be used for How can companies improve customer loyalty through branding?

4. Discussion on Major Findings

Research consistently shows that a well-defined brand identity significantly enhances customer loyalty by establishing a distinct and recognizable image in the marketplace. A strong brand identity helps foster emotional connections and trust, making it easier for customers to remember and relate to the brand.

Brand consistency is equally vital. Studies by Jain, et al. (2024) emphasize that maintaining uniformity in messaging and visual identity across all touchpoints reinforces brand identity and builds customer trust. Consistent branding ensures a reliable and predictable customer experience, which is essential for sustaining loyalty. Inconsistencies have the potential to cause customers to lose faith and become confused, which in turn might affect their loyalty.

Consumer loyalty is heavily influenced by the quality of the service they receive. Rane et al. (2023) found that pleasant experiences positively impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. Smooth interactions, effective problem-solving, and individualized care define these experiences. Happy customers who repeat purchases and share their positive experiences are essential for fostering long-term brand loyalty.

Oliver's (1999) theory and Zhong and Moon's (2020) research support this.

Customer loyalty can be greatly enhanced by well-executed branding strategies that prioritize a distinct brand identity, constant brand display, and an outstanding customer experience. When put together, these factors help strengthen overall brand loyalty and create enduring emotional relationships.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, a strategic emphasis on brand identification, brand consistency, and the customer experience is necessary to enhance customer loyalty through branding. Fostering connections and trust with customers requires a clearly defined brand identity that creates a picture that is both memorable and emotionally appealing. Maintaining consistency in branding guarantees the consistent communication of this identity across all touchpoints, thereby enhancing trust and minimizing misunderstandings. In order to establish trust and loyalty among customers, it is essential to keep the brand experience consistent.

The customer experience is critical because it has such a direct impact on consumer happiness and loyalty. Positive encounters, characterized by efficient problem-solving, individualized attention, and smooth service, bolster customer satisfaction and loyalty. A higher rate of client retention and advocacy is associated with more positive experiences, according to the research.

All of these parts work together to make a complete strategy for increasing client loyalty. Building long-term customer relationships and succeeding in a competitive market requires a focus on a unique brand identity, consistent messaging, and providing outstanding customer experiences.

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