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School/Student Relationship and an  
Example of Its Implementation

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**A New Model of the Business  
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**A NEW MODEL OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL/STUDENT  
RELATIONSHIP AND AN EXAMPLE OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Business schools have used two models of their relationship with students: student as product and student as customer. Neither is satisfactory because neither leads to the development of skills and networks that students need for success in business. A model of “Student as Achiever” is proposed and its implications are discussed.

For preparing students to be achievers, *Experiential Learning* and *Authentic Learning* methods show promise as being superior to the traditional lecture method. End-of-term surveys show that students place highest value on the most authentic learning experience, and that the value assigned to exams increases when the exams are changed from a traditional to an authentic learning format.

## **OLD MODELS AND THE NEW MODEL**

Business schools have used two models of their relationship with students. Under the first model, the school is a manufacturing plant and students are products. Schools convert raw material (ignorant students) into finished goods (educated students). Teachers lecture to convey knowledge and the grades students receive on exams demonstrate the teachers' effectiveness.

Under the second model, the school is a marketer of services and students are customers. Teachers are very nice to the students and use a lot of audio-visuals and make sure that tests are not too difficult. Teachers are available and attentive to students' needs. The teachers' success is measured not by evidence of students' learning but by scores on opinion surveys, the so-called "Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE)."

When business schools follow the first model, students learn to be attentive note-takers, text-book memorizers and efficient repeaters of facts and theories on exams. While these skills are of some value, they are not high on any employer's list of factors that lead to success in the business world.

When business schools follow the second model teachers become spoon-feeders and hand-holders who completely relieve students of responsibility for their education. Students learn even less than under the older model and become whiners and complainers. Employers are not pleased about the bad attitudes and illiteracy of job applicants.

Neither model is useful because neither model does a good enough job of helping students to achieve their own career objectives. Many formal and informal surveys have revealed that virtually all business students want career advancement, for very practical reasons: they want to improve their life styles and they feel that advancement leads to higher job security. To achieve career advancement, students must be able to satisfy employer needs and they must engage in sophisticated entrepreneurial career marketing.

To satisfy employers, students need: a general background in business, deep knowledge of a relevant business discipline, excellent oral and written communications skills, strong analytical skills, influencing and negotiating skills, and teamwork skills. Employers' needs are non-negotiable. Desirable employers recruit wherever their needs are satisfied best.

To advance their careers, students need (in addition to everything listed in the previous paragraph) to set career objectives for five years and ten years out, start and build up accomplishments files, perform periodic self-SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) evaluations, and continually gather and evaluate information for planning and implementing their career paths.

To make sure that they are working with current and complete information about opportunities and threats, students must develop and maintain active personal networks with well-informed and influential people. These networks help the students to improve job performance and to get better jobs. The networks also provide ideas, information, and contacts for starting their own businesses. (The absolute essentiality of personal networks is confirmed in

every publication on career planning and advancement. It has also been repeatedly confirmed by 1,000 students who conducted 9,000 interviews in my classes over the last nine years.)

The business school has a strong interest in helping its students to succeed. The school wants its graduates to achieve wealth, fame, and power: wealth for large gifts, fame to reflect well on the school, and power to offer good jobs to new graduates.

The new model aims to satisfy the needs of all three participants in the education process: the students, the school, and the employers. The proposal is that instead of thinking of the school, as a factory or a marketer and the students as products or customers, schools should be thinking of their relationship with students as a partnership, unequivocally dedicated to increasing the wealth, fame, and power of our students. The more schools help students to succeed in business, the more the students will be able to help the school in the future.

### **THE NEW MODEL: A PARTNERSHIP DEDICATED TO STUDENTS' SUCCESS**

In implementing the new model, the school provides accurate information about employment opportunities: number of entry level jobs in each field, including location, starting salaries, typical responsibilities, and career paths. The school also provides specific information about employers' needs and requirements for career success. It offers curricula that prepare students well for the jobs that will be available to them. It also provides services such as career planning services, alumni/students networking meetings, and continuing education and referrals for alumni.

Teachers do not lecture and do not put on audio-visual shows. They design appropriate curricula and syllabi. Teachers maintain high standards and provide feedback so that students may improve their work.

Continually, teachers refine the learning methods they use and develop new methods to respond to new requirements and opportunities. The focus is on students doing useful projects and learning useful things.

Students accept responsibility for their education. They are motivated because they appreciate the value of every aspect of the education provided by the business school. They do not conduct "Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness." Instead, they rate their own progress toward achieving career goals and develop strategies for improving their performance.

Graduating students go into "business for themselves." They sell their knowledge and skills, and they have a network of people who can provide them with information and referrals. They have a career marketing plan. While they make use of corporate recruiters, students are not dependent on them.

Employers hire students (buy services from them) according to purchasing guidelines: quality, dependability, capacity for growth, and cost.

Because students have received work-oriented education and training, the only additional training required will be enterprise-specific.

After students become employees or entrepreneurs, the school becomes an important participant in their networks. The school and the alumni exchange information and referrals. The school offers continuing education and networking meetings.

In promoting the school to prospective students, the school conveys the message that the program of instruction is designed to enable them to achieve all that their natural endowment and opportunities in the business world will permit. The school supports this claim with a detailed explanation of the program of instruction, teaching methodologies, and testimonials of alumni and employers.

Since the publication of the Porter-McKibbin (1988) report, educators have been encouraged to integrate skill development into business school courses. Examples in the marketing discipline are articles by Brown (1993), Shipp (1993), Cunningham (1995) and Lamb (1995). Frequently recommended skills are teamwork, written and oral communications, and influencing. At the same time, a body of knowledge in the field of education has developed regarding *experiential learning* and *authentic learning*.

### **DO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND AUTHENTIC LEARNING DIFFER FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHING?**

In traditional college teaching, the focus is on students' acquisition of knowledge. Teachers convey content through lectures and audio-visual techniques. Students take notes and study the text and indicate their participation by paying attention to the teacher, nodding their heads and in general showing admiration of the teacher's performance. Students demonstrate mastery of subject matter through written exams consisting of multiple choice, "True and False" questions and, occasionally, essay questions.

Experiential learning consists of case discussions, role-playing, simulations, and games. It conveys content and makes it more memorable.

Authentic learning consists of school experiences that resemble experiences students encounter in real life. The emphasis is not so much on acquisition of knowledge as on increasing students' ability to perform valuable tasks. The teacher's principal role is to provide direction, guidance, and to maintain standards.

### **A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RECENT LITERATURE**

Saunders (1997) finds that while case studies, role-plays, simulations, and games are used widely, no conclusions are possible about the usefulness of any of them. The problem is that all are abstractions heavily influenced by their authors' perceptions and biases, and there is no way of knowing how realistic any of the experiential learning exercises are.

Ricks (1994) states that each event that displays the superiority of the teacher threatens learning. Each event that demonstrates the success of the learner makes the learning permanent. In his 1997 paper, he concludes that people who have done a task well and have told others how they did it are nearing skills mastery, while people who have been shown, told, or "made aware" have not even taken the first step to mastery. Referring to instructors, Ricks says: "The performance that has proven toughest to modernize is our own. The position at the front of the

room seems to demand the disclosure of wise and insightful statements. And every time a participant smiles, nods agreement, or gives us a good score on a course evaluation, our dependence on the old-fashioned teaching mode is reinforced. Content disclosure is a work behavior we have learned well. We learned it experientially."

Dennehy (1998) reports that debriefing after experiential exercises provides insight and increases learning. He and his co-authors have used the Kolb (1991) model of the adult learning process as a structure for the debriefing: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

November (1997), on the other hand, found that when he instructed his students to apply the Kolb model (acronym COTE: Concrete event, Observations, Theory, Experiment) in describing their experiences while participating in a multi-group computer simulation, they found the Kolb model to be tiresome. They did not use it. They created simpler processes for evaluating their experiences in the simulation exercise. November's conclusion was that teachers can only lead students to experiences. Students have to figure out for themselves what the experiences mean and how to continue to learn. Complete structuring is impossible. A closing quotation ends: "They came, I pushed them . . . and they flew."

Becker (1998) has found that experiential learning can provoke strong negative reactions among participants:

1. Role-plays make non-actors feel foolish.
2. Simulations and games create winners and losers, and the losers only remember that they hated the experience and they do not learn anything useful. He goes on to recommend several face-saving strategies.

Stepien (1993) states that authentic learning is problem-based learning which turns instruction topsy-turvy. Students meet an "ill-structured" problem before they receive any instruction. They have to formulate the problem, determine what information they need and what will constitute a solution. Students realize it's *their* problem. Teachers ask questions such as "what's going on here?" and "what do we need to know?" As students become self-motivated learners, teachers fade into the background and become colleagues.

Gordon (1998) defines three types of authentic learning:

1. Academic challenges: Students produce a paper or a presentation assigned by the instructor.
2. Scenario challenges: Students make believe that they were hired by a business firm or a government agency to study a situation and to present a plan for solving a problem.
3. Real-life problems: Students examine a real situation and prepare a plan for solving a problem or achieving an objective.

Cronin (1993) offers suggestions for realizing the potential of authentic learning:

1. Do not expect complete authenticity.

2. Exploit available opportunities for authentic learning. Even traditional textbooks contain suggestions for authentic learning assignments.
3. Start with less complex tasks.
4. Students' experiences in school should resemble the experiences they encounter in their lives.

In summary, teaching of content is not enough. Experiential exercises may help if they are realistic, and if they are not presented in a way that threatens participants. Authentic learning, on the other hand, is not offered as an aid to content learning, it is offered as a superior substitute for content learning. In any event, experiential learning and authentic learning should be accompanied by debriefing, not necessarily following the Kolb model.

### **THE 100% EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND AUTHENTIC LEARNING MARKETING COURSE**

As a consequence of the large body of knowledge in the field of education about *experiential learning* and *authentic learning*, an effort to integrate skill development into the core graduate and undergraduate marketing courses at Pace University evolved into an effort to move the entire course toward experiential and authentic learning, with a focus on the latter. Pace University's MBA program enrolls about 2,000 students, 20 percent full-time and 80 percent part-time. This paper describes the current status of this effort, which was begun in the late 1980s. A Spring 1988 survey of graduating MBA students disclosed dissatisfaction with the lack of skill-development in the MBA program. Similar studies in the Summer and Fall of 1988 confirmed these findings.

Since 1988, course materials have been prepared to help students develop skills while they learn subject matter. These materials have been used in several sections of the core Managerial Marketing course. Over the past several years, a shift in orientation in the presentation of the course has occurred. While traditional content learning continues, the method of presentation has changed completely to experiential and authentic learning, with a strong emphasis on authentic learning.

The objectives of the course are

1. To help students to think and behave like marketers.
2. To demonstrate the essential nature of marketing.
3. To help students to learn the concepts and terminology of marketing.

To achieve these objectives, the students complete projects and activities, listed below with their grade weights:

- A. One mini written analysis of a case study .....8%
- B. One full written analysis of a case study..... 15%
- C. Influencing Experience and Report ..... 10%

D. Networking Experience Progress Report.....	5%
E. One Page Résumé - Enough copies for all students .....	2%
F. Networking Experience Update.....	5%
G. Networking Experience Final Report .....	20%
H. Discussion and presentation of textbook questions (no specific grade weight)	
I. Class Contribution: peer evaluation (based, in part on "H").....	15%
J. Mid-Term & Final, 10 each.....	20%

The course described in this paper is the core marketing course required in the MBA program. A nearly identical course has been given to four sections of the undergraduate marketing core course. The Influencing assignment was omitted in the undergraduate course. Texts used in this course are Kotler and Armstrong (1996) for the graduate course and Pride and Ferrell (1997) for the undergraduate course. A 100 page instruction book, prepared by the instructor, was used in both courses. The course components are discussed below.

### **THE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS**

The objectives of the case study work are:

1. To teach students a structured and creative process that has been applied effectively to school cases and real planning and decision-making in business and personal situations.
2. To increase understanding of marketing subject matter.
3. To increase students' team-working skills with diverse groups.
4. To increase students' presentation skills.

The tool is the Strategic Creative Analysis (SCAN) process described very briefly below.

1. Discover and list the objectives and strategies of the company.
2. Arrange hierarchically the step 1 list to identify the Top Rank Objective (TRO).
3. Discover the Strengths, Weaknesses, Auspicious Conditions, and Threats (SWATs) of the company with respect to the TRO. SWATs are defined as follows:

**Strengths** = attributes of the company helpful to achieving the TRO.

**Weaknesses** = attributes of the company harmful to achieving the TRO.

**Auspicious Conditions** = outside conditions helpful to achieving the TRO.

**Threats** = outside conditions harmful to achieving the TRO.

4. Decide whether the TRO is attainable, in view of the SWATs. If it is, continue. If it is not, select a different TRO and repeat the SWATs discovery, and *then* continue.
5. Create at least ten possible strategies based on the SWATs, by answering these questions many times: "How can the company: **Use** its Strengths? **Stop** its Weaknesses? **Exploit** its Auspicious Conditions? **Defend** against its Threats?"

6. Create more possible strategies by asking the questions "How can we achieve this objective?" and "How else can we achieve this objective?"
7. Develop action programs for implementing the most attractive strategies, covering benefits to the company from this program, actions required, responsible person(s), location(s), resources required, control system, and contingency plans.
8. Evaluate the action programs and select for implementation the programs that appear to be the most effective in achieving the Top Rank Objective.

In actuality, students have a ten-page description of the SCAN process plus a five-page sample case and an eight-page analysis of the case following the SCAN process. Included in these materials are specific instructions for writing mini and full SCANS. A mini-SCAN consists of the first three steps of the process, and a full SCAN consists of all eight steps.

There are six case assignments during the term. Students are expected to be ready to discuss and present all cases. They are required to hand in written analyses of any two cases they choose, a mini-SCAN and a full SCAN.

At class meetings designated as case study sessions, the instructor assigns students to randomly selected teams of three to five students. Each team prepares a SCAN presentation on the case due at that class meeting, and the first team ready gives its presentation. The rest of the class comments on the presentation and offers suggestions.

Students' success in the case study work is evaluated on the basis of the written analyses and the presentations. The written work is evaluated by the instructor and is weighted 8% for the mini and 15 percent for the full SCAN. Grades are based on the precision and depth of adherence to the SCAN process, quality of English language use, and appearance of the paper. Students evaluate the presentation work at the end of the term as part of the "Class Contribution" grade component, which is 15 percent.

### **DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF TEXTBOOK QUESTION (Q&A)**

The objectives of the "Q&A" activity are:

1. To give students experience in working as members of a team under time pressure toward achieving important goals, such as giving good presentations and maximizing their "class contribution" score. Students also learn to work with people of diverse backgrounds.
2. To increase students' understanding of text material. The instructor receives frequent feedback on this.

The instructor prepares a list of subject-relevant questions, preferably of a thought-provoking, action-directed nature. A convenient source of questions are the end-of-chapter questions presented in the textbook. The two textbooks listed above serve well for this purpose. In class, students are assigned to randomly-selected groups of four or five persons. The instructor assigns one question to each group. Groups are allowed about 15 minutes to develop answers to their questions and to arrange their presentation roles. They are permitted to refer to the text and to any other materials.

The instructor takes a seat at the side of the room and calls on groups to present their questions and answers. Other members of the class are encouraged to comment after each team's presentation. The instructor participates by helping students when they seem to require help and by emphasizing particularly important points. To maximize students' ability to work with different people, the instructor brings randomized lists of students' names and assigns teams according to these lists. (Spreadsheet programs can be used to randomize lists of names.)

Students' success with the Q&A activity is measured by peer evaluation as part of the "Class Contribution" component, which is 15 percent of the course grade.

### **THE INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE**

The objectives of the influencing assignment are to give students experience in influencing, which . . .

1. In the form of personal selling is a very important marketing activity;
2. In the form of persuading or winning over, is an important managerial activity; and
3. Is an excellent model of the marketing concept, which consists of achieving objectives by helping others to achieve their objectives through a mutually beneficial exchange.

Students receive an eight-page instruction set that covers the following topics: Whom should you try to influence? What are the needs of your client? Human behavior concepts, your credibility, prepare for influencing, present your opener, get the conditional "yes," make the actual offer, deal with objections, and mistakes to avoid. The instruction set also includes the required structure of the written report.

Students are expected to study this material, to prepare for and arrange an individual real influencing encounter, and then submit a report on the entire experience.

Students have conducted influencing encounters for the purpose of getting promotions on the job or increases in pay, or obtaining funding for their new enterprises. They have also conducted influencing encounters about lesser matters. The point of the assignment is to have students go through a complete, real Influencing Experience, to reflect on it, to write it up, to discuss it in class in small groups, and possibly to present it to the entire class. The written report covers the following topics:

1. Your personal mini-SCAN (your ranked objectives and Strengths, Weaknesses, Auspicious Conditions, and Threats discovery with respect to your Top Ranked Objective).
2. List of clients (people you seek to influence).
3. Mini-SCAN of one client.
4. The outcome you wanted from the influencing encounter.
5. How you established and maintained credibility with this client.
6. How you prepared for the influencing encounter.
7. What happened at the influencing encounter? Were there any surprises?

8. Should you have done anything differently?
9. The three most important things you learned from this experience.
10. Plans for future influencing encounters.

Grades are based on the precision and depth of adherence to the instruction set, quality of English language use, and appearance of the paper. The Influencing Experience report counts for 10 percent of the semester grade. Not all students report success on the first attempt at influencing. That is acceptable, as long as they make a decent effort. Many do report success and that the experience went more smoothly than they had expected. They usually attribute their success to thorough preparation. The class discussion and presentation work is evaluated by students at the end of the term as part of the "Class Contribution" grade component, which is 15 percent.

### **THE ONE PAGE RÉSUMÉ ASSIGNMENT**

The résumé assignment requires all students to bring in enough copies of their one (or two) page résumés for the other members of the class. The assignment has two objectives: to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of in-class networking and to help students to learn what constitutes an attractive résumé. To achieve the second objective, after the résumés have been distributed, each student writes on a piece of paper the names of the owners of the three résumés that the student finds to be the most attractive. These "ballots" are collected by the instructor. He tallies them and reports to the class the names of the top three vote-getters. Then each student is in a position to determine whether and how to modify his/her résumé.

The résumés are not graded. All résumés submitted earn 2 percent toward the semester grade. Students are urged to keep the résumés so that they may easily contact one another now and in the future.

### **THE NETWORKING EXPERIENCE**

The Networking Experience is a completely authentic learning experience. It is real world marketing. It is also the biggest component of the course, accounting for 30 percent of the grade. It provides experience in marketing planning, exploratory market research, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling.

The instruction set students follow is 21 pages in length. Some of the topics covered are: accomplishments file; evaluate your career situation; network with friends, alumni, and people within your organization; attend professional meetings; participate in organizations; give presentations, publish articles, arrange information interviews; the broadcast letter; using headhunters; and the world wide web.

Students prepare three reports. An outline of the final report follows:

1. Objectives of your Networking Experience.
2. List of completed interviews, meetings, and other networking activities.
4. List the most important things you have learned:

- a) About networking.
- b) Directly relevant to your information needs.
4. List the most important personal connections you have made.
5. Whom have you helped in the course of this project and in what ways?
6. Your plans for future networking.
7. What advice would you give to future students about maximizing the effectiveness of their networking?

The reports are graded by the instructor on the basis of adherence to the instructions, amount and quality of work being reported, quality of English language presentation, and appearance of the paper.

All students discuss their progress reports and update reports in class in small group sessions. At the end of term, each student gives a presentation to the entire class on his or her final networking report. The class discussion and presentation work is evaluated by students at the end of the term as part of the "Class Contribution" grade component, which is 15 percent.

### **THE MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS**

The Mid-term and Final exams for the Marketing course are take-home exams. The main objective of these exams is to help students (most of whom are not marketing majors) to increase their appreciation of the usefulness of marketing in achieving businesses goals. Other objectives are to encourage students to study the textbook and to think creatively about applying the concepts presented in the book to real business situations. The actual exam assignment is as follows:

Make an assumption about your position seven to ten years from now. Examples might be: partner in an accounting (or consulting) firm, vice-president in a business or non-profit organization, owner of your own business, or employed in another management position.

State clearly at the beginning of your paper what you are projecting this future position to be. Write an essay showing how you would perform (or recommend performing) each of the following marketing tasks in your business, the first ten essays for the mid-term and the second ten essays for the final.

Each essay must show that you understand the relevant concepts presented in the text and that you know how to apply these concepts in your situation.

#### **A. Mid-Term.**

1. Developing marketing objectives.
2. Managing the marketing effort.
3. Scanning the marketing environment.
4. Analyzing marketing opportunities for your business.

5. Applying important customer behavior concepts.
6. Forecasting demand for your product or service.
7. Segmenting markets and selecting target markets.
8. Positioning your product or service.
9. Developing new products and services.
10. Managing the product over its life cycle.

B. Final Exam.

1. Using marketing channels.
2. Pricing your products or services.
3. Using advertising.
4. Using public relations.
5. Using personal selling.
6. Using all other methods of sales promotion.
7. Building customer relationships.
8. Creating a competitive advantage.
9. Engaging in global marketing.
10. Engaging in socially responsible marketing

The exam papers are graded by the instructor on the basis of adherence to the instructions, amount and quality of work being shown, quality of English language presentation, and appearance of the paper. Grade weights are 10 percent of the semester grade for each exam.

All students discuss their exam papers in class in small group sessions. These discussions are evaluated by students at the end of the term as part of the "Class Contribution" grade component, which is 15 percent.

### EVALUATIONS

At the very end of each semester, after the last student presents his/her Final Networking report, the instructor distributes a two part questionnaire. The first part is the peer evaluation of "Class Contribution." The second part asks students to evaluate each component of the course, as well as the entire course, on a five point scale, with 1 = "Not at all valuable," and 5 = "Extremely Valuable." The results for five sections (1997 to 1998) are shown below.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>n</u>
The Networking Experience	4.72	95
The entire course	4.47	95
Seeing the other students' résumés	4.41	95

The take-home exams	4.33	58
The Influencing Experience	4.30	64
The case study work	4.22	95
The in-class exams	3.92	37
The textbook Q&A sessions in class	3.74	95

Represented in this table are three graduate sections (n=64) and two undergraduate sections (n=31). In the Spring 1997 semester, two sections had in-class essay question exams. Subsequently, three sections had the take-home exams. The difference in the evaluation scores of the take-home and in-class exams is significant at  $p=.01$ .

The Networking Experience, which constitutes real-life authentic learning, was perceived as being the most valuable. The in-class exams and the textbook Q&A sessions, which were most closely tied to the textbook, were perceived as being least valuable.

### CONCLUSION

A new model has been proposed in this paper describing a new relationship between the business school and its students. Instead of depicting students as passive consumers of “teaching,” we now see students as achievers taking full responsibility for their education. Teachers do not lecture or give high-tech audio-visual presentations. Instead, they guide students in the completion of assignments that have a direct bearing on their careers.

Implementing this model requires changes in the orientation of the school, the work of teachers and students, and the nature of evaluation systems.

A marketing course that was developed especially for implementing the new model makes use of *Experiential Learning* and especially of *Authentic Learning*. Much of the work that students perform under Authentic Learning (AL) is actual marketing, not just textbook marketing. The Networking Experience, in particular, not only leads students to practice several marketing activities, but it also gets them started on developing a network for exchanging information and referrals.

The evaluations show that students perceive real-life authentic learning to be more valuable than text-book related learning activities.

Two final conclusions may be drawn:

1. The new model that defines the school/student relationship as a partnership dedicated to the business success of the students leads to a higher level of achievement of the business school’s objectives, the students, and employers than either of the two current models.
2. In implementing the new model, authentic learning and experiential learning are superior to lectures and multi-media presentations because they lead students to develop the skills and networks that they need for business success. Of the two methods, authentic learning is more effective.

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