



LEADING IN YOUR VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

LEVEL 5 PROJECT



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INTRODUCTION



Offering your time and expertise as a leader in a volunteer organization provides many benefits and challenges. Among the most important benefits is the opportunity to lead. Regardless of career or social status, a member of an organization can participate as a leader and gain skills and experience. A particular challenge of leading in a volunteer organization is understanding that the people you lead follow because they choose to follow.

Leading in a volunteer environment is distinct from leadership in an employment setting because traditional, compensation-based motivation of team members is not an option.

In this project, you will learn the skills required to lead in a volunteer organization and develop an understanding of the importance of recognition and reward in motivating volunteers. You will come to understand the value of building a strong environment of mutual respect with other members and the importance of showing integrity, competency, and character in decisions, leadership, and actions.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to apply the skills needed to successfully lead in a volunteer organization.

Overview: Serve in a leadership role in Toastmasters or another volunteer organization for at least six months. You may complete this project based on your employment, but a volunteer organization is preferable. Ask members of the organization to complete a 360° evaluation of your leadership skills. Create a succession plan to aid in the transition after you leave your position of leadership. After your six-month term, deliver a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting to reflect on your personal experience.

Note: If you plan to fulfill a leadership role in a non-Toastmasters organization, you must receive advance permission from your vice president education.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 13.



Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.



Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

5
EXEMPLARY

4
EXCEL

3
ACCOMPLISHED

2
EMERGING

1
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I have a clear understanding of the skills required to lead in a volunteer organization.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I understand the importance of recognition and reward in motivating volunteers.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am able to build a strong environment of mutual respect among members of an organization.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I can clearly explain how leading with integrity, competency, and character affects members of an organization.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I always show integrity, competency, and character in decisions, leadership, and actions.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

COMPETENCIES

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Exhibit an understanding of the skills required to lead in a volunteer organization.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of recognition and reward in motivating volunteers.
- Build a strong environment of mutual respect with other members.
- Show integrity, competency, and character in decisions, leadership, and actions.

VOLUNTEER LEADERS AND MEMBERS

One of the most important goals in any volunteer organization is to elevate members to the ranks of leaders. The nature of volunteer organizations, like Toastmasters, is a dependency on members to engage in leadership roles. This requires a high level of commitment and provides an even higher level of opportunity.

THE LEADER GROUP AND THE MEMBER GROUP

Leader-Member Exchange Theory, or LMX, focuses on the relationships between leaders and the people they lead. Unlike other theories of leadership that focus on the skills and traits of the leader, team members, or the environment, LMX concentrates on individuals as part of a leader group or a member group.

Leader Group

The leader group in an organization is made up of individuals who volunteer for office or other leadership positions. Any office or role that involves leadership responsibilities falls into this category.

Members of an organization who participate in the leader group may simply have more time available to contribute, but they are often those individuals who do more than is expected of them. Whatever the reason they choose to lead, they are likely to be the innovators and problem solvers in their organization. Because of their participation, they very often receive more opportunity and recognition than those who remain in the member group.

Member Group

The member group is comprised of individuals who are not currently engaged in a leadership role. Any time a member moves out of a leadership role, she leaves the leader group and becomes part of the member group. In this way, the groups are continuously evolving and changing.

Individuals content to remain a part of the member group may do so for a variety of reasons. Members may be unable to commit a larger amount of time, they may feel unprepared for handling the responsibilities of leadership, or may not be interested in a higher level of involvement. It is possible they do not see the value to be gained by participation in the leader group.

Value

Each group, both members and leaders, has an important contribution to make to an organization. It is imperative for leaders to remember that without the member group, there is no one to lead. Many volunteer organizations are for and about the members. Leaders contribute to furthering the values of the organization and facilitating the goals of its members.

General members of an organization must recognize that without those who volunteer to lead, the organization would likely fail.

Both groups are needed and contribute immeasurably to the success of any organization.

WHEN YOU LEAD

Members of the leader group—especially individuals who have volunteered for a leadership role over a long period of time or taken consecutive positions—may underestimate the value of the member group. The most successful volunteer leaders recognize the contribution of every member in an organization.

Creating an environment of trust and mutual respect is core to building a well-run volunteer team. When your goal as a leader is to be as inclusive as possible and encourage members to contribute, all members must know they have an open invitation to increase their involvement. Because a leader has a high level of trust and respect for members, individuals in the member group will feel secure in assuming more responsibilities and eventually moving into the leader group.

When a leader has a high level of trust and respect for the member group, she is more likely to make opportunities available. By making opportunities available and encouraging involvement, the leader gives members a way of building a higher level of trust in the leader and the organization.

It is important to acknowledge and reward member contributions. Developing a system for honoring contributions will help a leader track rewards and acknowledgments in order to be consistent. Consistent acknowledgement builds trust. Keeping track will help a leader avoid the common pitfall of appearing to reward certain members more than others.

RESPECT AND LEADERSHIP

The importance of building respect between the member group and the leader group cannot be overestimated. On the surface, this may seem like a simple thing. A leader does a good job, functions with integrity, and is respected by members. Respect flows from leaders to members in the same way.

In theory it is simple, but the reality is more complex. There are several factors that contribute to an environment of mutual respect. Recognizing these factors can help both members and leaders understand the building blocks of a high quality working relationship.

Generally, people in an organization are drawn to individuals who exhibit stronger leadership skills than they themselves possess. There are times when a leader is not as strong as individuals in the member group, but he is recognized as a leader because of status, rank, or past accomplishments.

Charisma

Most of us have had the opportunity to work with a person who draws people in by the sheer power of her charisma. Though this natural attribute does not contribute to the relationship between leaders and members, it is important to acknowledge its value. While some individuals innately possess more charisma than others, everyone can work to increase their approachability and enthusiasm.

Contribution

Volunteering is a choice. Leaders in a volunteer organization cannot force members to contribute. Though this is true in any setting, it is especially true when leaders are dependent on members to reach an organization's goals.

People contribute because they have a desire to be part of something larger than themselves. The challenge for a leader is making sure members want to engage and contribute. We have already mentioned the value of reward and acknowledgment, but it is important to understand the value of respecting the members you lead.

Respect

When members feel respected, they are more likely to engage at a higher level.

Individuals will abandon a well-paying job, a prestigious assignment, or an important role even when they are well compensated if they do not feel respected for their work, their commitment, or their personal strengths. By showing respect for all members, regardless of their level of involvement, a leader builds a stronger ability to influence members to participate.



Courage

Acts of courage have a powerful influence on members of any organization. Courage is a leader's ability to act responsibly even if doing so isn't popular and the leader opens herself up for heavy criticism.

The smallest act of courage from a leader can build a strong rapport with individuals in the member group and encourage a sense of pride in belonging. This pride in being a part of an organization with integrity can encourage members to join the ranks of leadership.

Success

It is great to be a part of a winning team. It's also great to join the team of a leader you know is a success. Success draws people in, and leaders need to leverage not just their own success, but also the successes of their team members. Successful members tend to become successful leaders, and a generous amount of recognition helps reward current successes and encourages future accomplishments.

Loyalty

In a volunteer organization, loyalty is fundamental to success. Loyalty is built by providing members with a strong, well-defined vision. It is the vision, and the goals set out to accomplish that vision, that call members to action. To attain a high level of loyalty, a leader needs to communicate the vision of the organization and demonstrate what the member gains by helping to bring the organization's vision to life.

TRUST AND COMMITMENT

Trust is at the core of leading with integrity. Trustworthiness in leadership can be defined as a combination of integrity and competency. If a leader is competent in her skills, but lacks integrity, members will not see her as trustworthy. At the same time, a leader with a high level of integrity, but a lack of competence or skill, will be viewed with an equal amount of distrust.

Another component of building a high level of trust is communication. When you think of communication, it is easy to only think of the bigger, more dramatic pieces of information, like organizational change. Often, the most important communications are the mundane, everyday correspondence that allows members, even those with little active involvement, to feel a part of the broader group. This relates back to that important sense of belonging that will help move an inactive member into the leader group.

CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Commitment from membership is built at the same time as trust. When a member trusts an organization and those who lead, that member is more likely to take an opportunity to move into the leader group. In that way, leaders are the messengers for the organization. The more trustworthy the messenger, the more likely a member is to participate.

A leader's commitment to the organization and its membership is a self-fulfilling action. Leaders with a high level of commitment will encourage the same in the members of their teams. That commitment will encourage members to take leadership roles, providing growth to the member and support for the organization as a whole.

Appreciate Participation

Volunteers are most often intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation comes from inside of the member in the form of a desire to participate.

Encourage and Support

Leaders in a volunteer organization are tasked with finding ways to encourage members to motivate themselves and to provide support for continued involvement.

Recognize Potential

All leaders must look for and identify highly motivated individuals. These are the people who are most likely to move from the member group into the leader group. This can be accomplished by recognizing a member's potential and skills.

Inspire Contribution

A volunteer leader's ability to influence members is an important component of encouraging involvement successfully. Take the time to praise members for their contribution and work to inspire each person to contribute at a higher level.

Acknowledge Effort

A leader needs to watch for members who are contributing above their normal level. This may be a signal that a volunteer is ready to assume more responsibility.

Provide Opportunity

Provide opportunities for every member to contribute, regardless of past involvement. When leaders work to encourage and motivate at every opportunity, they create an environment where individuals can easily move into positions of leadership.

Transfer of Knowledge

A key component to success as a leader in an organization is learning from other leaders and passing that knowledge on to members. An organization supports this transfer of knowledge by providing training. Leadership supports it by demonstrating a willingness to share.

Value of Membership

Most people join an organization first because they believe in the vision of the organization and because of the support and learning the organization provides. They stay because of what they gain by being a member.

Creating Successors

Leaders facilitate a member's commitment by being good role models and by mentoring. In supporting members in this way, leaders ensure that there are well-trained successors to move into leadership roles when they decide to take a step back and become a part of the larger membership group.

Organizational Success

The value of well-trained successors is indisputable. This type of training happens naturally, over time when leaders allow members to take the level of responsibility they find comfortable. By encouraging, supporting, training, and mentoring, leaders guarantee the continued success of their organization and growth in leadership among its members.



CREATING A SUCCESSION PLAN

In Toastmasters, members in leadership roles have a set term of office. As a part of this project, you will need to fulfill a leadership role at some level of the organization. This role can be as a leader at your club, area, district, or region and is up to you to decide the best fit for you and your skills or the skills you would like to develop.

You can also take a volunteer role in another organization with the approval of your club's vice president education.

As a part of this project, you need to develop a succession plan to smooth the transition when your term is complete. Use the Succession Plan on page 18 to help you organize your plan or create your own.



CONDUCTING 360° EVALUATIONS

As a part of your project, you will need to complete a 360° evaluation. The value of a 360° evaluation is in receiving feedback from people with different perspectives on your leadership. A peer may have a different experience working with you than a team member you lead or a club officer who oversaw the outcome of your project.

Use the 360° Evaluation provided on page 19. Choose the method of administration you feel is most effective, whether electronic, face-to-face, or paper-based.



REVIEW AND APPLY

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What skills and attributes are most important when leading in a volunteer organization?
- Why is it important to recognize and reward volunteers?
- List the steps you need to take to build a strong environment of mutual respect with other members. How can you accomplish each one?
- What is the value of showing integrity, competency, and character in decisions, leadership, and actions?
- How is leading volunteers different from leading in another type of organization?

COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT



Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report.

Review: Return to page 3 to review your assignment.



Organize: Use the Project Checklist on page 13 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

Schedule: Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.



Prepare: Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 15–17 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.

PROJECT CHECKLIST

Leading in Your Volunteer Organization

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to apply the skills needed to successfully lead in a volunteer organization.

Overview: Serve in a leadership role in Toastmasters or another volunteer organization for at least six months. You may complete this project based on your employment, but a volunteer organization is preferable. Ask members of the organization to complete a 360° evaluation of your leadership skills. Create a succession plan to aid in the transition after you leave your position of leadership. After your six-month term, deliver a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting to reflect on your personal experience.

This project includes:

- Serving in a volunteer leadership role for a minimum of six months
- Conducting a 360° evaluation of your leadership skills
- Creating a succession plan
- The Succession Plan resource
- The 360° Evaluation resource
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

Identify the leadership role of your choice. If you plan to fulfill a leadership role in a non-Toastmasters organization, you must receive advance permission from your vice president education.

Fulfill the leadership role of your choice.

Select the group you would like to complete your 360° evaluation. This group must include representatives from a team you lead, a person or persons you reported to or who oversaw the work you completed as a leader, and at least one peer.

Distribute the 360° Evaluation resource.

Use the Succession Plan resource to create a succession plan for your office.

Schedule your speech with the vice president education.

Collect, review, and submit your evaluations to the vice president education.

Write your speech. Include information about your experience as a leader, information about how you designed your succession plan, and the impact of your 360° evaluations.

Rehearse your speech.

After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

EVALUATION FORM

Leading in Your Volunteer Organization

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title _____

Purpose Statements

- The purpose of this project is for the member to apply the skills needed to successfully lead in a volunteer organization.
- The purpose of this speech is for the member to share some aspect of his or her experience serving as a leader in a volunteer organization.

Notes for the Evaluator

During the completion of this project, the member:

- Served in a leadership role in a volunteer organization for a minimum of six months
- Received feedback on his or her leadership skills from members of the organization in the form of a 360° evaluation
- Developed a succession plan to aid in the transition of his or her leadership role

About this speech:

- The member will present a well-organized speech about his or her experience serving as a volunteer leader.
- The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style the member chooses. The style should support the content.
- This speech is not a report on the content of the “Leading in Your Volunteer Organization” project.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

EVALUATION FORM – Leading in Your Volunteer Organization

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING
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<p>Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:
<p>Topic: Shares some aspect of personal experience leading in a volunteer organization</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	Comment:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Leading in Your Volunteer Organization

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively

- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Topic

- 5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about some aspect of personal experience leading in a volunteer organization
- 4 – Delivers a compelling speech about some aspect of personal experience leading in a volunteer organization
- 3 – Shares some aspect of personal experience leading in a volunteer organization
- 2 – Mentions some aspect of personal experience leading in a volunteer organization, but does not fully address
- 1 – Speaks on a topic other than personal experience leading in a volunteer organization

SUCCESSION PLAN

Skills Required	Primary Responsibilities	Typical Time Commitment	Benefits of the Role
Position title:		Term: Weekly commitment:	
Position title:		Term: Weekly commitment:	
Position title:		Term: Weekly commitment:	
Recommendations			
I recommend: For the position of:	I recommend: For the position of:	I recommend: For the position of:	Notes

360° EVALUATION

Evaluator Name _____ Date _____

Role _____

Leader Name (person to be evaluated) _____

Timeframe for Evaluation _____

Please consider your experience working with the leader you are evaluating and give a thoughtful response to all the questions presented here. If you have not observed a particular behavior or quality, indicate "Not observed" on your evaluation. Take a moment to include examples wherever possible and if needed, add additional pages.

Using the rating scale provided below for survey-style questions, please circle the number that best reflects your rating of the individual's performance during the time period being evaluated.

Leadership

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE

Provides a clear sense of purpose, direction, and responsibilities to team members	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Comment:
Acts and behaves in a manner consistent with his or her statements	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Comment:
Manages issues in an effective manner	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Comment:

Provide an example of how he or she positively contributes through his or her leadership.

How can the individual improve his or her leadership?

Communication

1 DEVELOPING	2 EMERGING	3 ACCOMPLISHED	4 EXCELS	5 EXEMPLARY	N/A NOT APPLICABLE
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<p>Is open to constructive feedback</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 N/A</p>	Comment:
<p>Gives appropriate feedback that is timely and constructive</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 N/A</p>	Comment:
<p>Manages conflict effectively</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 N/A</p>	Comment:

How has the individual demonstrated effective communication skills?

Describe how he or she has implemented constructive feedback.

Interpersonal Skills

1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE	
Shows genuine concern for all team members						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Perceived as trustworthy						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Recognizes and rewards individual contributions in a manner meaningful to each team member						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

How would you recommend that the individual improve his or her interpersonal and relationship-building skills?

Teamwork and Team Building

1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE	
Supports a team environment by valuing collaboration and cooperation						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Supports the organization at all levels						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Considers the impact of actions and decisions on the organization before implementing						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

How does the individual contribute to the successful and effective functioning of his or her team?

Problem Solving

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE

Listens actively to others' ideas and perspectives						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Is prepared to make decisions based on relevant information						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Is willing to change his or her position when presented with compelling information						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Give an example of a time when the individual displayed exemplary problem-solving skills.

What recommendations do you have for the individual to improve his or her problem solving skills?

Motivation

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE

Shows interest in and enthusiasm for the work to be completed						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Uses effective strategies to motivate his or her team members						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Rises to challenges						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Give an example of a successful motivational strategy he or she used while leading the team.

Give an example of the individual's level of motivation.

Prioritization

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
DEVELOPING	EMERGING	ACCOMPLISHED	EXCELS	EXEMPLARY	NOT APPLICABLE

Allots time appropriately to tasks that require attention						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Manages time to keep high-priority tasks at the forefront						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

In general, does the individual prioritize action items and follow through on the priorities he or she set?

In your opinion, does he or she select the appropriate priorities?

Reliability

1 DEVELOPING	2 EMERGING	3 ACCOMPLISHED	4 EXCELS	5 EXEMPLARY	N/A NOT APPLICABLE
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Sets and honors milestones and timelines						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Establishes an agenda for every meeting and effectively covers all topics in the allotted time						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
Is respectful of others' time and commitments outside of the organization						Comment:
1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

Can you depend on the individual to keep his or her commitments?

Describe how the individual demonstrates respect for others' time and commitments.



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