

Marketing Intelligence: Antecedents and Consequences

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Abstract:

Contemporary business organizations are consistently innovating their data generation, analysis and dissemination capabilities for bringing efficiency and effectiveness in their operations. Incorporating strategic marketing intelligence can provide top management a new approach of improving business performance and brand positioning strategies. Similarly, tactical intelligence can enhance business value by developing customer insights and customer loyalty. This research paper presents a framework of antecedents and consequences of Marketing Intelligence through the review of literature and their contribution to strategic and tactical decision making. Insights are also provided into the various sources of generating marketing intelligence and how proper analysis of marketing information can contribute to value maximization for customers and profit maximization for business organizations.

Keywords: Marketing Intelligence, Strategic decision making, Tactical decision making.

1. Introduction

Marketing Intelligence is the application of intelligent IT systems on marketing information for strategic and tactical planning and decision making. MI is defined as “gathering marketing information from all accessible points i.e., marketing research, market developments, internal and external environment, verifying and validating the reliability and consistency of information sources and employing it for decision making” (Kelley, 1965). For these marketing intelligence systems to work efficiently managers obtained information through both formal (Reports) and informal (Hall talk) mechanisms, using various published and personal sources (Maltz & Kohli, 1996). Additionally, insightful and actionable information is also collected, organized and analyzed in a systematic, timebound, ethical and regular basis for decision making. This information is then utilized to identify customer requirements by scanning their surrounding marketing environment i.e. Technological, Economic, Legal and Social using marketing

research to satisfy their requirements profitably (Evans, 1988). Marketing Intelligence therefore, is the process of “determining key intelligence areas and then acquiring and analyzing, supplying and applying information (both qualitative and quantitative) about the external market environment in order to understand market forces (including products and customers)” (Muller, 2006). Marketing Intelligence works by accumulating “information about customer needs, preferences attitudes, and behaviors, plus potential changes in the business environment that may affect buyers” (Cornish, 1997). Marketing Intelligence thus is the analysis of marketing information about customers to improve the core competence of strategic organizations processes (Kunle, Akanbi, & Ismail, 2017). Marketing Intelligence serves the organizations by keeping them fast-tracked about competitor development and customer requirements to provide efficiency and effectiveness to their marketing operations (Massoudi, 2018). In lieu of the same, forces in the Marketing Intelligence landscape needs to be continuously monitored for any possible changes and developments requiring updating policy reforms and marketing programs.

Table 1 – Marketing Intelligence Landscape (Muller, 2006)

Dimension	Description
Product Intelligence	Research & Development, Product modification & innovation
Competitor Intelligence	Competitor market share, Competitor product share, Competitor area of operations, Competitor Capabilities
Customer Intelligence	Customer present needs & future requirements, Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty parameter's
Market Intelligence	Key Market trends, Demand & Supply mechanism, Driving Forces, Market developments, Risk Variables, Market size, Market Analysis
Competitive Intelligence	Success Factors, Core Competence, Competitive Advantage

1.1 Sources of Marketing Intelligence

In contemporary business environment, managers need timely, reliable and accurate information to make effective decisions. Marketing intelligence systems supplies this information on

developments in marketing environment that helps managers to prepare and adjust marketing plans. Therefore, intra-organizational & inter-organizational channels of information inflow for marketing intelligence must be developed, maintained to serve the Key Intelligence needs of an organizations in a time bound and systematic manner.

Table 2 – Marketing Intelligence Sources

SOURCE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
FORMAL	Salesforce	Competitors
	CRM, MkIS, MDSS	Suppliers/ Distributors/Dealers
	Research & Development	Business Associates
INFORMAL	Cross Department Interactions	Secret Agents, Dummy Employees
		Customers
		Client Meetings
PUBLISHED	Marketing & Sales Reports Sales Quotas	Competitors
		Physical Evidence (product or prototype)
		Government Publications
UNPUBLISHED	New Hires	Periodicals & Newspapers
		Market Research Projects
		Trade Associations

2. Research Background & Hypothesis Development:

Historically, the research area of organizations is not volumes, variety and velocity of generated information (big data) but how to “analyze” little available information to make successful decision making and problem solving. Dealing with the same marketing research emerged as the soul problem solver for data management and analysis in 1930’s and 1940’s but it suffered from the constraint of high costing. In lieu of business requirement, the concept of marketing intelligence was first introduced to the marketing literature by (Kelley, 1965) to provide reliable, consistent and analyzed information to the top management for planning policy reforms and formulating key business decisions. Kelley’s work on marketing intelligence was quickly followed by (Pinkerton, 1969) as organizations become proactive about this new technological revolution and marketing intelligence systems gets adopted and applied to the field of industrial marketing by managers. Since its inception, MI systems gets updated & innovated keeping up with the requirements of the different time horizons, industries and customized requirements of the business organizations.

The qualitative and quantitative impact it brings on the business organizations, current trends show a strong researching interest of both academic and practitioner in marketing intelligence (Cornish, 1997; Evans, 1988; Kunle, Akanbi, & Ismail, 2017; Pinkerton, 1969; Kelley, 1968). Marketing Intelligence as defined by most of the eminent authors comprised of three set of activities namely:

- Information Acquisition: Organization wide generation of marketing information for current and future customer needs

- Information Analysis: Generation intelligence from the collected information.
- Information Activation: Using generated intelligence for developing and executing marketing plans (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

These above stated components of marketing intelligence in addition to the antecedents and consequences as identified from the literature forms the core of the study. To allow for the smooth progression of present study, model identifying the key variables included in the study are provided (figure 1). Based on the insights identified from literature, 3 sets of antecedents of Marketing Intelligence pertaining to Individual sources, Information source and Internet source were identified, and hypothesized in relation to Marketing Intelligence. Marketing Intelligence is in turn hypothesized to be related to Consequences of MI in the form of strategic and tactical decision making.

2.1 Antecedents & Consequences of Marketing Intelligence

The most important group of antecedents regarding this study pertains to be the key stakeholder comprising of employees, customers and suppliers, driven by life-long experience and commitment to the organizations. Several authors suggested that employees (sales force), the eyes and ears of the organizations in the markets plays a critical role in generating marketing information. Similarly, suppliers being the centrifugal component of organizations value chain can reactively and proactively analyze the market trends by interacting with the business fraternity and provide decision areas to marketers for centralizing their business operations around knowledge innovation.

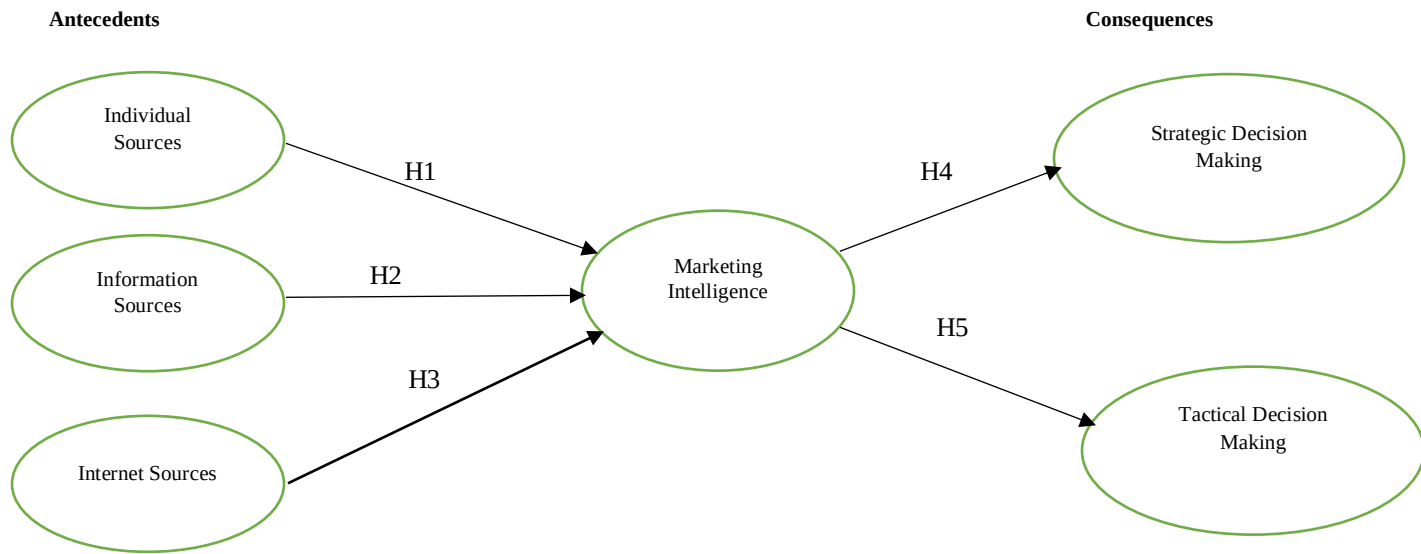


Fig. 1- Conceptual Framework: Antecedents and Consequences of Marketing Intelligence

With the proliferation of web applications, customers used internet intelligence for shopping, product comparisons, and sometimes publishing product reviews (Vishnoi, Bagga, Sharma, & Wani, 2018). Harnessing these customer reviews by Domain Adopted Sentiment Classifications can result in bifurcating customer opinions into separate sentiment categories which are cited as one of the important sources of marketing intelligence (Yang, Chen, & Chang, 2015). Customers perception about brands can also be

mined using data mining techniques. (Daabes & Kharbat, 2017) identified customers to be a rich source of objective, intelligent and systematic marketing information. Salespeople and statistical information collected by government and made available to the market through trade associations are once regarded as the two best sources of marketing intelligence (Moss C. , 1979).

Table 3 – Individual Sources of Marketing Intelligence

Individual Source	Authors
Employees (Salesforce)	(Moss C. , 1981; Meunier-FitzHugh & Piercy, 2006; Thietart & Vivas, 1981; Robson, 2015; Kuester & Rauch, 2016), (Festervand, Grove, & Reidenbach, 1988), (Webster Jr., 1965)
Customers	(Yang, Chen, & Chang, 2015), (Daabes & Kharbat, 2017)
Suppliers	(Song & Thieme, 2009)

Salesforce, the eyes and ears of businesses in the market can become the most important source of marketing intelligence by nurturing them on organizational factors (training, involvement, recognition and performance evaluation) (Bonfrer, Peters, & Mazany, 1993), managerial factors (decision making, control, feedback and recognition) (Jandaghi, Amini, & Tavakoli, 2011), individual factors (desire for upward mobility & organizational commitment) (Bon & Merunka, 2006) and motivational needs (expectancy, instrumentality and valence) (Nasri & Charfeddine, 2012). But some companies limit the role of salesman only to promotional services and minimizes the opportunities of salespeople working as a source of marketing information (Webster Jr., 1965). On the contrary, most of the studies involving salesforce potential in generating marketing intelligence not only empirically validates salesforce contribution in marketing intelligence generation (Meunier-FitzHugh & Piercy, 2006; Kuester & Rauch, 2016) but some even suggest developing a marketing intelligence system with salesman as the core component

(Festervand, Grove, & Reidenbach, 1988). Going by the conventional wisdom, a research experiment by (Song & Thieme, 2009) suggest that supplier's participation in MI generating activities is positively associated with innovation. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: The Individual Sources i.e. customers, suppliers and employees are positively associated with the generation of marketing intelligence.

Information is the core component of contemporary business organizations and often dictates the parameters of success in global and competitive markets. Marketing information system is the knowledge warehouse of the organizations formed by the timely interaction of men, machines and mechanisms, designed for generating and maintaining continuous and orderly flow of internal and external information for decision making in the area of marketing management (Fletcher & Wheeler, 1989).

Table 4 – Information Systems Sources of Marketing Intelligence

Information Sources	Authors
MkIS	(Fletcher & Wheeler, 1989)
CRM	(Chablo, 2000), (Rababah, Mohd, & Ibrahim, 2011), (Stein, Smith, & Lancioni, 2013), (Kelly, 2000)
Market Research	(Wee, 2001)

Customer relationship management (CRM) provides marketers the accessibility to quality customer information required for marketing intelligence systems (Chablo, 2000). Obtained information thus helps organizations in better knowing their customers and drive successful management and development of sustainable customer relationships (Rababah, Mohd, & Ibrahim, 2011). For a customer-centric organization to be successful customer behavior and customer responses needs to be continuously monitored to understand customer satisfaction & loyalty, profitability, lifecycle and switching tendency (Stein, Smith, & Lancioni, 2013). There processed and analyzed customer feedbacks are then woven into the business strategy and business processes (Kelly, 2000). Adding on to the data sources of marketing intelligence is market research carried out for specific project and product related market development in order to cater to customized customer requirements. Market research senses for possible market threat or opportunity to remove any weak links in company's armory of product portfolio, overriding any concern regarding the tactical and operational business strategy (Wee, 2001). Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H2: The Information Sources i.e. CRM, MkIS and Marketing Research are positively associated with the generation of Marketing Intelligence

Marketing intelligence gathered from social networking sites is being predominantly used by SME's for operationalizing their business actions and social media therefore has been long recognized as a strategic asset for MI acquisition (Atanassova & Clark, 2015). Facebook, being the top performing social media site likes, influences customer opinions about products and services based on recommendations, advertisement, likes and reviews and therefore is an important element of MI generation. The influence of Facebook marketing is empirically tested to be positive on customers, especially in mobile phone and brewing industry (Groothuis, 2019). A study of MI application on destination marketing and tourism organizations also holds true as core business processes already monitoring blogs and weblogs as a source of MI (Puhlinger & Taylor, 2008; Glance, et al., 2005; Baumgartner, Gottlob, & Herzog, 2009). Additionally, an experiment measuring the effectiveness of microblogging website Twitter as a source of MI and managerial decision making is also supported (Li & Li, 2013).

Table 5 – Internet Sources of Marketing Intelligence

Internet Sources	Authors
Social Media	(Atanassova & Clark, 2015), (Groothuis, 2019)
Blogs, Weblogs, Microblogs	(Puhlinger & Taylor, 2008; Glance, et al., 2005; Baumgartner, Gottlob, & Herzog, 2009), (Li & Li, 2013)
e-Commerce	(Buchner, Anand, Mulvenna, & Hughes, 2008; Buchner & Mulveena, 1998)
Internet	(Lympelopoulous & Chaniotakis, 2005)
Virtual Communities	(Maclaran & Catterall, 2002)

e-Commerce websites which forms a considerable segment for customer visits, processes online data by incorporating domain knowledge through web log mining and thereby discovering marketing intelligence (Buchner & Mulveena, 1998; Buchner, Anand, Mulvenna, & Hughes, 2008). (Lympelopoulous & Chaniotakis, 2005) conducted a research study using TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) validating Internet, being the life blood of contemporary business organizations, as one of the most important source of marketing intelligence generation for banks. It is being proved that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of internet positively impacts employee attitudes which, in turn, affect employee's intention of using internet as a tool of MI (Maclaran & Catterall, 2002) in his research study argues that many to many communication in virtual communities between customers via discussion forums and chat rooms are a rich source of marketing intelligence. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: The Internet Source i.e., Social media, Blogs/Weblogs/Microblogs, Online discussions, e-Commerce (web

log mining), Internet & Virtual Communities are positively associated with the generation of Marketing Intelligence

From definition, Marketing Intelligence is a proactive mechanism to scan, monitor, analyze and evaluate marketing information to counteract on competitor actions and prevailing market conditions for improving their competitive advantage and overall performance through enhanced and intelligent decision making (Daabes & Kharbat, 2017). MI enables the managers in deploying intelligence through the salesforce and reforming their organizations business strategy (Piercy & Lane, 2005), business performance (Johan, Isfianadewi, & Anwar, 2019), decision making (Oktara & Erdogan, 2007). A research study conducted by (Lackman, Saban, & Lanasa, 2000) reveals that 44% of organizations using MI indicated that MI contributes to business decision making and gets generated from customers, manufacturers and research and development. Research studies empirically validates the linkage between internet generated MI positively influencing value creation (Karayanni, 2005) and salesforce generated MI assisting in new product development (Kuester & Rauch, 2016) .

Table 6– Marketing Intelligence & Strategic Decision Making

Dimension	Author
Business Strategy	(Makadok & Barney, 2001), (Piercy & Lane, 2005)
Business Performance	(Johan, Isfianadewi, & Anwar, 2019; Ayub, Raisani, Iftekhar, & Mushtaq, 2014; Aghazadeh, 2015; MacPherson, 2000)
Decision Making	(Oktara & Erdogan, 2007; Al-Shaikh, 2010; Mockler, 1992; Khurana & Goje, 2015; Mandal, 2018), (Daabes & Kharbat, 2017), (Lackman, Saban, & Lanasa, The contribution of market intelligence to tactical and strategic business decisions. , 2000)
Business Value Creation	(Karayanni, 2005), (Harrison & Cupman, 2008),
New Product Development	(Trainor, Krush, & Agnihotri, 2013), (Kuester & Rauch, 2016),
SWOT Analysis	(Novicevic, Harvey, Autry, & Bond III, 2004)
Competitive Advantage	(Ade, Akanbi, & Tubosun, 2007; Igbaekemen, 2014; Guarda, Augusto, & Lopes, 2019; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005)
Business Forecasting	(Jensen, Wakefield, Cobbs, & Turner, 2016)
Strategic Marketing & Business Planning	(Lackman & Lanasa, 2013; Wee, 2001; Ayub, Razzaq, Aslam, & Iftekhar, 2013; Trim & Lee, 2007; Karayanni, 2005; Venter & Rensburg, 2014; Thomas, 1990; Jamil, 2013)
Innovation	(Thieme & Song, 2002; Cornish, Product innovation and the spatial dynamics of market intelligence: does proximity to markets matter?., 1997; al-zoubi, 2016; Mostaghela, Oghazib, Patel, Parida, & Hultman, 2019)
Environment Scanning	(Xu & Kaye, 1995; Evans, 1988)
Brand Positioning	(Tüfekci, Papatya, & Papatya, 2014; Kanwal, Samalia, & Singh, 2019)
Business Transformation	(Papatya & Papatya, 2011)

Several studies indicated that application of MI by business organization is positively related to strategy formulation (Makadok & Barney, 2001), SWOT analysis (Novicevic, Harvey, Autry, & Bond III, 2004), competitive advantage (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005), business value (Harrison & Cupman, 2008), business forecasting (Jensen, Wakefield, Cobbs, & Turner, 2016), strategic marketing & business planning (Wee, 2001)[29], innovation (Mostaghela, Oghazib, Patel, Parida, & Hultman, 2019), new product development (Trainor, Krush, & Agnihotri, 2013), environment scanning (Evans, 1988), brand identity & positioning (Tüfekci, Papatya, & Papatya, 2014) and business transformation (Papatya & Papatya, 2011). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Marketing Intelligence is positively associated with Strategic Decision Making in the organizations.

One of the most important drivers of organizations success are the tactics employed by them in managing their macro and micro environmental factors. Therefore, in this era of digital revolution, the role of marketing intelligence becomes all together more important in providing the required and customized marketing information to the managers to put their business strategies into action, fulfilling the objectives of the business organization. In

present times of social media sync digital selling and buying (Alamsyah & Saviera, 2018) used sentiment analysis to empirically prove that MI infused organizations are better able to understand their customer requirements and improve their satisfaction quotients. Marketing Intelligence if incorporated by business organizations within the framework of customized customer requirements can transform customer satisfaction into customer loyalty (Faryabi, Moradi, Yasrebdoost, & Moghadam, 2013). Customer loyalties in turn leads to superior customer value by understanding customer insights (Mandal, 2018) through syncing their marketing system capabilities into their marketing strategies (Guenzi & Troilo, 2007). Although, installing MI systems can cost high but the associated investment is more than offset by the effective and efficient contribution of MI systems to the dynamic business environment (Kelley, 1965). These installed MI systems allows for transformation of business organization from conventional pricing to computerized based pricing based on the tenets of market research, MkIS (marketing information system) and DSS (decision support system) (Mochtar & Arditi, 2001). In addition to pricing, MI also enables segmentation of industries into clusters & sub-clusters based on their marketing intelligence quotients, business characteristics and marketing intelligence sources (Öztürk, Okumuş, & Mutlu, 2012).

Table 7– Marketing Intelligence & Tactical Decision Making

Dimension	Author
Customer Satisfaction	(Alamsyah & Saviera, 2018)
Customer Loyalty	(Faryabi, Moradi, Yasrebdoost, & Moghadam, 2013)
Customer Value Creation	(Mandal, 2018)
Marketing Returns	(Guenzi & Troilo, 2007)
Promotion	(Crosier & Pickton, 2003)
Pricing	(Mochtar & Arditi, 2001)
Segmentation	(Öztürk, Okumuş, & Mutlu, 2012)

Integrated marketing communication campaigns can be designed by applying system generated intelligence and insights to enhance the effective of key account planning qualitatively and quantitatively (Crosier & Pickton, 2003) . A study by (Lackman, Saban, & Lanasa, 2000) reinforces the paradigm of MI as incorporated companies shows positive increase in two-third of their business activities, and for three-fifth of companies, MI contributes heavily to tactical and strategic decision making. Furthermore, one third of companies using MI, activity level was discovered at par, while none of the companies indicated a reduction in the activity and almost half of the companies holding marketing information accountable to MI. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H5: Marketing Intelligence is positively associated with Tactical Decision Making in the organizations.

3. Managerial Implications:

This preposition holds significant implications for managers and businesses to align their mission and vision policies with strategic and tactical marketing intelligence. First, this research study suggest that managers can generate marketing information from a host of available sources be it internet sources, information sources and individual or institutional sources and derive objective specific marketing intelligence for strategy formulation and implementation. Secondly, marketing managers or businesses must consider salesforce as the pivotal link between internal and external organizational environment, having in-depth knowledge of market happenings and customer future requirements. Marketing and sales inputs procured from a salesforce smartly managed, well informed and thoroughly involved is half the work done. Thirdly, by analyzing and reviewing the consequences of marketing intelligence, marketers will get an understanding of variables leading to the achievement of tactical and strategic objectives of the organizations. The provided bifurcation of tactical and strategic decision-making parameters of marketing intelligence will enable the marketers to justify the various elements of marketing intelligence centric decision making.

4. Limitations & Future Research Directions:

While this is one of the first studies highlighting the antecedents and consequences of Marketing Intelligence, research limitations are inevitable. Firstly, one of the major drawbacks of the proposed research study is the empirical validations of hypothesized model. Lack of acceptance/rejection based on statistical evidence makes the model subjective and biased. Examining the relationship between the identified variables through quantitative analysis method could offer stronger empirical evidence to the proposed conceptual framework. Future research may consider testing the proposed model using statistical tools and validating the hypothesis as supported or not supported. Secondly, antecedents and consequences thus identified are subjected to the dimensions of different sectors and industries which makes the model less fitting on the dimension of universality. As different industries have different needs and goals of using marketing intelligence technology solutions, to be able to propose a universal model depicting sector specific marketing intelligence causes and consequences relationship can make the relationship amongst hypothesized variables more accurate and reliable. Future research may consider bifurcating the cause and consequences of marketing intelligence sector specifically so as to lend more credibility and accuracy to the model. In addition to existing used cases, different marketing intelligence capabilities and outcomes may surface. The final

limitation pertains to identifying cause and consequence related variables of the study. As researched variables seems close in meaning to each other, problem of duplication and replication gets tagged to the research study. Thus, to bifurcate obtained variables based on original nomenclature and to regroup them into strategic and tactical decision-making parameters of marketing intelligence is prone to subjectivism and errors. Therefore, further research may consider attributing the variables by reducing their dimensions, through factor analysis.

5. Conclusion:

Marketing Intelligence works by gathering all relevant marketing information either from data bases (CRM, MkIS, MDSS) or from Stakeholders (customers, employees, suppliers) and from online forums and communities (social media, weblogs and blogs and all associated web forums) and provides the analyzed data for Strategic and Tactical planning and decision making, thereby enhancing the profitability and competitive advantage of the business organizations. Marketers must continuously develop these channels for timely generation of Marketing Intelligence and thereby maximizing the length, breadth and depth of existing and potential marketing information sources. Marketing Intelligence systems must be innovated, updated and automated (Vishnoi, Tripathi, & Bagga, 2019) periodically to serve the customized requirement of business organizations. Resource camaraderie must be fostered between different marketing intelligence generating channels to strengthen channel member relationships with the customers and other key stakeholders for creating core competence and sustaining competitive advantage.

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