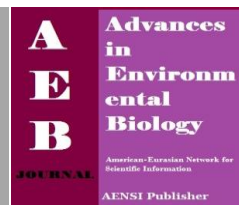




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### Building Brand Resonance in a Competitive Environment: A Conceptual Model

<sup>1</sup>Wasib B. Latif, <sup>2</sup>Md. Aminul Islam, <sup>2</sup>Idris Md Noor

<sup>1</sup>PhD Candidate, <sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, School of Business Innovation and Technopreneurship, Universiti Malaysia Perlis

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#### ABSTRACT

Building brand resonance in a competitive market can play an active role in the modern marketing arena. It is now widely acknowledged by companies and business enterprises that strong brand resonance will create a competitive advantage in the marketplace that will enhance their overall reputation and credibility. Indeed, recent trends in modern marketing have changed enormously, and study of brand resonance is increasingly becoming important to keep pace with this change. In this conceptual paper, we have summarized the literatures on currently prevailing concepts and approaches on brands that will allow us to identify the imperative components of brand resonance, and therefore will help companies and business enterprises to enhance their marketing efficiency. Based on a comprehensive review of several earlier works, here we propose a plausible framework for building brand resonance in sequential order, namely, awareness of the brand, association of the brand, superiority of the brand, affection of the brand and brand loyalty. In this review, we put forward the notion that brand-building attempt need to be associated with organizational processes which will assist in bring the promises as well as commitments to the consumers through organizational activities. We suggest that these activities could play an important role in creating brand resonance among consumers. As a whole, based on the existing literatures, we have tried to provide a comprehensive view on the imperative components of brand resonance for building brand resonance in a competitive market.

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### INTRODUCTION

Building a brand driven marketing background creates important results that include greater consumer satisfaction, reduced price sensitivity, fewer consumer defections, and a greater share of consumers' wallets, more referrals, and also a higher percentage of reiterate business [22]. Consumers value their relationships with their branded ownerships and with marketing agents and institutions that own and control the brand. In this perspective, the brand resonance focuses on points of differentiation and points of identification that propose sustainable competitive advantage to the company and business enterprise.

Brand resonance depends on a systematic understanding of the company's consumers, competitors, and marketing environment. Brand resonance is based on appropriate identity that needs to reflect the marketing strategy and the firm's willingness to invest in the programs needed for the brand to live up to its promise as well as commitment to consumers [3]. Strong brands take pleasure in consumer loyalty, the possibility to charge premium prices, and extensive brand power to hold up new product and service launches. Companies and business enterprises need to have careful as well as systematic understanding of consumer beliefs, behaviors, product or service characteristics as well as attributes and rivals.

This paper presents a conceptual framework in the form of AASAL model for building brands that is based on a comprehensive review of the existing literatures. An attempt has been made in the discussion section to discuss the managerial implications of the concepts presented in this paper.

#### Brands – Meaning and Definition:

A brand is defined as a differentiating name and/or symbol (such as logo, sign, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to distinguish those goods or services from those of rivals. A brand therefore signals to the consumer the source of the product, and protects both the consumer and the producer from rivals who would challenge to provide products that come out to be identical [1]. Brands provide the basis upon which consumers can identify as well as differentiate and

**Corresponding Author:** Wasib B. Latif, PhD Candidate, School of Business Innovation and Technopreneurship, Universiti Malaysia Perlis

bond with a product or service or a group of products or services [33]. From the consumer's point of view, a brand can be defined as the total accretion of all his/her experiences, and is built at all points of contact and relation with the consumer (Kapferer, 2004). A successful brand is an identifiable and differentiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values as well as benefits which match their needs most narrowly as well as strongly [7].

According to Keller [13], consumer brand-knowledge can be defined in terms of the personal meaning based on identity about a brand accumulated in consumer memory, that is, all explanatory and evaluative brand-related information. Different sources and levels of knowledge such as consciousness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and experiences get connected with a brand and its understanding by the consumer. The brand, in a sense, acts as a credible as well as transparent guarantee for any product or service, allowing the consumer visibly to identify and denote products that actually offer added value and benefit [27]. Powerful brands provide long-term security and growth, higher sustainable profits, and amplified asset value for the reason that they accomplish competitive differentiation and identification, premium prices, higher sales volumes, economies of scale and reduced costs, and greater security of demand [31]. The Brand "promise and commitment" is the concentrate of the benefits or values (both functional and emotional) that consumers can anticipate to accept from experiencing a brand's products/services, which reflects the heart, soul, and strength of the brand [22]. Successful brands are those brands which become accustomed well to the environment and so that live on and boom in the long term instigate of competition they face.

A significant factor pressuring the selection of a brand concept is consumer needs. According to Park *et al.* [29], many brands offer a blend of symbolic, functional, and experiential benefits or values. Functional needs are defined as those that motivate the search for products that solve consumption associated problems (e.g. solve a current problem, resolve conflict and restructure a frustrating situation). A brand with a functional notion is defined as one designed to solve outwardly created consumption needs. Symbolic needs are defined as desires for products that complete inside created needs for self-enhancement, role position, group membership, or ego identification. Brand also can be with a symbolic notion which is designed to connect the individual with a desired group, role, or self-image and self-honorary. Experiential needs are defined as desires for products that provide sensory pleasure and happiness, diversity, and/or cognitive stimulation that reflect motivation. A brand with an experiential notion is designed to accomplish these inside-created needs for stimulation and/or diversity.

A brand soul that is based on emotional and self expressive benefits or values provides a higher-order basis for interactions which can be less susceptible to product-related changes or straightforwardly submitted to new circumstances [3]. On the other hand, a brand's value proposition is a declaration of the functional benefits, emotional benefits, and self-expressive benefits distributed by the brand that provide values or benefits to the consumers. Functional benefits are the most familiar basis for a value proposition, based on a products feature that provides functional utility to the consumer and communicate directly to the functions performed by the product for the consumers. Emotional benefits are positive feelings the consumer can have about the brand and is connected with the experience of owning and using the brand. Most functional benefits have a matching feeling or a set of feelings, while the self-expressive benefits concentrate on person's self- concept, aspirations, and provide a way for a person to converse his or her self-image.

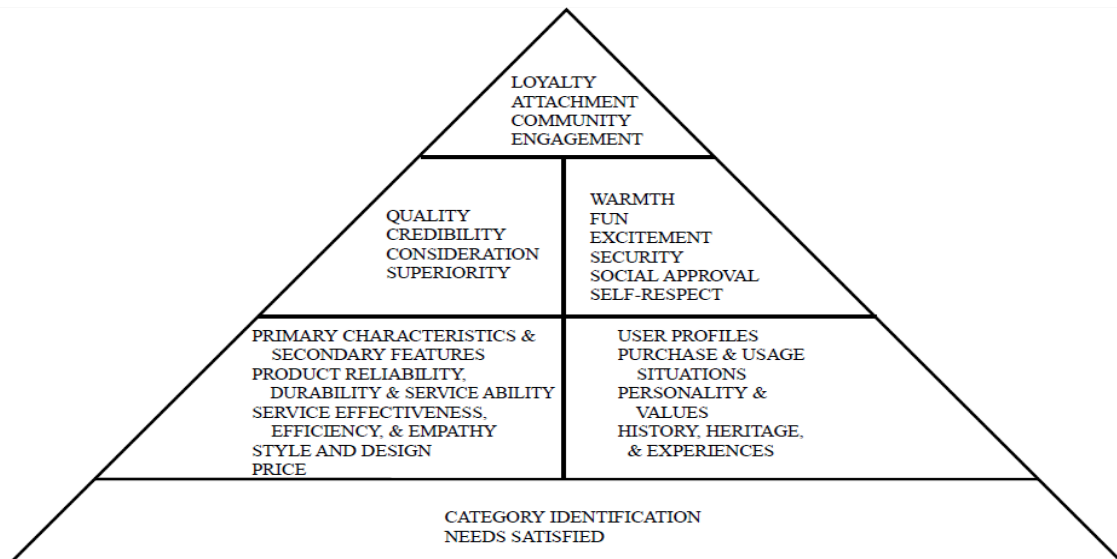
Brands develop over time. The first level of the brand development concerns to articulate the identity of the producer (i.e. label). The second level is known as functional supremacy (perceived by consumer as differentiation and identification). While, the third level of brand development is referred to as emotional touch as well as contact and the fourth level concerns to the power of self-expression and self-judgment. At the top of the pyramid, the highest level (i.e. fifth level) is known as loyalty attachment.

## 2. Establishing Brand Resonance:

Brand resonance underlies to the final relationship that consumers apprehend told a brand as well as the spread to which the consumer feels "in sync" with a certain brand [17]. With proper brand resonance, consumers articulate a high degree of loyalty to the brand like that they enthusiastically quest means to intermingle with the brand and allocate their experiences with others. Companies that are able to establish brand resonance should harvest a host of benefits or values, for instance, greater price premiums and more efficient and effective marketing programs [18]. Basically brand resonance is the ultimate as well as final relationship between a brand and a consumer where loyalty can play key role [16]. The level of relationship that a consumer has together with a brand can be characterized through the amount of action the consumer engages in unto the brand as well as the strength of the relationship the consumer has together with various users of the brand. A consumer that uses the brand repeatedly or connects with various activities aimed at the brand is characterized as having a high action and activity level with the brand. Even, a consumer that continuously connects with various consumers of the brand, participating brand stories, and aiding in the use of the brand is characterized as having a high level of intensity on the part of the brand.

However, resonance replicates the intensity or depth of the psychological tie that consumers have along the brand, as well as the level of activity stimulated by loyalty mechanism. Pointed out product or service categories

potentially permit for more resonance forasmuch as they have intrinsically high levels of interest and activities. Some brands together with high resonance comprehend Harley-Davidson, Apple and eBay [21]. According to the brand pyramid model presented by Keller [15,16], the resonance can be established as a pyramid diagram that is called resonance pyramid model. However, brand resonance pyramid is also called sub-dimension of brand building blocks which is given below:



Source: The Resonance Pyramid or Sub-dimensions of Building Blocks (Adapted from Keller; [15,17,20,21]).

**Fig. 1:** AASAL Model.

Brand resonance expresses how to build strong and active loyal relationships with consumers. It is categorized into four types which each captures a number of diverse aspects of brand loyalty that are shown below as a snap attempt [15,17,20,21]. For which-

First exhibit behavioral dependability- consumers' repeat purchases as well as the amount or share of category volume accredited to the brand. Through behavioral dependability the following two questions assist to measure loyalty.

- i. The first measurement criteria- How hourly do consumers purchase the brand?
  - ii. The second measurement criteria- How much as well as how long do consumers purchase of the brand?
- Second exhibit is that attitudinal relationship- when consumers view the brand as being something unique in a broader context. By attitudinal relationship the following three questions assist to measure loyalty.

- i. Do consumers "love" the brand?
- ii. Do consumers explain the brand as one of their favorite possessions?
- iii. Do consumers view the brand as a "little gratification" they look forward to?

Third exhibit is that sense of community- when consumers feel an affinity or affiliation with other people associated with the brand. Across attitudinal relationship the following two questions assist to measure loyalty.

- i. Do consumers cooperate with fellow brand users or employees or representatives of the company?
- ii. Does this consumer contact take place on-line and/or off-line?

Fourth as well as last exhibit is that active commitment- when consumers are willing to invest personal resources on the brand- time, energy, money, etc. – away from those resources expended in the period of purchase or consumption of the brand. Across active commitment the following three questions assist to measure loyalty.

- i. Do consumers choose to bond a club centered on a brand?
- ii. Do consumers accept updates, exchange correspondence with various brand users or formal or informal representatives of the brand itself?
- iii. Do consumers visit brand-related websites; join in chat rooms and so on?

To establish brand resonance, marketers must first generate a foundation on which resonance can be built. According to the consumer-based brand equity model [15,17], resonance is most probable to result when marketers are primarily able to create: appropriate salience and breadth and depth of awareness; resolutely established points-of-parity and points-of-difference; positive judgments and feelings that demand or appeal to the head and the heart. Together with a firm foundation in place, marketers can then optimize the four exhibits of brand resonance that have been highlighted above. There is a number of marketing communication activities

that can be set into place to impact any one exhibit of resonance. Somewhat marketing communication may also affect more than one exhibit of brand resonance. Such as, when BMW produced its online video series, the driver, attributing top film actors and directors, it arguably improved brand attachment, community and engagement. In truth, there may be interactive effects like that, such as, higher levels of the attachment escort of greater engagement. To maximize brand resonance, levels of both the intensity as well as activity of loyalty relationships must be increased.

For that reason, brand resonance is encompassed brand loyalty which goal is to build strong relationships with consumers in that case not only build strong relationship but also maintain relationship for a long period of time that is called consumer relationship management with a “consumer mindset of connections sensor” ground. Therefore, brand loyalty makes important action to construct resonance that consumers hold uttered a brand and the swell to which the consumer feels “in sync” with an assured brand.

### *3. AASAL Model: A Conceptual Model for Building Brands:*

Based on the literature review, the conceptual model for brand building in a competitive market, known as AASAL Model, has been proposed. The five elements of this model, namely, awareness of the brand, association of the brand, superiority of the brand, affection of the brand and loyalty of the brand are discussed below.

#### *Awareness of the Brand:*

Awareness is related with creating the positive perception of a brand in the consumer’s mind and of achieving brand knowledge that make a positive as well as comprehensive awareness about a brand. Brand marketer’s major objective should be to create the desired perception in the target consumer’s mind. Therefore, brand awareness is the essential part of brand resonance. Indeed, marketers must be capable to understand how various entities should best be combined, from a consumer brand-knowledge perspective, to create the optimal awareness in the minds of consumers.

Brand awareness, according to Keller [20], that holds brand recognition and brand recall performance. In cooperation, both are important components in sustaining brand equity whose main aim to achieve a strong brand resonance with long term relationship. Brand recognition is defined as the consumers’ ability to authenticate earlier revelation to the brand when given the brand as an indication while brand recall is consumers’ ability to recoup the brand from memory when given the product category, the needs satisfied by the category, or a purchase or habit situation as a reminder. Aaker [1] advocates that brand awareness engages a continuum ranging from an undecided feeling that the brand is recognized, to a faith that it is the barely one in the product class.

As already mentioned, a significant breadth of brand resonance is brand awareness, very often an underestimated constituent. Not only that awareness is almost a precondition for a brand to be incorporated in the consideration set (the brands that accept consideration for purchase), but it also persuades perceptions and attitudes, and can be a driver for brand loyalty that the ultimate goal is to construct a strong brand resonance [1]. Shimmering the salience of the brand in the consumer’s mind, awareness can be appraised at several levels such as recognition, recall, top of mind, brand governance (the only brand recalled), or, even more, brand knowledge (what the brand stands for is extremely well known by consumers) [2]. Brand awareness is the initial and the prerequisite breadth of the whole brand knowledge system in consumers’ minds, dazzling their capability to discover the brand underneath different conditions: the possibility that a brand name will come to mind and the simplicity with which it does so at its level best for which create strong brand position [13].

#### *Association of the Brand:*

A set of brand associations facilitate a brand to enlarge as well as clear a way to build strong brand resonance. While some consumers may attach greater significance to functional benefits, emotional value assists the brand stand above others. Building brand associations involves a company to understand its brand as well as rivals’ brands by consumer research. Consumer research should study existing and prospective consumers, former consumers, industry experts, and intermediaries. Brand strengths connected with beliefs and values are the most powerful and most complicated to imitate. Brand image is the perception in the mind of the consumers about the brand and its associations. Keller [13] marked brand image as “a set of associations associated with the brand that consumers embrace in memory” (p. 3). A brand image is cool, calm and collected of a set of associations regarding the brand in the mind of the consumer. Brand associations are considered to be the informational nodes connected to a brand node that includes the meaning of the brand in the mind of the consumer [14]. In the same way, brand associations are considered any idea associated with the brand in the mind of the consumer [1]. Marketers use brand associations for product positioning reasons whereas consumers use brand associations to help guide their decision making [23]. Intellectuals have detained differing opinions on what constitutes a brand association as well as how these associations should be classified. Strong brand associations coalesce to form the aggregate image or meaning of the brand for the consumer [34].

The fundamental value of a brand name often is its set of associations — it's meaning to people. Associations, according to Aaker [1], embody the bases for purchase decisions and for brand loyalty while brand image plays an important role. There are a swarm of possible associations and an assortment of ways they can provide value. He recognizes the following as the possible ways in which associations produce value to the consumer: helping to process / reclaim information about a brand; engendering a reason to buy, and creating positive attitudes / feelings.

#### *Superiority of the Brand:*

The substance realm for brand superiority is limited to Keller's [17] conceptualization of the pull together. As a result, the following dialogue provides a significant review of the brand attitude literature as it narrates to brand superiority. Brand attitudes and brand superiority are extremely correlated each other and generate in that while they both communicate with the consumer's aggregate cognitive evaluation of a target brand. The major difference lies in the conflicting operationalization of each construct or builds from a measurement perspective. Brand attitudes are first and foremost measured using a semantic differential scale attached by contrasting adjectives. Brand superiority measures the consumer's aggregate cognitive evaluation of the brand in next of kin to competing brands. The brand superiority captures the uniqueness and differentiation that consumers perceive when they appraise a brand in relation to its competitors. In this regard, this measure is challenging to capture one of the definitive goals of successful branding: the construction as well as the formation of a brand that is unique or distinctive from its competitors.

Keller [17] accredited three appearances of consumer judgments in observing to the evaluation of a brand: quality, credibility, and superiority. Brand quality emphasizes on the functional superiority of the brand in connection with the competition. Brand credibility is an aggregate consideration of the brand and implies quality, expertise, and the dependability of the brand. Finally, brand superiority underlines to the level of uniqueness that the brand holds in the mind of the consumer in connection with other brands in the same product category. Fundamentally, a brand is superior if it can offer advantages that other brands cannot suit.

#### *Affection of the Brand:*

Consumer's affective reaction to advertisements, to the consumption of goods, use of services, and in connection with consumer satisfaction has been examined comprehensively by preceding research [4,6,24,25,26,30,32]. Preceding findings have pointed toward that emotions play an important role in consumer reaction and engage a vital position in consumer behavior literature [4,6,30]. In a modern attitude model, Bagozzi [5] proposed that emotional responses arbitrated the relationship between cognitive appraisals and behavioral intentions to a prearranged stimulus. This model demonstrated the significance that affects play in predicting consumer's behavioral intentions on the part of a product or brand. The view of emotions that will be accepted in this cram comes from Bagozzi, *et al.*'s [4] characterization of emotions in the context of affection. They characterized emotions as something that take place in reaction to a cognitive appraisal or event, once and again is accompanied through physiological processes, and be able result in particular behavioral responses to manage with like this an effective response.

This glance has essential implications for building brand resonance that is confirmed by Keller [15,17]. Firstly, it underlines that consumers experience affective reactions in response to cognitive evaluations or appraisals of a target brand with value. Secondly, affective responses may take place basically on the basis of brand associations, not essentially in response to the cognitive evaluations of brand associations with attribute. Finally, the operationalization of the brand affect determine must enclose explicitly affective items. Preceding research has been assorted on how to measure emotions, with some measures including cognitive-labeled items. As a result, this cram will exemplify the potential relationship among brand associations, brand attitudes and brand affection and also brand affection will be particularly measured consequent to the conceptualization of emotions put forth by Bagozzi *et al.* [4].

The responsibility of the affection in the relationship between consumers and brands has been examined. Dick and Basu [8] posed that positively affect and mood are associated with higher levels of brand loyalty. Chaudhuri and Holbrook [6] talked that consumers exhibiting a high level of commitment to the relationship with a brand are possibly to experience strong affection unto the target brand. Chaudhuri and Holbrook [6] define brand affection namely "the brand's potential to bring out a positive emotional reaction in the average consumer therefore of its use" (p. 82). Disparate cognitive reactions to the brand, a consumer's emotional reaction to the brand are impulsive and less thought out through comparison. Brand affection has been shown to extensively impact attitudinal and purchase loyalty within consumers in both service and goods categories [6]. More significantly, brand affection has been shown to obliquely impact increased market share for a company as well as business enterprise and virtual price of the product.

#### *Loyalty of the Brand:*

Aaker [1] defines brand loyalty as symbolized a productive mind-set on the part of a brand that leading to

constant purchasing of the brand over time. Aaker [1] further squabbles that brand loyalty is a necessary component when it comes to evaluate a brand in terms of value forasmuch as loyalty can make profit. According to Yoo *et al.* [34], underlines that brand loyalty is the core of a brand's value. Furthermore, Strategic Marketing and Research Techniques (1992-2008) discover that there is a strong positive relationship as well as bonding between consumer loyalty and brand resonance [9]. Brand loyalty has been illustrated like a behavioral response as well as the action and kind of a function of psychological processes [10]. Loyalty is further defined as a profoundly taken commitment to repurchase a preferred product/service consistently over time, despite situational heaviness and marketing efforts that might have the influential to reason switching behavior [28].

Dick and Basu [8] point out that brand loyalty favors positive worth or importance of mouth and greater confrontation within loyal consumers to competitive strategies. Perceptibly like these findings persuade marketers to build and maintain brand loyalty within consumers. When ruthless for like these goals, information on factors determining the creation of brand loyalty within consumers turns out a significant matter. Maintaining brand loyalty keeps the final goal of a marketer. Brand loyalty is the consumer's conscious or unconscious decision, articulated by intention or behavior, to repurchase a brand persistently. It arises forasmuch as the consumer perceives that the brand offers the right product features or characteristics, image, or level of quality at the right price for which consumers become committed to a brand as well as consider a brand as a friend.

#### 4. Discussion:

The suggested AASAL model can serve as a guideline to managers and executives in building resonance of their brands in their target markets. As competition gets more concentrated, managers face challenges to bend their brands with changed expectations of their consumers. Among different alternatives that are available to managers, awaking their brands on the recognition as well as recall performance that happen to be the consumer wealth can assist in building resonance of their brands in the minds of their consumers. Basically recognition and recall performance can enable companies and business enterprises to leverage current resources to the extent possible. If existing performance becomes outmoded, the brand has to move to higher or expected levels of position to uphold itself in a competitive market.

Companies and business enterprises need to position their brands in the minds of consumers. To accomplish desired goals of their association strategy, companies and business enterprises have to break the confusion by developing innovative ways to magnetize the attention of the target audience. Alongside the traditional association mechanism like general product attributes, relative price, common users, etc, new association techniques such as unique values or benefits, appropriate brand meaning and image, etc, present opportunities for consumer participation. Such innovative approaches can facilitate managers to minimize the impact of competition on their brand. Association research (research on brand associations) is significant to marketers in view of the fact that they would desire to grow a perceptive picture of how a brand is perceived by consumers as well as its competitors. A brand image should be created to ascertain an affecting connection with the target consumers.

The brand managers need to endlessly track their brands in opposition to the effect of competition and to track the improvement as to how their brands are doing in the marketplace on the basis of proposed model. Monitoring the improvement of brands in terms of purchasing, consumption, brand recognition, brand recall, brand position, etc, assists the managers to adjust their strategies of marketing to accomplish the desired performance of their brands. This performance audit can also facilitate the company to measure its brand strength vis-à-vis competing brands in a competitive market. The brand loyalty can reduce the vulnerability of the consumer base to long term relationship action that indicate constant purchase as well as positive worth of mouth and can straightly interpret into future sales and profits.

Brands that have established desired brand resonance in the marketplace can have strong loyalty through constant purchase, worth of mouth and brand as a friend. These approaches allow the companies to influence the brand resonance to new categories of uniqueness as well as differentiation that hold on brand superiority and plan a new intensification path for their brands for achieving brand resonance. Indeed, brand resonance is to provide a comprehensive view on the essential components (see Figure 1) of brand building in a competitive market.

#### 5. Conclusion:

This paper discusses the AASAL model for building brands and this paper is based on the review of pertinent literatures. Consistency of awareness and comprehensive knowledge about the different dimensions within components of brand resonance targeted towards consumers is important to the success of brand-building efforts. In developing successful brand, companies and business enterprises need to guarantee that the brand remains strong even during complicated times and offers value that is consistent with the brand promises as well as commitments. The five stages suggested in AASAL model namely, awareness of the brand, association of the brand, superiority of the brand and affection of the brand and also loyalty of the brand can enable companies and business enterprises to build strong brand resonance as well as strong brands in a competitive market.

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