

Success Factors of Malaysian eBay Entrepreneurs: Skills, Attitudes and Strategies for Digital Growth

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Abstract

The focus is on digital entrepreneurship in Malaysia with specific reference to eBay site, the purpose of the study being to precise the skills, attitudes and strategies that enhance the success of those involved in the business. Even though the Malaysian DKN 2030 (full) and MyDIGITAL projects recognize digital entrepreneurship as a hope for the country's economy growth, only some of the eBay entrepreneurs in Malaysia may be recognized as "Top Rated Sellers". This research uses qualitative research technique and conducts a series of semi-structured interviews with 10 Malaysian eBay successes. The research evidence suggests that ability to manage stock control, integrated tools in the internet and social networks like SEO (full), and the employees' favorable personality attributes like perseverance and lobbying. Also, proper use of e-marketing techniques and strong brand image are some of the critical success factors that yielded demonstrated positive outcomes. The result of this research opens the way into theory, practice, and policy, it does open pathways where entrepreneurs require adequate programs and training programs for getting better results. As for the suggestions for the future studies, they include the investigation of social networks, the impact of AI and blockchain on them, as well as the quantitative methods to enhance the understanding of this subject.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Digital entrepreneurship has been one of the important engines of growth for the Malaysian economy, and it has driven the transformation of traditional business models for innovating and incorporating technological advances. This shift is important and recognized by the Malaysian government which has set aside various policies to improve the digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. One of these is the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030, which stresses on a strong digital business environment for development of Malaysia's international competitiveness (Ammeran et al., 2022).

As the global trend of e commerce rises, DKN 2030 objectives resonate with such a trend by allowing businesses to expand market through digital platforms; eBay, one of the largest global online marketplaces, has offered Malaysian entrepreneurs a platform to engage in cross-border trade. E commerce tools have helped business owners reduce operational costs and access a mass consumer base due to the convenience and easy accessibility. However, a number of such advantages, most Malaysian entrepreneurs fail to create sustained success in eBay, this in turn raises questions about the business readiness and capabilities for digital entrepreneurship amongst local businesses (Shahriari et al., 2015).

A framework for digital transformation MyDIGITAL was introduced to further support digital transformation in Malaysia, by elevating Malaysia to become a nation of high income with a strong digital economy (Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia, 2021). This is an initiative to build a better digital infrastructure, provide an education to entrepreneurs, and spur on innovation. Efforts to offer such supportive environment, however, may be helpful for entrepreneurs who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and strategies for thriving in the e-commerce competitive environment.

2. Rationale

Although Malaysia maintains an envisioned leap in digital entrepreneurship development, there is a significant disparity between e-commerce participation and entrepreneurial success. As there are more Malaysians who are venturing into online business, the rates of failure for entrepreneurs on such platforms as eBay are increasing. According to statistics, there are currently only 10 Malaysians out of 115 who have running businesses on eBay that have successfully attained the 'Top Rated Seller' status. The size of this gap implies that there are many entrepreneurs whose businesses are hitting the wall at scale and this inefficiency is making it hard to get to long-term sustainability (Koe, 2020). Some challenges of aspiring digital entrepreneurs may be attributed to the absence of a structured support system, relevant training, strategic market positioning, which makes it difficult for them to build a sustainable career. There is a need for a study to identify the success factors and challenges of Malaysian eBay entrepreneurs. Aspiring entrepreneurs can determine the key factors that make the difference between success and failure of a business and can adopt the best practices in digital ventures (Samara & Terzian, 2020). Furthermore, it would help to understand the reasons for the failure of some businesses as compared to the success of others, so that better policies and training programs can be designed to enrich the overall digital entrepreneurial ecosystem of Malaysia.

2.1 Scope

The aim of this study is to focus on the case of Malaysian entrepreneurs operating businesses on eBay, where they have achieved notable success of their businesses. The skills, strategies, and tactics that enable their own growth and sustainability in the digital marketplace are researched. The study also evaluates the barriers and challenges that impede entrepreneurial success, offering guidance on how aspiring and existing entrepreneurs can overcome these impediments. Government policies, digital tools as well as marketing techniques that help influence the success of a business, will also be studied. Therefore, the research attempts to fulfill the knowledge gap on the best practices of thriving in Malaysia's digital economy. While the focus is on eBay entrepreneurs, the results may be applicable to other e-commerce platforms including Shopee, Lazada and Amazon since they face similar challenges and success factors.

2.2 Problem Statement

While Malaysia has made efforts to encourage digital entrepreneurship, the low success rate for eBay entrepreneurs implies that a large number of business owners are not adequately equipped to survive in the competitive online marketplace, which offers much potential for businesses. Although platforms like eBay allow access to enormous global markets, most Malaysian entrepreneurs fail to sustain their business and turn a profit. This issue points to some of the factors hindering success in digital entrepreneurship and raises the need for designing strategies specifically for supporting those who aim to run e-commerce businesses (Rahim et al., 2019). Lack of digital skills is one of the foremost challenges that Malaysian eBay entrepreneurs needed to overcome. Although there are numerous business owners, they do not have enough knowledge about these areas of expertise like digital marketing, data analytics and e-commerce management for them to be able to optimize online presence and sales. Entrepreneurs without foundation in these skills find it hard to come up with fitting product listings, implement search engine optimization (SEO) tactics or use data-driven decision making to improve business performance (Kinkani et al., 2024). These competencies are not in place and thus, put them at a disadvantage in an ever more technology-savvy marketplace.

Moreover, the business strategies are not effective. However, most entrepreneurs aren't good at planning and this causes many things such as pricing strategies difficulties, customer engagement and difficulties on how to manage stocks. Poor sales performance is likely if pricing is inconsistent and there is a lack of well-structured marketing campaigns. Additionally, bad customer service practices, and slow response times can cause bad reviews, which in turn will lower the credibility and discourage potential buyers. In addition, the growing business fails when the entrepreneur is not guided by a clear business model and does not adapt strategically to market trends. Furthermore, most of the eBay entrepreneurs find limited market reach as a barrier to their operation (Noor & Ayob, 2021). Although, this delivery platform provides access to global markets, many of the sellers are not taking advantage of cross-border trading opportunities. The reasons for this limitation could be due to logistical issues, shipping constraints or ignorance of international customer preferences. Many entrepreneurs

limit their opportunities for growth by not expanding their reach into international buyers and aren't tapping into their potentially lucrative value outside of the local market.

A critical factor affecting the struggles of the entrepreneur is also the inadequacy of entrepreneurial attitudes. To be successful digital entrepreneur, it requires having a growth mindset, adaptability and innovation. Some business owners don't have these traits and therefore find it hard to adapt to the evolving consumer behavior, e-commerce trends and the competitive environment. Sometimes challenging for the entrepreneurs who refuse to innovate or miss the chance to take in the new technologies brought on by the digital marketplace (Felicia & A, 2024). However, Malaysian entrepreneurs on eBay have a high failure rate, thus deserving questions about what were the skills, knowledge and strategies that could lead to sustained success in digital entrepreneurship. With a clear understanding of the factors that separate successful eBay entrepreneurs from those who struggle, policymakers, educators, and business support organizations will be equipped to develop targeted interventions in support of enhanced entrepreneurial outcomes (Ishak et al., 2018). To create a more resilient and competitive digital business landscape in Malaysia, entrepreneurs will need to be empowered with the right skills, resources, and support systems.

2.3 Objectives

This study is aimed to identify and analyze the factors that lead to the success of the Malaysian eBay entrepreneurs. The research objectives, with which the study aims to achieve the above stated objectives, include:

1. The objective of this study is to evaluate the key skills successful eBay entrepreneurs have in Malaysia.
2. This extends to explore the success factors that aid growth and sustainability of these entrepreneurs in the digital marketplace.

2.4 Significance

The results of this study would be useful to the aspiring digital entrepreneur in Malaysia in terms of providing useful insights and actionable strategies. This research seeks to equip business owners with the essential skills and success factors that define how top-rated eBay entrepreneurs achieve success and how to move beyond the challenges of the competitive e-commerce landscape. Learning the main factors related to success, (for example digital marketing capability, business planning, relevant customer engagement strategies, and adaptation), can assist entrepreneurs on making informed choices to make sure the success of business.

This study also has broader implications regarding Malaysia's digital economy. As the country positions itself to become the most competitive digital hub, empowering entrepreneurs with the knowledge and tools they need is a necessity. This research has provided insights that are in line with the national initiatives like MyDIGITAL and the National Entrepreneurship Policy 2030 which focus on digital transformation and promotion of entrepreneurship. This study is in accordance with government efforts to keep improving Malaysia's entrepreneurial ecosystem and encouraging an e-commerce growth by solving the barriers impeding eBay entrepreneur's success.

In addition, this research provides empirical evidence on digital entrepreneurship to the academic discourse in terms of skills as well as the strategies of successful entrepreneurs in contrast those entrepreneurs who are struggling. The results can inform future studies to determine ways of designing targeted training programs and interventions for policymakers, educators, and business support organizations in designing targeted training programs and interventions. In the end, this study ultimately closes the gap between the theory and the practice by offering practical recommendations to drive digital business success, promote innovation, and propel Malaysia toward a progressive and vibrant digital economy.

3. Methodology

This study utilized qualitative method to explore the skills, attitude as well as success factor of Malaysian entrepreneurs operating on eBay. A qualitative approach is selected because it provides detailed exploration of participants' experience, and therefore allows to obtain descriptive data, instead of numerical metrics (Cresswell, 2009). While quantitative research is conducted by examining statistical analysis, qualitative research on the other hand involves understanding the behavior, motivation, and strategies of a human by direct interaction with the participants. Considering the aims of the study, semi structured interviews are the main means of collecting data since it offers the interviewer the chance to probe, in addition to it enabling the interviewees extend on their experiences.

As part of the study design, face to face personal interview is used, which allows a researcher to engage the participants in direct manner, observe nonverbal cues, seek clarifications of answers to responses, and create rapport with the participants to elicit more detailed insights (Monday, 2020). Digital entrepreneurship is the primary data collection instrument, as it contains 10 open-ended questions formulated to capture different facets of digital entrepreneurship. At the levels of words, phrases and sentences, patterns and themes are extracted from

the narratives of successful eBay entrepreneurs. Coding techniques are used to identify commonalities to successful entrepreneurship in this study that is valid and meaningful.

3.1 Research Approach

The study of the experiences, skills, and strategies of the successful Malaysian eBay entrepreneurs is carried out using a qualitative approach. This study can be conducted through qualitative method as it provides qualitative and contextual insight into the entrepreneurial success, and it suits the researcher to gather the in depth narratives (in formals) instead of numerical data (formals). This study is able to capture first-hand accounts of digital entrepreneurship by conducting direct interviews, letting them uncover key success factors that would be challenging to measure via surveys or experiments (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research, which is statistical in nature, cannot be comparable as it involves exploratory inquiry that facilitates the full representation of voices of the entrepreneurs. Through open ended questioning, the participants can reflect on their experiences and enrich their insights in some of their skills, marketing approach, and business challenge (Ahmad et al., 2019). Qualitative research also has the flexibility of asking questions in a way to follow the thread of the conversation that might reveal other themes that emerge.

3.2 Research Design

The semi-structured interview design is used in this study and has a balanced stance whereby it incorporates some elements of structured interviewing and others of unstructured interviewing methods. As a semi-structured format, it ensures that the important issues are covered, but allows for spontaneous discussion, making possible for the researcher to probe in depth, if needed (Gill et al., 2008). Face to face personal interviews help to develop the depth of the data as you can add on non-verbal cues and expressions to the verbal words. There is a standardized interview protocol for each interview to ensure consistency and comparability of participants. The interviews are meant to learn on Top Rated eBay Seller's entrepreneurial journeys, their challenges and strategies. The interviews have an average duration between 45 minutes to 1 hour and there is enough time for the participants to discuss their experiences. The face-to-face setting promotes better engagement and makes sure participants are at ease discussing specific insights of their business experiences.

3.3 Data Collection Technique

This research utilizes semi-structured, face-to-face interviews been seen as a main data collection method with chosen eBay entrepreneurs in Malaysia as this study's subjects. Through this technique, detailed, personalized discussions can be provided, and rich qualitative insights are captured, instead of short, restrictive answers. In the interview guide, the ten open ended questions, answer in an e commerce entrepreneurial module aimed at investigating entrepreneurial skill, business strategy, and digital marketing approach and challenges encountered in e commerce. The researcher provides sufficient time for the participant to contemplate their responses allowing for detailed and substantive responses from the participant. Because the interview process is interactive in nature, relevant questions can be followed up, clarified, and themes can be explored deeper where there is natural emergence during the conversation. Along with verbal responses, non-verbal communication is observed and responded to gain further context. As a means to achieve the accuracy and reliability of the data collected, interviews are recorded on a digital voice recorder and later transcribed for analysis by thematic means.

3.4 Measurement Criteria

The interview responses are then analyzed at different linguistic measurement levels, in order to systematically analyze the findings. Frequently used words related to entrepreneurship, e commerce, digital marketing, customer engagement are identified at word level. Commonly used phrases that reflect entrepreneurs' patterns of thought, strategic way of approach or their common experiences are analyzed at a phrase level. At the sentence level, the structure and depth of the responses are examined to comprehend the complexity of the meaning and purpose being conveyed by each participating person. The use of these three levels of measurement ensures that the findings are contextually relevant and can be derived beyond individual words or responses. Unlike quantitative measurement, which is based on numerical scales, this is qualitative measurement, where each response is interpreted within the context of the topic of digital entrepreneurship and business success (Huang et al., 2023).

3.5 Data Analysis

A coding technique is used to analyze the interview data and, in this approach, patterns and themes that are emerging from participants' responses are identified. Open coding is the first step in the data analysis process in which the researcher organizes responses related to entrepreneurial skills, customer engagement, marketing

strategies, and business growth, among others. Secondly, pattern identification identifies commonly occurring trends in the data like common success strategies of Malaysian eBay sellers. Thematic categorization is the final stage where related concepts are categorized into broader themes including risk taking, technological adaptation, customer satisfaction, and business resilience. This systematic approach guarantees that the results of this study are valid, verifiable and usable for real world entrepreneurial practices (Naeem et al., 2023). Research categorizes data in a structured way so that it helps to provide critical success factors of Malaysian entrepreneurs in digital marketplace.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research requires the researcher to ensure validity and reliability to maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. This study is improved by taking several measures to increase its accuracy and reliability. Secondly, the questions for the semi structured interviews are reviewed by academic supervisors that will ensure they are appropriate to the aims of the study. Furthermore, the collected data is cross referred to previous studies on digital entrepreneurship to ascertain the similarity of findings (Kakar et al., 2023). In addition, participants were allowed to review their transcribed responses prior to data analysis in the attempt to build credibility. It guarantees that their responses are expressed correctly and does not allow in errors in misconstructions. Additionally, there was full documentation of the research process making research transparent and reproducible. Methodological safeguards like these ensure the validity, reliability, and applicability of the research findings so that they can be acted upon by aspiring digital entrepreneurs.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Key ethical principles are adhered to throughout this study maintaining ethical integrity. All participants are obtained for informed consent, which means they have been informed about the purpose of the research and their rights, as well as given the option to be able to withdraw their participation at any time. Strict confidentiality and anonymity are provided, with the report omitting personal information. Participants are assured their responses are used only for research purposes and none will be shared beyond the study. As such, this study prioritizes ethical research practice to be fair, transparent and respectful of participants' rights (Arellano et al., 2023). The obligation to uphold ethical standards is not only for the protection of participants, it allows integrity and credibility to adhere to the research findings.

4. Results

The purpose of this research is to discover the skills, beliefs and approaches to work used by eBay Malaysia's most successful entrepreneurial trained individuals. The main findings of this study are as follows: The main findings of this study are as follows:

4.1 Skills of Successful eBay Entrepreneurs

Features of business activities in the Malaysian eBay setting reveal that the most important skill of Malaysian eBay entrepreneurs is formal business experience. This prepares the kids in business management and marketing, which they develop and incorporate into their e-commerce business. Respondents who had previously run an offline business claimed that most of the management and marketing skills used in the offline business were applicable in eBay business. This is in line with the Ansoff Matrix theory and earlier studies disclosing that prior involvement in conventional business decreases the hazards associated with e-commerce while increasing its probability of success (Turban et al., 2012). However, IT and business education background also has a significant contribution to the process. Traditional education in these areas gives one the academic knowledge which is needed in the handling of digital tools and social media. Respondents composed of IT skilled entrepreneurs declared that possessing technical skills in managing software and technology enables them to have better control over the business being operated through eBay.com (Becker, 1964).

4.2 Attitudes of Successful eBay Entrepreneurs

Attitudes such as perseverance, innovation, and openness to change were identified as key success factors. Successful entrepreneurs showed perseverance in facing challenges and failures and the ability to rise and keep trying. An innovative attitude is also important, where entrepreneurs are always looking for new ways to improve their business, either through the introduction of new products, process improvements, or the use of new technologies. Openness to change is also important as the digital market is constantly changing and entrepreneurs need to be ready to adapt quickly (Myers, 2009).

4.3 Success Strategies

Effective digital marketing strategies are critical to the success of eBay entrepreneurs. They use various digital marketing tools such as paid ads on social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and email marketing to reach and attract customers. The use of paid ads on platforms like Facebook and Instagram allows them to target potential customers more accurately, increasing the likelihood of sales (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Additionally, robust branding strategies also play an important role, where entrepreneurs build a strong brand by emphasizing product quality, good customer service, and appealing brand values. They use social media and their websites to share their brand stories and interact with customers, which helps build strong relationships and increase customer loyalty (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, good inventory management is essential to ensure product stock is always sufficient and avoid stock shortages. Successful entrepreneurs use advanced inventory management systems to monitor and control their stock accurately, including technology such as inventory management software that allows them to track stock levels in real time and make timely replenishment decisions. The use of this technology not only reduces the risk of stockouts but also reduces storage costs by ensuring stock is not excessive (Creswell, 2009). By using the skills, attitudes, and strategies mentioned above, eBay entrepreneurs in Malaysia can increase their chances of success in e-commerce. This study's findings provide practical guidance that is useful to other entrepreneurs who want to succeed on the eBay platform.

5. Discussions

Therefore, this research seeks to establish an empirical understanding of the specific skills, favorable attitudes and effective strategies, which the eBay entrepreneurs in Malaysia are applying. These results reveal several valuable implications that affirm the theoretical perspectives and prior research concerning e-business and offer specific recommendations for digital business managers.

5.1 Success Strategies

The research establishes that prior experience in conventional business is one more important precondition on a successful eBay business in Malaysia. Such an experience offers a basic understanding of business management particularly in the marketing area, and it is applied to their online business. Those who were involved in offline business said that the management and marketing skills, which they had before, are helpful in this eBay business. This aligns with Ansoff Matrix theory and earlier research in this field that indicate that the prior experience in conventional business aids in mitigating risks and thus boosts the likelihood of success in e-commerce (Turban et al., 2012). In addition, the need to have adequate skills in digital marketing, data analysis and Search Engine Optimization was also observed. Digital marketing understanding enables the entrepreneurs to drive more traffic to their online store, thus increasing possible sales. This professional knowledge assists them to make appropriate decisions in marketing activities and stocking products. It is essential to comprehend the dynamics of SEO in order to boost theorist products' presence on eBay and subsequently, customer attendance (Becker, 1964).

Some of the behavioral characteristics which were considered relevant were persistence, high drive and the absence of laziness. All respondents named numerous obstacles and problems regarding their e-commerce business, while successful business people managed to address all of them: This attitude serve as an assurance that they never stop finding solutions to the problems faced and do not recline. This is in concordance with a study by Dweck (2006) in which people who were consistent with a 'growth mindset' persevere with their efforts and do not easily throw in the towel hence likely to succeed. High determination means great efforts toward the accomplishment of business objectives. One can easily notice that high determination is an invaluable characteristic of a successful entrepreneur since the latter is perpetually seeking for ways to develop and enhance both his/her skills and business. Bandura (1997) documents that people with high self-efficacy have high standards of performance, and strive to meet them. The other self-promoting behavioral pattern which is relevant to the context is called perceiving, it means that the person does not easily give up on a task. That is why some people, who did succeed in becoming entrepreneurs, still continue trying to be successful, even if they were through some bankruptcy in their business.

The following are specifics that relate to eBay entrepreneurs' goals and digital marketing strategies. Since they are in the service industry, they employ online marketing techniques like paid social media advertisement, SEO, and newsletter advertisements. Paid advertisement methods like the use of the Facebook and Instagram business accounts helps them to reach their targeted clients more frequent due to the foundation within the gender, age, and interests. This is in a nutshell supported by the study by Ashley & Tuten (2015) which identified how proper strategy of digital marketing tools can enhance product awareness and consequently the market sales of the products on the e-commerce platform. Also, there is a significant role of strong branding, with regards to the cornflakes' packaging and advertisement. As a result of successful firm branding, the focus should be accorded to quality, customer care, and appealing brand values. Through the social networking sites and their own websites, they post accounts of their brands and communicate with their customers, thus achieving a close link with the

customers. This work relies squarely on Hair et al. (2010), which has pointed out that effective branding enhances the level of customer identification with the brand, and the degree of trust in it. Good inventory also entails forecasting to make sure the stock of those products is always adequate and more so to avoid cases of stock out. The use of innovative inventory management tools is common amongst successful business people to deal with their stock with efficient includes by using the inventory management systems that enable efficient stock tracking through the use of management software that enables that business person to track stock level in real-time and make proper restocking at the right time. This implies that the use of this technology in managing stock is effective in mitigating stock out risks as well as cutting on storage costs since stock is not too much (Creswell, 2009).

The contribution of this research to theory, practice and policy of digital entrepreneurship is also significant. For the entrepreneurs, the relevant competencies required for the eBay platform include management skills, digital marketing skills, and the right attitudes that include perseverance and innovativeness among others. Today's policymakers and educators should strive to deliver training and support programs that could assist the young business people in acquiring these skills. There is also a necessity to enhance an amount of policy support and infrastructural facilities to increase the probability of digital business start-ups in Malaysia in order to have higher competence in the international market (Turban et al., 2012; Becker, 1964).

6. Conclusion

The findings of this research have pointed towards the optimum skills, favorable attitude and great strategies that work to the advantage of the eBay entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Based on the findings of this case study where interviews were conducted with successful business people in eBay, several factors have been established. Expertise in effective stock management and promotion of products through social networks, as well as values like patience and readiness to make changes, are the key factors influencing the success of such business people. Thus, expertise in the usage of marketing approaches for its products and good branding have also been found to be other essential factors in selling goods on the eBay site.

The results of the present study contribute to theories and prior research studies which indicate that prior work experience from conventional business can be invaluable for e-business. Also, the application of tools and concepts of digital technologies and digital marketing, for example, SEO, paid advertising, aids the entrepreneurs in enhancing the visibility of its products and hence sales. Other features are also mentioned as favourable conditions that enable the entrepreneur to overcome the obstacle and succeed: these are positive orientations or attitudes like persistence and creativity.

Thus, the findings and discussions of this study have a plethora of theoretical, practical, and policy repercussions. From the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there are several areas of personal skills that are the most important for entrepreneurs: the technical and the marketing skills, followed by the ability to take any challenge with a smile. This is why policymakers and educators should enhance training and support initiatives necessary for the acquisition and application of related competencies by the heads of new ventures and the postsecondary education stakeholders. Due to the implementation of new technologies and efficient marketing techniques, the digital entrepreneurship in Malaysia has the capacity for higher success in the international market.

There are also several suggestions for future research, concerning such topics as social media, new technologies – artificial intelligence and block chain, or quantitative studies to collect a wider amount of data and replicate the qualitative approach of this work. The research also has to investigate future experiences of other successful entrepreneurs to establish the role of culture and economy in their success.

Therefore, this research offers clear recommendations for improving digital entrepreneurship in Malaysia. Thus, by stressing the technical aspect of work, creativity in marketing, and having a polite attitude towards all the cooperating parties, online entrepreneurs from Malaysia may succeed on eBay and in the world economy as well.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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