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Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Logistics Businesses: Ethical Analysis Based on Intern Observations

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Abstract: This study uses internal data to analyse logistics businesses' strengths, flaws, and unethical behaviours. Content analysis was used to categorise and evaluate observations from 104 logistics organisations. This research, based on internships, illuminates the business management, ethics, and organisational development of the logistics industry. The study highlights the strengths of logistics companies in organisational structure and discipline; speed and operational efficiency; training and employee development; communication and relationship management; logistics and distribution capabilities; quality and production standards; corporate governance; and innovation. These capabilities enable the sector to respond to market changes and remain competitive. Conversely, the analysis highlights major vulnerabilities that may impede sustainable growth. Communication and trust concerns, operational inefficiencies, financial and economic challenges, employee motivation, deficiencies in technology and digitalisation, and organisational and managerial shortcomings were identified. These issues must be addressed to boost sector performance and ensure long-term success. The investigation also illuminates the logistics company's unethical behaviours. These behaviours included poor working conditions, occupational safety hazards, bribery and fraud, and unprofessionalism. Unethical behaviour can hurt employee satisfaction, corporate reputation, and business viability. This report helps logistics organisations identify strategic improvement areas by analysing broader trends and challenges. The paper also recommends novel industrial solutions using interns' actual operational experience and impartiality.

Keywords: Intern Observations; Business Analysis; Business Ethics; Business Strategies; Logistics Management; Organisational Development; Operational Efficiency; Corporate Sustainability.

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1. Introduction

The logistics sector is a cornerstone of the global economy, playing a critical role in enhancing business efficiency and ensuring competitiveness. Logistics operations encompass various processes such as transportation, warehousing, inventory management, and order fulfilment, all of which contribute significantly to the seamless movement of goods and services. However, the success of businesses in this sector depends not only on operational performance but also on competence in human resource management and adherence to ethical standards. Ethical considerations, including fair labour practices,

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environmental sustainability, and corporate social responsibility, are essential components that can influence a company's reputation and long-term viability. In this context, analysing the strengths and weaknesses of logistics businesses, evaluating their ethical practices, and offering solutions are of great importance for the sustainable growth of the sector. This study aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of logistics enterprises and examine ethical issues. The study is based on systematic observations of interns working across various logistics companies, enabling a firsthand assessment of organisational dynamics. In the study, the observations obtained by using the content analysis technique were categorised and interpreted. This process enables the systematic identification of general trends and common issues among enterprises.

Identifying these trends is crucial for businesses aiming to refine their operational strategies, boost employee satisfaction, and align with industry best practices. The study is structured as follows: In the Business Ethics section, the importance of ethical standards in the logistics sector and their application methods are discussed theoretically. Strengths, Weaknesses, and Ethical Behaviours are examined, focusing on the enterprises' prominent strengths, such as organisation, speed, innovation, and communication. Additionally, challenges such as communication problems, a lack of trust, unethical behaviour, and a lack of professionalism are analysed in depth [3]. In the method section, the content analysis technique and data collection processes used in the research are explained in detail. The qualitative nature of this study ensures that insights are drawn from real-world experiences, allowing for a nuanced understanding of industry practices [7]. The data collection process involved systematic documentation of daily observations to ensure accuracy and consistency. In the findings section, the findings obtained from the intern observations comprehensively explain the strengths and weaknesses of logistics companies, as well as the ethical issues they face.

These findings highlight key areas of concern, including workplace culture, leadership effectiveness, and the ethical dilemmas encountered in daily operations. Moreover, trends observed in multiple companies provide valuable insights into industry-wide practices and potential areas for improvement. The Conclusion and Evaluation section summarises the research's general findings and presents suggestions for logistics companies. These suggestions aim to enhance operational efficiency, promote ethical conduct, and encourage businesses to adopt sustainable and responsible practices [11]. This study aims to contribute to the evaluation of businesses in the logistics sector from a different perspective and to develop innovative solutions to common problems in the sector. By offering an empirical perspective based on direct observations, it provides a unique contribution to both academia and industry professionals [13]. It aims to guide sectoral development by shedding light on the academic and applied logistics fields. Additionally, this research emphasises the importance of ethical business conduct as a fundamental pillar for long-term success and industry sustainability. Future studies can expand on these findings by incorporating quantitative data and comparative analysis across different geographical regions to gain a broader understanding of global logistics challenges and opportunities.

2. Method

This study is based on systematic observations of 104 interns across 104 logistics companies over 40 days. The primary aim of the study was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these companies and identify any unethical behaviours within their operations. To ensure consistency and accuracy in data collection, the interns were required to maintain daily observation records. These records provided valuable insights into various operational aspects, highlighting both best practices and areas requiring improvement. To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process, all interns underwent comprehensive training before commencing their observations. This training covered key aspects of systematic observation techniques and ethical considerations in data collection and analysis. Additionally, a standardised template was provided to the interns to structure their daily entries, ensuring uniformity in data recording. By implementing these measures, the study aimed to minimise subjective bias and enhance the credibility of the observations. During the data collection phase, interns diligently documented their experiences and observations in written form at the end of each workday. These records were systematically gathered and reviewed every week to maintain consistency and coherence. The observations focused on critical business aspects, including organisational structure, workflow efficiency, innovation capacity, internal communication mechanisms, trust-related issues, and unethical behaviours exhibited within the workplace.

The interns were encouraged to record their observations in as much detail as possible to provide a comprehensive understanding of the workplace dynamics. For data analysis, the content analysis method was used to process and interpret qualitative data systematically. The initial step involved examining observation records for internal consistency and clarity. Any inconsistencies or missing data were identified and rectified to ensure data integrity. Subsequently, the data were categorised into main themes and subcategories using a structured coding process. The predefined main themes included strengths, weaknesses, and unethical behaviours. However, the analysis also remained open to new patterns emerging from the data, leading to the creation of additional relevant subcategories. To enhance the credibility of the coding process and reduce potential biases, multiple researchers were involved in coding the observations. The inter-coder agreement rate was calculated to assess consistency in the interpretation and classification of data. This methodological approach was adopted to increase the study's reliability and ensure the findings were as objective as possible. Despite its valuable insights, this study has certain limitations, particularly regarding the generalizability of its findings. Since the research is based on qualitative data derived from a specific group of interns in selected logistics companies, the representativeness of these observations is limited. Although the observations provide in-depth insights into the internal dynamics of logistics firms, they may not fully capture broader industry trends. To enhance the generalizability of the findings and draw stronger conclusions, future research should incorporate quantitative data collection alongside qualitative methods. A mixed-methods approach could provide a more holistic understanding of the operational and ethical landscape within the logistics sector.

3. Ethics

Business ethics encompasses the principles that shape and influence business activities, enabling businesses to develop behaviours that sustain their operations and enhance performance [2]. In other words, business ethics serves as a framework that helps businesses maintain sustainability while operating responsibly and fairly. It encompasses various ethical principles that influence corporate decisions and actions, thereby playing a critical role in a company's long-term success and reputation. Business ethics examines the ethical problems faced by businesses and provides strategies for addressing these issues [4]. Ethical challenges in business operations can range from workplace discrimination and bribery to misleading advertising and environmental responsibility. Addressing these issues effectively requires businesses to adopt ethical decision-making frameworks that align with legal requirements and social expectations.

Without a well-structured ethical approach, businesses may face reputational damage, legal consequences, and loss of consumer trust. Additionally, business ethics examines how businesses apply ethical principles in their decision-making processes and the impact of these principles on business outcomes [6]. When businesses integrate ethical considerations into their decision-making, they not only foster a positive organisational culture but also enhance their market competitiveness. Ethical decision-making can lead to increased employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, and stakeholder confidence, all of which contribute to the overall success and stability of the business. When conducting a literature review on business ethics, the following topics can be taken into consideration:

- **Business Ethics Theories:** These provide insight into the ethical decision-making processes businesses employ. These theories examine how businesses identify and resolve ethical issues [5]. For example, stakeholder theory emphasises the importance of considering the interests of all parties affected by business decisions, while virtue ethics focuses on the moral character of business leaders.
- **Business Ethics Practices:** These examine how businesses apply ethical principles in real-world situations. These practices enable businesses to assess their strategies for addressing ethical issues and their impact on business outcomes [15]. Many companies implement ethical codes of conduct, whistleblower policies, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to ensure adherence to ethical standards.
- **Business Ethics Issues:** These address ethical issues faced by businesses. These issues encompass the ethical decision-making processes of businesses and their impact on business outcomes [10]. Ethical dilemmas often arise in areas such as labour rights, data privacy, and environmental sustainability. Companies that proactively address these issues tend to build stronger relationships with their stakeholders.
- **Business Ethics Training:** This examines how businesses teach their employees ethical principles. This training enables employees to develop effective ethical decision-making processes and enhance business outcomes [14]. Ethical training programs often include case studies, role-playing scenarios, and workshops designed to reinforce corporate values and ethical behaviour.

These topics can be considered when conducting a literature review on business ethics. They offer a broader perspective on the subject and help researchers develop a deeper understanding of how ethics influence business operations and decision-making processes [2]. Business ethics is not only a theoretical concept but also a guide for businesses to address real-world problems in their daily operations [15]. Ethical considerations influence corporate governance, customer relations, employee behaviour, and public perception. Companies that prioritise ethical business practices are more likely to foster long-term success and contribute positively to society.

4. Business Strategies Strengths and Weaknesses in the Context of Ethics

Business strategies are the roadmap that a business sets to achieve its long-term goals, guiding its operations and decision-making processes to ensure sustainable success [12]. These strategies are not created in isolation but are determined through a comprehensive SWOT analysis. This analytical approach evaluates a business's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, providing a structured framework for strategic planning [9]. A business’s strengths are the characteristics that set it apart from its competitors and give it a competitive advantage. These strengths could stem from factors such as a superior product that better meets customer needs, excellent customer service that enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty, a strong brand image that resonates with the target audience, or an efficient supply chain that ensures cost-effectiveness and timely delivery [1]. Identifying and leveraging these strengths allows businesses to maintain a strong market position and foster long-term growth.

On the other hand, weaknesses are internal factors that can hinder a business's competitive position or limit its growth potential. These may include poor product quality, which leads to customer dissatisfaction; poor customer service, which can damage the business's reputation; low brand awareness, which reduces market reach; or an ineffective supply chain, which causes delays and inefficiencies [8]. Recognising these weaknesses is crucial, as it enables businesses to implement corrective measures and turn potential vulnerabilities into opportunities for improvement. Ethics plays a crucial role in determining and implementing effective business strategies. A business's ethical standards influence its strengths and weaknesses, shaping its relationships with stakeholders, customers, and employees [4]. Ethical behaviour, such as adhering to principles of honesty and transparency, can significantly enhance a business's reputation, leading to increased trust from customers, investors, and other stakeholders [2]. Trust is a critical asset for businesses, as it fosters customer loyalty, encourages repeat business, and strengthens brand credibility in the marketplace.

Conversely, unethical practices can have severe negative consequences. Engaging in dishonest or deceptive practices can erode customer trust, leading to declining sales and potential legal repercussions. For example, misleading advertising, unfair labour practices, or a lack of corporate social responsibility can damage a company's public image and weaken its long-term sustainability [16]. Therefore, businesses must integrate ethical considerations into their strategic planning to ensure both profitability and social responsibility. In conclusion, business strategies and ethics are deeply intertwined and play a crucial role in determining a business's success. Companies that conduct thorough assessments of their strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies aligned with ethical principles are better positioned to maintain a competitive advantage. By prioritising integrity and transparency, businesses can not only achieve their long-term goals but also contribute positively to society and build a lasting legacy in their respective industries.

5. Findings

The table shows five types of businesses, together with the number of employees and the average number of employees for each kind. It shows that big companies have the most employees (28) and the largest average staff size, while mini-businesses have the fewest employees and the smallest average team size (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of businesses by employee size

Business Category	Number of Businesses	Average Number of Employees
Mini-businesses (<10)	9	6.89
Small businesses (10-50)	15	32.33
Medium businesses (50-100)	7	72.57
Large businesses (>100)	28	124.46
Unresponsive	5	N/A

The table shows the total number of replies and their percentages out of 179 for formal and informal relationship types. Table 2 shows that both groups are approximately equally represented, with informal partnerships accounting for 35.8% and formal relationships for 35.2%.

Table 2: Formal vs. Informal relationships in logistics companies

Relationship Type	Total Responses	Proportion (Total = 179)
Formal	63	35.2%
Informal	64	35.8%

The majority of businesses lean slightly toward informal human relations, though the difference between the two is marginal, 64 informal vs. 63 formal responses (Table 3).

Table 3: Key strengths of businesses

Strength Category	Key Explanation
Organisation/Discipline	Structured management, employee ownership, and business continuity.
Speed/Efficiency	Rapid problem-solving and efficient workflows.

Education/Development	Training programs address employee skill gaps.
Relationships/Communication	Strong customer relations and respectful internal communication.
Logistics/Distribution	Wide cargo network and multi-modal transport operations.
Innovation	Openness to technological and process improvements.

There are six types of company vulnerabilities on the table, from ethical difficulties to market constraints. Each one has a short explanation. It discusses common problems, including insufficient staffing, poor logistics, low morale, and outdated technology (Table 4).

Table 4: Weaknesses and challenges

Weakness Category	Key Explanation
Ethical Issues	Lying to customers, trust erosion, and unethical practices (e.g., bribery).
Operational Inefficiencies	Poor logistics infrastructure, slow shipping, and disorganised stock management.
Staffing Shortages	Understaffing, unfair workload distribution, and low wages.
Technological Gaps	Reliance on manual systems, inadequate tech adoption, and outdated software.
Employee Morale	Low motivation, poor work-life balance, and insufficient training.
Market Limitations	Small scale, dependency on suppliers, and weak digital/e-commerce presence.

The table breaks down frequent workplace problems into five groups: safety, professionalism, communication, working conditions, and fraud. There are specific examples in each category that can help you find and fix problems in your organisation (Table 5).

Table 5: Observed unethical behaviours (ıntern perspectives)

Category	Examples
Working Conditions	High stress, low wages, irregular hours, inadequate dining facilities.
Communication Issues	Inaccessible bosses, gossip, and poor team communication.
Lack of Professionalism	Discourteous behaviour, ignoring dress codes, and unprofessional conduct.
Safety Neglect	Insufficient attention to employee safety protocols.
Fraudulent Practices	Bribing forklift operators, tampering with tachographs.

6. Evaluation and Interpretation

Ensuring the sustainability and long-term success of businesses requires strengthening their weaknesses and minimising unethical behaviours. In particular, false statements directed at customers undermine fundamental reputation and trustworthiness, making it nearly impossible to establish a loyal customer base. The dissemination of negative experiences further threatens a company's competitive standing in the industry. Such ethical violations can lead to a wide range of consequences, from declining sales to damage to an industrial reputation. Operational inefficiencies also pose significant challenges for businesses. Low productivity, unclear objectives, and inadequate time management disrupt business processes, reduce employee motivation, and adversely impact profitability. Similarly, in the logistics sector, deficiencies in essential infrastructure—such as cold chain compartments or shelving systems—result in product damage and failure to meet customer demands, thereby weakening competitive advantage. Disruptions in transportation processes directly reduce customer satisfaction. A shortage of personnel leads to an inequitable distribution of workload, employee burnout, and slower business processes.

These factors contribute to disruptions in customer service, hindering overall business growth. Deficiencies in technology further exacerbate these challenges; inefficient software infrastructure slows workflows, increases operational costs, and necessitates an urgent transition to modern solutions. Mistakes in human resource policies also have profound implications for businesses. Low-wage policies deter talented employees from joining the company, diminish motivation among existing staff, and lead to performance declines. Additionally, failing to integrate interns into business processes results in missed opportunities to harness young talent and exacerbates long-term skilled labour shortages. A lack of professionalism in the work environment heightens communication issues, blurs job roles, and weakens organisational discipline. Insufficient logistical networks hinder the ability to provide timely services, resulting in market share losses. Moreover, the absence of a digital presence, when combined with shortcomings in e-commerce and marketing strategies, prevents businesses from reaching a broader customer base. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), limited financial and human resources, combined with weak trade relations, hinder their ability to capitalise on new business opportunities and constrain their growth potential. Failure to remain competitive in dynamic markets results in an inability to meet evolving customer needs, while financial constraints prevent investment in new projects, putting companies at a disadvantage. In conclusion, businesses must address these weaknesses through strategic planning, prioritise technological modernisation, and place ethical principles at the core of their operations to achieve long-term transformation.

6.1. Motivation and Training Problems

Businesses often face challenges in employee motivation and training. These issues may include a decline in employee motivation, a lack of activities designed to sustain high levels of engagement, and insufficient training opportunities for personnel. Addressing these concerns is crucial for fostering a productive work environment and enhancing overall employee performance.

6.2. Organisation and Management Problems

Organisational and managerial issues can arise due to various factors, such as inadequate staffing, irregular working hours, and formal, impersonal workplace relationships. Additionally, spatial constraints and disorganised working environments contribute to inefficiencies. Businesses that rely on manual systems may face challenges in distributing work and managing crises, particularly due to personnel shortages and inadequate crisis resolution capabilities. Furthermore, an ineffective logistics network and an inability to provide efficient distribution services weaken operational effectiveness. Weak management and poor coordination within the supply chain, as well as difficulties in setting company objectives and strategic planning, further exacerbate these problems. Additional challenges include inefficiencies in raw material procurement and supply chain processes, as well as the inability to establish a competitive pricing strategy.

6.3. Technology and Digitalisation Problems

Technological and digitalisation challenges pose significant risks to businesses, particularly in e-commerce and digital marketing. Falling behind in technological advancements limits a company's ability to remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy. The lack of investment in modern digital tools and platforms may hinder business growth and reduce market reach. This analysis highlights key areas where businesses exhibit weaknesses, enabling the identification of priority areas for improvement. Addressing these challenges is essential for businesses to enhance their operational efficiency and maintain a competitive edge.

6.4. The Quality of Human Resources and Hierarchical Structure

Survey responses indicate that a group of interns shared their experiences across various companies, providing insights into human resource management. Generally, positive feedback was given regarding the quality of human resource departments and their training programs. It was noted that businesses valued both interns and employees, exhibited a solution-oriented approach, and placed significant importance on employee training and development. Although some responses referenced hierarchical structures, the majority indicated that hierarchy was not rigid, fostering a culture of respect and sincerity in the workplace. However, a few respondents expressed discomfort with the superior-subordinate relationship. Based on these internship experiences, it can be inferred that human resource departments generally perform well and demonstrate a commitment to employee development. At the same time, perspectives on hierarchical structures varied; most indicated that workplaces maintained a non-rigid hierarchy with respectful relationships.

6.5. Evaluation of Human Resource Management

The overall evaluation of human resource management in businesses was predominantly positive. According to the data, 21% of businesses rated their human resource management as "Very Good," 18% as "Good," and 11% as "Sufficient." Additionally, 7% described it as "High Quality," 6% as "Very Good," 2% as "Quality Was High," and another 2% as "Efficient." Employee relations within human resources departments also received favourable assessments: 4% of respondents noted "Caring and Regular Work Practices," 3% stated "Good and Caring Management," and 2% indicated that human resources valued people. Further comments emphasized positive workplace interactions, such as "Very Emotional and Respectful" (1%), "Proper and Respectful Employee Relations" (1%), "Quite Friendly" (1%), "Excellent Communication" (1%), "Committed to Teaching Employees" (1%), and "Supportive Work Environment" (1%).

However, certain deficiencies in human resource education and training were noted. While 12% of businesses found training programs sufficient, 8% suggested that additional training should be prioritised, and 3% identified personnel shortages as a concern. Additionally, 1% of respondents highlighted the need for further training related to customer communication. These findings underscore the necessity for businesses to allocate greater resources to training and workforce development.

6.6. Hierarchical Structure Assessment

When evaluating hierarchical structures, 20% of businesses reported a flexible approach, indicating the absence of a strict superior-subordinate relationship, while 10% explicitly stated that such a relationship did not exist. Additional responses included “Not Rigid” (9%), “Sincere and Respectful Relationships” (6%), and “Decent Due to Corporate Structure” (3%). However, some businesses exhibited more rigid hierarchical structures; 2% described the superior-subordinate relationship as authoritarian; another 2% indicated that hierarchy rigidity varied by department; 1% stated that the work environment strictly regulated relationships; and 1% noted that conflicts were resolved through formal channels. While human resource management in most businesses is perceived positively, there is still room for improvement in training and staffing. Additionally, hierarchical structures vary across businesses; some adopt a flexible, employee-friendly approach, while others enforce a more rigid, authoritarian framework. These insights provide valuable guidance for businesses seeking to enhance their organisational effectiveness, workforce development, and overall employee satisfaction.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

This study aims to analyse the operational dynamics, ethical practices, and fundamental challenges faced by companies in the logistics sector from the perspective of interns. By doing so, it provides valuable insights into sectoral development. The findings indicate that logistics companies exhibit significant strengths in organisational structure, technological adaptation, and operational efficiency. However, deficiencies in communication, slow progress in digitalisation, and weaknesses in leadership skills pose considerable risks to the sector's continued growth and competitiveness. The long-term success of logistics companies depends on their ability to differentiate themselves through operational flexibility, customer-centric approaches, and innovative solutions. To sustain these competitive advantages, modernising technological infrastructure—such as adopting the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and automation—is crucial. Additionally, increasing investments in research and development (R&D) and implementing employee entrepreneurship programs are recommended. These initiatives can foster an innovation-driven corporate culture and accelerate digital transformation. The research findings highlight key challenges in the logistics sector, primarily related to communication barriers, delays in digital transformation, and the institutionalization of ethical practices:

- **Communication and Leadership Deficiencies:** The rigidity of hierarchical structures and the inefficiency of vertical communication channels hinder decision-making processes, reducing overall organisational effectiveness. To address these issues, logistics companies should integrate digital collaboration platforms that facilitate seamless information flow among employees. Moreover, leadership development programs should be implemented to enhance managerial communication skills and foster a more inclusive decision-making environment.
- **Delays in Digital Transformation:** The logistics sector lags global competitors in adopting advanced technologies such as automation and data analytics. To overcome this challenge, companies must invest in cloud-based logistics management systems and artificial intelligence-powered optimisation tools. These investments will improve operational efficiency and enhance the sector’s ability to respond to market demands.
- **Lack of Ethical Practices and Awareness:** The low reporting rate of ethical violations is not necessarily due to the absence of ethical policies but rather to a lack of awareness and ineffective reporting mechanisms. To strengthen ethical governance, logistics companies should standardise ethical behaviour protocols, expand employee ethics training programs, and implement more effective anonymous reporting systems.

The study also provides insights into human resources management and organisational flexibility within the sector. A significant portion of participants (49%) rated their human resources departments as “good” or “very good.” However, 32% of respondents indicated that training in customer relations and crisis management was insufficient. Additionally, while 36% of participants perceived their organisational structure as flexible, 15% stated that an authoritarian management approach hurt employee motivation. Based on these findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed to enhance the continuous development and competitiveness of logistics companies:

- **Technology Integration:** Companies should prioritise investments in artificial intelligence, IoT, and real-time data analytics, and make digital literacy training mandatory for employees.
- **Human Resource Optimisation:** Implementing performance-based reward systems, structured career development plans, and flexible working models can enhance employee motivation and productivity.
- **Ethics and Transparency:** Ethical standards should be clearly defined at every stage of the supply chain, and employees should receive comprehensive training on ethical decision-making.
- **Leadership Transformation:** Managers should be trained in change management and the relationship between diversity and innovation, while young professionals should be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes.

Implementing these strategies will enable logistics companies to strengthen their position in the global competitive landscape and establish themselves as industry leaders. By adopting innovative strategies, firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantages and rapidly adapt to market dynamics. Furthermore, a robust digital transformation strategy will play a pivotal role in shaping the sector's future trajectory. In the long term, enhancing both operational efficiency and customer satisfaction through strategic initiatives will contribute to the sustainability and growth of the logistics industry.

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