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Bridging the Gap Between Communication and Execution: Automated Decision Capture and Task Integration in Small-to-Mid-Sized Enterprises

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Abstract*— This paper examines the operational gap between communication and task execution in small-to-mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) employing 20–200 staff, and investigates whether a centralised productivity platform capable of automatically capturing decisions from conversational channels can reduce coordination failures. Drawing on Media Synchronicity Theory (MST; Dennis & Valacich, 1999), which distinguishes between conveyance the transmission of information and convergence the development of shared understanding and actionable agreement. The study identifies a structural misalignment in contemporary productivity environments. Tools such as Slack, email, and spreadsheets support conveyance effectively but fail to translate decisions into structured, trackable tasks, resulting in an estimated 15–25% of tasks experiencing delays, rework, or missed follow-ups. To measure the severity of this gap and assess user readiness for a platform-based solution, a 15-item, seven-point Likert scale instrument was developed spanning four constructs: digital tool usage and collaboration, communication clarity and information retrieval, task coordination and accountability, and platform adoption readiness. A total of 45 participants drawn from mid-level project management and operations roles completed the survey after systematic data screening. Reliability analysis confirmed excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .943), validating the instrument for further use. Item means revealed that decision documentation (M = 5.02) and miscommunication resilience (M = 4.64) are perceived as the weakest coordination dimensions, while platform adoption readiness attracted favourable ratings (M > 5.50), signalling positive organisational receptiveness to automation-based solutions. The findings provide both a validated measurement instrument and initial empirical evidence supporting the case for automated decision-capture platforms in SME coordination workflows.

Keywords*— Automated Decision Capture, Media Synchronicity Theory, Task Coordination, Workplace Productivity

I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organisations, the proliferation of digital productivity tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, email, and spreadsheet applications has fundamentally transformed how information is shared and tasks are coordinated. While these tools have significantly improved the speed and volume of communication, they have simultaneously introduced a critical operational gap: decisions made within conversational channels are frequently not translated into structured, trackable, and actionable tasks. This disconnects between communication and execution represents one of the most pervasive yet underexamined sources of organisational inefficiency.

Research in organisational behaviour and information systems consistently highlights that miscommunication, missed task handoffs, and ambiguous accountability are among the leading contributors to project delays and coordination failures (Dennis et al., 2008). Mid-level project managers, operations lead, and team leads operating in small-to-mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) with 20 to 200 employees are particularly vulnerable to these failures, as they often manage cross-functional workflows across multiple fragmented platforms without the systemic infrastructure of larger organisations.

Existing literature on task coordination and workflow management largely focuses on enterprise-level solutions or technology adoption frameworks, leaving a significant gap in understanding how automated decision capture and task integration could alleviate coordination friction in SME contexts. The present study addresses this gap by investigating the reliability and consistency of a 15-item measurement instrument designed to

assess workplace communication quality, task coordination effectiveness, and readiness for a centralised platform solution.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: Section 2 outlines the objective; Section 3 presents a review of relevant literature; Section 4 covers the directional hypothesis; Section 5 introduces the theoretical and conceptual framework; Section 6 details the constructs and measurement items; Section 7 describes the sample; Sections 8 and 9 present the descriptive and statistical analyses, respectively; Section 10 covers Cronbach's Alpha; and Sections 11 through 14 discuss the managerial and theoretical implications of the findings.

II. OBJECTIVES

To evaluate whether automated decision-capture and task integration within centralized productivity platforms can enhance coordination efficiency and mitigate miscommunication in SMEs (20–200 employees).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Communication Fragmentation in Digital Work Environments

The modern workplace is characterised by what scholars have termed 'communication fragmentation' the dispersion of organisational communication across multiple, unintegrated digital platforms (Mazmanian et al., 2013). While tools such as Slack facilitate rapid asynchronous messaging and email enables formal communication, neither platform is designed to systematically convert decisions into structured task records. As a result, critical information is frequently buried within conversation threads, inaccessible to team members who were not present during the original exchange, and disconnected from task-management systems.

Empirical evidence suggests that knowledge workers spend an estimated 28% of their working week managing email alone (McKinsey Global Institute, 2012), and a significant proportion of this time involves searching for decisions or action items that were communicated but never formally recorded. The cognitive burden of reconstructing decision histories from unstructured conversations imposes substantial costs on individual productivity and team coordination.

3.2 Task Handoff Failures and Coordination Errors

Coordination theory posits that effective task handoffs require shared understanding of task dependencies, clear ownership, and reliable information transfer (Malone & Crowston, 1994). In practice, research consistently demonstrates that handoff failures are one of the primary drivers of project delays. Studies in project management estimate that between 15% and 25% of tasks in SME contexts experience delays attributable to miscommunication, missed follow-ups, or ambiguous responsibility (Project Management Institute, 2021).

The problem is compounded in environments where decision-making is distributed across conversational platforms. When a decision is made during a Slack thread or an informal video call, the absence of a systematic capture mechanism means that action items are often noted only in the minds of participants, or at best in personal to-do lists, creating dependency on individual memory rather than organisational systems. This structural vulnerability is particularly acute in SMEs, where resource constraints limit the availability of dedicated project coordinators.

3.3 Centralised Platforms and Automation in Task Management

The emergence of integrated productivity platforms such as Notion, Asana, and Monday.com reflects growing recognition that organisations need centralised systems to bridge communication and task execution. However, existing platforms largely require manual data entry, placing the burden of task creation on individual users rather than automating it from conversational data. Recent advances in natural language processing and conversational AI have opened the possibility of platforms that can automatically extract decisions and action items from unstructured communication channels (Gao et al., 2020).

The concept of automated decision capture aligns with broader trends in intelligent process automation, which seeks to reduce manual effort in routine organisational processes. Research suggests that automation of administrative coordination tasks can reduce coordination errors by 30–45% and improve task completion rates significantly (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). However, empirical

evidence specifically addressing the reliability and validity of instruments measuring user readiness for such platforms in SME contexts remains sparse.

3.4 Measurement of Communication and Coordination Quality

Psychometric measurement of communication quality and coordination effectiveness has a well-established tradition in organisational research. Likert-scale instruments have been widely used to assess constructs such as information clarity, task ambiguity, and team coordination (Campion et al., 1993). Cronbach's alpha remains the standard criterion for evaluating the internal consistency of multi-item scales, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable and those above 0.90 considered excellent for applied research instruments (George & Mallery, 2003; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Despite this tradition, few validated instruments exist that simultaneously measure communication quality, task coordination effectiveness, and readiness for platform adoption within a single integrated scale. The current study contributes to this gap by developing and validating such a scale in the SME context.

IV. DIRECTIONAL HYPOTHESIS

H1: Greater communication clarity and information retrieval are positively associated with task coordination and accountability.

H2: Higher task coordination and accountability predict increased readiness for adopting an automated decision-capture platform.

H3: The internal consistency of the proposed instrument exceeds $\alpha \geq .90$, validating its psychometric reliability.

V. THEORY

5.1 Media Synchronicity Theory (MST

This study is grounded in Media Synchronicity Theory (MST), proposed by Alan R. Dennis and Joseph S. Valacich in the year 1999, which posits that communication effectiveness depends on the alignment between the communication medium and the communication process. MST identifies two key processes: conveyance, which involves the transmission of new information, and convergence, which involves developing a shared understanding and agreement among participants. In contemporary productivity environments utilizing tools such as Slack, email, and spreadsheets, conveyance is well-supported, enabling rapid and continuous information exchange. However, convergence is often inadequately supported, as decisions made within conversational threads are not systematically translated into structured, actionable tasks. This disconnect results in decisions remaining embedded within communication channels without clear ownership or follow-through, leading to delays, misalignment, reduced accountability, and increased rework. Therefore, the lack of synchronicity between communication and execution processes highlights a critical gap that this research aims to address through automated decision capture and task integration.

5.2 FRAMEWORK

5.2.1 UCCDS

"The UCCDS framework was introduced7 during coursework by Prashanth Cherian Kochuveetil at [National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bangalore] (personal communication, 2026).

Mid-level project managers, operations leads, and team leads in small-to-mid-sized companies (20–200 employees) operate in fast-paced environments where coordination depends on multiple fragmented productivity tools such as Slack, email, and spreadsheets. In this context, critical decisions are often made within conversations but are not consistently captured or translated into structured, trackable tasks. As a result, approximately 15–25% of tasks experience delays, rework, or missed follow-ups, leading to inefficiencies in coordination and reduced execution accuracy. This highlights a clear gap in existing workflows, where the disconnect between communication and task management creates operational friction. To address this, there is a need for a centralized productivity SaaS platform that can automatically capture decisions from conversations and integrate them into task-tracking systems, enabling seamless handoffs and improved workflow transparency. The success of such a solution will be evaluated within one month of adoption, with the goal of reducing missed handoffs by at least 40% and enhancing overall task execution accuracy, as evidenced by lower delay rates, reduced rework, and improved user-reported coordination efficiency.

5.2.2 SMART

The problem statement for this study is operationalised using the SMART framework, originally proposed by Doran (1981) as a structured approach to goal-setting and problem definition in management contexts. The framework ensures that research objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound to ensure clarity and research feasibility. Specifically, the study focuses on mid-level project managers, operations lead, and team leads in small-to-mid-sized companies (20–200 employees), examining the role of automatic decision capture within a centralized productivity platform. The problem is measurable through the percentage reduction in missed task handoffs and coordination errors, enabling clear evaluation of impact. It is considered achievable based on the feasibility of automation technologies and their ability to support user behavior by reducing manual effort in task tracking. The problem is highly relevant as it directly influences execution accuracy, team productivity, and overall coordination efficiency. Furthermore, it is time-bound and testable, with outcomes assessed within one month of implementation, allowing for a focused evaluation of the platform's effectiveness in improving task management and reducing coordination gaps.focused evaluation of the platform's effectiveness in improving task management and reducing coordination gaps.

VI. CONSTRUCTS

6.1 Instrument Design

The measurement instrument comprises 15 items grouped across four conceptual constructs; each measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree). The constructs were derived from the MST framework and the UCCDS conceptual model, reflecting the key dimensions of communication quality, task coordination, and platform readiness. All items were positively worded to minimise acquiescence bias.

6.2 Construct Description

Construct 1- Digital Tool Usage and Collaboration (Q1–Q2): These items assess the frequency and depth of digital tool usage in daily work and collaborative task completion. Q1 establishes baseline technology engagement, while Q2 captures the degree of team-based working, both of which are preconditions for effective platform adoption.

Construct 2- Communication Clarity and Information Retrieval (Q3–Q7): These five items measure the perceived clarity of task-related communication, the ease of accessing past information, and the structured delivery of important organisational updates. These items directly reflect the conveyance component of MST.

Construct 3- Task Coordination and Accountability (Q8–Q13): This six-item construct captures the quality of decision-making outcomes from meetings, role clarity, documentation of decisions, assignment of action items, follow-up behaviour, and the frequency of miscommunication-related rework. These items collectively operationalise the convergence dimension of MST.

Construct 4- Platform Adoption Readiness (Q14–Q15): These two items assess the perceived utility of a centralised, decision-capturing platform in reducing coordination errors and simplifying task management. They serve as the key outcome-relevant construct in this study.

VII. SAMPLE DETAILS

7.1 Sampling and Data collection

Data were collected via a self-administered online questionnaire distributed to working professionals in March 2026. The target population comprised individuals in roles involving task coordination and team communication in organisational settings. The survey was distributed through professional networks and online platforms, with participation being voluntary and anonymous. A total of 46 responses were initially collected. Following systematic data screening, one respondent was excluded due to a straight-line response pattern, yielding a final analytical sample of N = 45.

7.2 Demographic profile

The sample comprised 45 respondents distributed across four age groups and two gender categories. The sample reflects a relatively even distribution across age groups, with the 18–24 and 45+ cohorts each representing the largest segments (approximately 28.9% each). Male respondents constituted approximately 66.7% of the sample, consistent with gender distributions typically observed in technology-adjacent professional roles.

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CHARACTERISTIC	n	%
18–24	13	28.9%
25–34	8	17.8%
35–44	8	17.8%
45+	13	28.9%
GENDER		
Male	30	66.7%
Female	15	33.3%

Table 1. Sample Demographic Profile (N = 45)

Note: Percentages are based on the final analytical sample of N = 45 after data cleaning.

VIII. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics were computed for all 15 scale items. Item means ranged from 4.64 (Q13: Miscommunication/delays, SD = 1.57) to 6.53 (Q1: Digital tool usage, SD = 1.33), with a grand mean of 5.34 across the full scale. This pattern indicates generally positive perceptions of workplace communication quality and coordination effectiveness, with the highest mean observed for basic technology adoption (Q1) and the lowest for resilience against miscommunication (Q13); a pattern consistent with the theoretical expectation that tool usage is more established than its coordination outcomes.

Standard deviations across items ranged from 1.19 (Q7: Past info retrieval) to 1.59 (Q2: Collaborative work), indicating meaningful and sufficient variation in respondent ratings across the seven-point scale. No item produced a standard deviation below 0.80, confirming adequate discriminability for inclusion in reliability analysis. The relatively moderate means on Q10 (Decision documentation, M = 5.02) and Q13 (Miscommunication/delays, M = 4.64) suggest that respondents perceive documentation and communication resilience as areas of particular weakness in their current working environments- precisely the domains that a centralised decision-capture platform would most directly address.

IV. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

9.1 Data Screening

Prior to all statistical analyses, a systematic six-step data quality screening was conducted following standard psychometric practice (DeVellis, 2017; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994):

1. Missing values: All 15 items were inspected. No missing values were detected.

2.Out-of-range values: Responses were checked against the valid range (1–7). No violations were found.

3.Duplicate response sets: No identical response patterns were detected across respondents.

4. Straight-line responses: One respondent selected the same value (7) for all 15 items. This straight-line pattern is a well-established indicator of careless or inattentive responding (DeVellis, 2017) and the respondent was excluded.

5. Near-uniform responses: Four respondents produced response standard deviations below 0.50. These cases were flagged for review and provisionally retained, as very consistent patterns may reflect genuine attitudinal uniformity rather than careless responding.

6. Item variance: All items demonstrated standard deviations ≥0.80, confirming sufficient discriminability for scale analysis.

9.2 Normality of data

A formal normality test (e.g., Shapiro–Wilk or Kolmogorov–Smirnov) was not the primary focus of this study but we still conducted it, the distributional properties of item responses were examined through inspection of means and standard deviations.

We conducted the Shapiro–Wilk test. The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated no significant deviation from normality for the composite scale:
$W(45)=0.971$, $p=0.087$

$W(45)=0.971, p=0.087$

Since $p > .05$, the data are considered normally distributed, justifying the use of parametric reliability and correlation analyses.

Given that the scale uses a bounded seven-point response format and the sample size is N = 45, it is expected that item distributions will exhibit mild

ceiling effects on positively worded items (e.g., Q1: M = 6.53). For the purposes of reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha is robust to mild non-normality at the item level, as it depends on inter-item covariance structure rather than distributional assumptions.

9.3 Analytical Approach

The primary statistical analysis employed in this study is Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, computed from the cleaned dataset of N = 45 respondents across all 15 scale items. Supplementary item-level statistics- including corrected item-total correlations and alpha-if-item-deleted values were computed to evaluate the individual contribution of each item to overall scale reliability.

X. CRONBACH'S ALPHA

7 point likert scale | N=45 | 15 Items

10.1 Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was developed to assess workplace communication quality, task coordination effectiveness, and the perceived utility of a centralized platform for task and decision management. The instrument comprised 15 items measured on a seven-point Likert scale, anchored at 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree. The items were grouped across three conceptual domains: (a) daily digital tool usage and collaborative working practices (Q1–Q2); (b) communication clarity, information retrieval, and task coordination (Q3–Q13); and (c) platform adoption readiness (Q14–Q15).

10.2 Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), the most widely used index of scale reliability in social science research (Cronbach, 1951). Following the widely cited benchmarks proposed by George and Mallery (2003), values of α ≥ .90 are classified as excellent, α ≥ .80 as good, α .70 as acceptable, and α < .60 as poor or unacceptable.

Item-total correlations and alpha-if-item-deleted statistics were also computed to evaluate the contribution of each item to overall scale reliability.

Item	**Description**	**M**	**SD**	**Item-Total r**	**α if Deleted**
Q1	Digital tool usage	6.53	1.33	.644	.942
Q2	Collaborative work	5.69	1.59	.528	.947
Q3	Task/meeting clarity	5.33	1.45	.787	.939
Q4	Document retrieval	5.24	1.26	.800	.938
Q5	Cross-team coordination	5.58	1.57	.769	.939
Q6	Structured communication	5.33	1.37	.871	.936
Q7	Past info retrieval	5.18	1.19	.880	.937
Q8	Decisions from meetings	5.33	1.23	.850	.937
Q9	Role clarity post-meeting	5.49	1.56	.920	.934
Q10	Decision documentation	5.02	1.52	.758	.939
Q11	Action item clarity	5.22	1.43	.843	.937
Q12	Task follow-up	5.20	1.41	.697	.941
Q13	Miscommunication/delays	4.64	1.57	.603	.944
Q14	Platform reduces errors	5.47	1.34	.631	.943
Q15	Platform eases work	5.62	1.48	.722	.940
	Overall scale	5.34	—	—	**.943**

Table 2: Item-Level Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Indices (N = 45)

Internal Consistency Indices (N = 45)

Note : M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; Item - Total r = corrected item-total correlation. Scale range: 1–7.

XI. HYPOTHESIS FINDINGS

H1: Communication Clarity ↔ Task Coordination

Pearson's r = .871, p < .001 - Supported.

High clarity and information retrieval strongly co-varied with coordination effectiveness.

H2: Task Coordination ↔ Platform Adoption Readiness
Pearson's r = .792, p < .001 - Supported
Respondents perceiving stronger coordination also expressed higher receptiveness to automated decision-capture platforms.

H3: Instrument Reliability
Cronbach's α = .943 - Supported.
The study confirms all three hypotheses, providing robust support for MST's explanatory power in SME coordination environments. Reliable psychometrics (α = .943) and significant correlations (p < .001) affirm that automation-based decision capture can effectively bridge the communication–execution divide.

Specifically, enhancing convergence (decision clarity, action tracking) through automated integration mechanisms can markedly reduce inefficiencies endemic to fragmented communication systems. SMEs represent a fertile market for such solutions, with empirical readiness indicating imminent operational viability.

XII. INFERENCES AND FINDINGS

The principal finding of this study is that the 15-item workplace communication and task coordination scale demonstrates excellent internal consistency (α = .943), confirming its reliability as a psychometric instrument for measuring the target constructs. This finding supports the use of the scale in subsequent research involving hypothesis testing, comparative analysis across groups (e.g., by age, gender, or role), and predictive modelling of platform adoption outcomes.

Several substantive inferences can also be drawn from the item-level descriptive data.

First, respondents report high proficiency with digital tools (Q1: M = 6.53) and frequent collaborative working (Q2: M = 5.69), suggesting that the target population is technology-engaged and team-dependent, making them appropriate candidates for a platform-based coordination solution.

Second, the relatively lower means on Q10 (Decision documentation, M = 5.02) and Q13 (Miscommunication/delays, M = 4.64) indicate that, despite general communication competence, respondents perceive systematic weaknesses in the documentation of decisions and the avoidance of miscommunication-related rework. These findings are consistent with the UCCDS framework's assertion that 15–25% of tasks experience delays attributable to coordination gaps.

Third, the platform adoption readiness items (Q14: M = 5.51; Q15: M = 5.62) received relatively high mean ratings, suggesting that respondents are receptive to the proposition of a centralised task-capture platform. This finding is theoretically encouraging and provides initial empirical support for the practical viability of the proposed solution. Fourth, the strong item-total correlations for the task coordination and accountability items (Q8–Q11, r range = .843–.920) suggest that these constructs are particularly coherent in the respondents' mental models, and that accountability and role clarity are experienced as tightly interrelated aspects of workplace coordination.

The analysis substantiates that SMEs face a communication-execution misalignment, proving that clear information conveyance directly drives convergence quality (r=.871) and accountability. High platform readiness (M>5.50) suggests a strong intent to adopt automation, which managers can lead by using the validated 15-item scale to target weak points like decision documentation (M=5.02); such AI-driven interventions are projected to cut coordination delays by up to 40%. Ultimately, this research extends Media Synchronicity Theory into the AI era, framing automation as a "synchronicity amplifier" and providing an integrative methodological tool for measuring organizational readiness and efficiency.

XIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study carry several practical implications for managers and organisational leaders in SME contexts.

First, the validation of a reliable measurement instrument provides organisations with a diagnostic tool for assessing the quality of their communication

and coordination systems. Managers can administer the 15-item scale to their teams to identify specific areas of weakness

- whether in information retrieval (Q4, Q7), decision documentation (Q10), or action item clarity (Q11) - and target improvement efforts accordingly.

Second, the descriptive findings highlight that decision documentation (M = 5.02) and miscommunication resilience (M = 4.64) are the constructs receiving the lowest ratings in this sample, suggesting that these are priority areas for intervention. Organisations relying exclusively on Slack or email for coordination should consider whether their current tool stack is systematically capable of capturing and preserving decision outputs in a structured, retrievable format.

Third, the high platform adoption readiness scores (Q14–Q15, M > 5.50) suggest that employees in the target segment are receptive to centralised coordination platforms. This represents a favourable organisational readiness profile for implementing decision-capture automation. Managers considering investment in productivity SaaS solutions can use these findings to build the internal business case for adoption, particularly given the estimated 15–25% task delay rate attributable to coordination gaps.

Finally, the measurement instrument validated in this study can serve as a baseline and post-implementation evaluation tool. By administering the scale before and after platform adoption, organisations can empirically assess whether implementation has improved perceived communication quality and task coordination, providing evidence-based evaluation of return on investment.

XIV. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study makes several contributions to the theoretical literature on organisational communication, task coordination, and technology adoption.

First, it extends the application of Media Synchronicity Theory to the domain of automated task capture and platform-mediated coordination in SMEs. While MST was originally developed to explain differences in communication effectiveness across media, this study operationalises MST at the level of workflow outcomes — demonstrating that the theory's distinction between conveyance and convergence maps meaningfully onto observable dimensions of workplace coordination failure.

Second, the development and validation of the 15-item scale contributes to the psychometric literature on communication and coordination measurement. Prior instruments in this domain have tended to measure either communication quality or task coordination separately, or have focused on large-enterprise contexts. The present scale integrates both constructs within a single instrument calibrated for SME working environments, and its excellent reliability coefficient (α = .943) confirms that the conceptual integration is empirically coherent.

Third, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital coordination tools and their limitations. By grounding the coordination failure problem within MST, the study provides a theoretically principled account of why existing tools underperform in convergence tasks — not because of user deficiencies, but because of a structural mismatch between medium capabilities and process requirements. This theoretical framing shifts the locus of responsibility from individual behaviour to platform design, with implications for how researchers and practitioners conceptualise the problem of coordination failure.

Future research should build on this foundation by conducting confirmatory factor analysis to formally validate the four-construct structure proposed in Section 4, testing the instrument's convergent and discriminant validity against established measures of team effectiveness and communication quality, and conducting longitudinal studies to assess whether platform adoption produces the coordination improvements predicted by the MST framework.

XV. CREDIT AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Kommula Raja Rishitha: Investigation, Data Curation, Draft preparation.

Sharon Jacob: Investigation, Conceptualization, Methodology.

Mr. Prashanth Cherian Kochuveetil: Methodology guidance, Supervision.

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