

AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITERATURE ON MARKET ORIENTED ARTIFACTS

Submission to the 20th Annual Irish Academy of Management Conference 2017

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Category: Development Paper

Track: Marketing Management

Keywords: Organisational Culture, Market Orientation, Cultural Artifacts, Market orientated Artifacts. Marketing Management.

An examination of the literature on Market Oriented Artifacts

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present a review of the literature on market oriented artifacts. Artifacts are one of the components of a market oriented culture as well as values, norms and behaviours (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Market oriented artifacts have been argued to have four categories; stories, arrangements, rituals and language (Schein 1984; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). The importance of artifacts is their ability to indicate the degree to which an organisation is market oriented. Furthermore, artifacts have been argued to have symbolic meaning because they strengthen the degree of market oriented behaviours in the organisation. However at this point research relating to the artifacts of a market oriented culture is limited (Farrell, 2005; Byrne, 2014; Tiernan, 2015). Thus, this paper concludes that considering the importance of market oriented artifacts there is scope for further investigation. Specifically, in relation to the categories of artifacts; stories, arrangements, rituals and language (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000).

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present a review of the literature on market oriented artifacts. However, to understand artifacts of a market oriented culture one must firstly understand what market orientation is. Market orientation has been an interesting subject for academics and researchers alike since the early 1900's due to its evident link to performance and marketing management strategy (Liao et al., 2011). Thus, this has led to a considerable body of work being published (Deshpande and Webster, 1989; Narver and Slater 1990; Kohli and Jaworski 1990 & 1993; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Deshpande and Farley, 2004). Consequently a universally accepted definition of market orientation has failed to develop. However, two main perspectives of market orientation have emerged; a cultural and behavioural perspective.

The behavioural perspective describes market orientation in terms of specific behaviours relating to the generation and dissemination of market intelligence and the responsiveness to it (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). Whereas, from a cultural perspective market orientation is viewed as an organisational attitude (Avlonitis and Gounaris, 1999). From the cultural perspective the focus is on values and norms that create the necessary behaviours for market orientation (Sheppard, 2011). It has been argued that a cultural perspective is more favourable than the behavioural perspective because if market orientation was a purely behavioural concept, then any organisation could be market oriented, which is not the case (Narver and Slater, 1990, cited in Homburg and Pflesser, 2000, p. 449). Furthermore, when one considers what a market oriented culture is it is from the cultural perspective that one looks for answers (Harris, 1997).

Therefore, this paper will focus on the cultural perspective of market orientation and will be structured as follows:

The first section of the paper will briefly define a market oriented culture and three of its components; values, norms and behaviours (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). The second section of this paper will discuss organisational artifacts before focusing on the conceptualization of artifacts of a market oriented culture which is the fourth component of a market oriented culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000).

1.1 What is a Market Oriented Organisational Culture?

In order to understand what market oriented artifacts are, it is necessary to understand what a market oriented culture is considering artifacts are a component of market oriented culture as well as values, norms and behaviours (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Five principal definitions of a market oriented organisational culture have been presented in the literature (Narver and Slater, 1990; Deshpande and Webster, 1989, Webster, 1993; Harris, 1997, 1998; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Of these the most widely recognised and cited definition of a market oriented organisational culture is put forward by Deshpande and Webster, (1989) who define it as:

The pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand organisational functioning and thus provide the norms for behaviour in the organisation (Deshpande and Webster, 1989 p.27).

This definition highlights three layers of culture: values; norms and behaviours in the organisation. They further elaborate that the view of market orientation centres on the belief that, the customer always comes first and argue that a market orientated culture can be examined through dimensions of service quality such as: interpersonal relationships, selling task orientation, organisation, internal communication and the degree of innovativeness (Deshpande and Webster, 1989). Furthermore, they explain that when market orientation is viewed from a cultural perspective it relates to the characteristics of the organisation that focuses on organisational norms and values (Narver and Slater, 1990; Deshpande et al., 1993). From this perspective market orientation is a specific organisational culture that creates the behaviours for creating customer value. Conversely Narver and Slater (1990) define a market oriented culture from a behavioural perspective such as:

The organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviour to the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus continues superior performance for business (Narver and Slater, 1990 p.21).

It is clear from this definition that Narver and Slater in describing a market oriented culture suggest that market orientation is synonymous with culture and that this culture creates the necessary market oriented behaviours.

Homburg and Pflesser (2000) argue that previous academics such as Narver and Slater (1990) and Deshpande et al., (1989) have not considered the fundamental components of market orientated culture and suggest that a market orientated organisational culture comprises of these 'four distinguishable but interrelated components':

1. Market oriented values
2. Market oriented norms
3. Market oriented behaviours
4. Market oriented artifacts

Homburg and Pflesser (2000, p. 452) explain that the difference between these components is their 'degree of visibility': high in the case of market oriented behaviours and artifacts, medium in the case of norms, and low in the case of shared basic values'. Furthermore, to gain an understanding of one of these components would require a knowledge of all four components as they are all interrelated. Therefore, next few paragraphs of this paper will summarise three of these components; values, norms and behaviours before presenting the literature on market oriented artifacts.

1.1.1 Market Oriented Values

In the literature values have been identified as a component of a market oriented organisational culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000) and have been described with words such as, 'team orientations', 'employee oriented value systems' and 'an aggressive marketing belief', 'a highly competitive output orientation', an 'emphasis on market orientation', and a 'highly internal and external orientation' (Harris, 1997). However, it is important to note that organisations will have different values depending on the capabilities that exist within the organisation, the culture within the organisation and their environmental challenges (Deal and Kennedy, 1982).

In relation to a market oriented organisational culture O'Reilly et al., (1991) identified seven value dimensions; innovation, stability, people, outcomes, details, teams and aggression. Similarly, Homburg and Pflesser (2000, p. 453), identified eight basic values that support a market orientation; success, quality and competence, innovation and flexibility, openness to internal communication, appreciation of employees, responsibility of employees, inter-functional co-operation and speed (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Gebhardt et al., (2006) argue that cultural values form the basis for market orientated behaviours and identified six cultural values; trust, openness, keeping promises, respect, collaboration and viewing the market as the *raison d'être*. It has been argued that values form the basis for the development of organisational norms (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000) and encourage market oriented behaviours (Byrne, 2014). Furthermore, market oriented values reflect what is important for the organisation as well as providing employees with established norms that can lead to the successful implementation of a market orientation strategy in the company (Byrne, 2014).

1.1.2 Market oriented Norms

In the literature norms have been identified as component of a market oriented organisational culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000) however, norms differ from values, in that they have a stronger relevance to actual behaviour (Farrell, 2005, p. 262). Norms guide behaviours whereas values provide general behavioural guidelines (O'Reilly, 1989, cited in Homburg and Pflesser, 2000, p. 451). Academics have argued that norms originate from shared values (Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Schein, 2010; Byrne, 2014). Consequently, norms that have been identified in the literature as directly relating to values (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Gebhardt et al., 2006; Byrne, 2014; Tiernan, 2015).

An important way in which organisational culture influences behaviour is through the norms and standards which the social systems institutionalises and enforces (Farrell, 2005). Thus, these are encountered by the individual as group norms that can be put in the form of a

statement specifying what a member should do (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Schein (1984, p) defines norms as, ‘the rules of behaviour which have been accepted as legitimate by members of a group’. Though these are unwritten rules they express the shared beliefs of most group members about what behaviour is appropriate for one to be a member in a good standing (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Byrne (2014) argued that organisations wishing to implement a market orientation need to have market oriented norms in place. Furthermore, she argues that norms exist because of behaviour within the organisation. Conversely, Homburg and Pflesser (2000) argue that ‘norms describe this behaviour.

1.1.4 Market oriented behaviours

Behaviours are another component of a market oriented organisational culture and refer to ‘organisational behavioural patterns with an instrumental function’ (Homburg and Pflesser’s 2000, p. 450) for market oriented behaviours, Homburg and Pflesser (2000) use the conceptualisation suggested by Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and define them as follows:

The organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future needs of customers, dissemination of intelligence horizontally and vertically within the organization, and organization-wide action or responsiveness to market intelligence (Kohli et al., 1993, p. 467)

This definition captures three specific behaviours of a market-oriented organisational culture: namely, generation of market intelligence, dissemination of market intelligence and responsiveness to market intelligence. The behavioural perspective put forward by Kohli and Jaworski, (1990 & 1993) describes market orientation in terms of specific behaviours that are concerned with implementing the marketing concept; market intelligence generation, dissemination of this intelligence across departments and the responsiveness to this intelligence. (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Sheppard, 2011; González-Benito, 2005). The importance associated with market oriented behaviours is that they reflect an organisations underlying culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Furthermore, market oriented behaviours may influence the overall level of market orientation but artifacts communicate this level.

Having outlined three of the four components of a market oriented organisational culture in the proceeding paragraphs, it is evident that all four components are interrelated (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Values influence norms and form the basis for market orientated behaviours (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000), norms originate from values and artifacts reflect these unique norms and values (Farrell, 2005). Furthermore, considering the importance of market oriented artifacts as an interrelated component of a market oriented culture and the focus of this paper, the next section will examine organisational artifacts in detail. However before proceeding to the next section it is important to note that artifacts have been identified in the literature as a component of organisational culture (Schein, 1984) and a component of a market oriented culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Therefore, before the literature is presented for artifacts of market orientation, we will firstly discuss the literature of artifacts in general.

2. Organisational Artifacts

Artifacts have been identified as one of the components of organisational culture. Furthermore, there are several types of artifacts observable in an organisation. (Schein, 1984, Rousseau 1990 and Hatch, 1993, Brown, 1998). Artifacts were introduced into the organisational culture literature by Schein in (1984). Since then academics have put forward an array of definitions as well as arguments relating to their importance. This section will present definitions and categories of artifacts followed by their importance as a component of organisational culture.

2.1 Defining organisational artifacts

The table below presents an array of definitions of organisational artifacts which have been identified in the organisational cultural literature.

Author	Year	Definition
<i>Schein</i>	<i>1984, p. 17</i>	<i>Artifacts include all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture.</i>
<i>Gagliardi</i>	<i>1990, p. 32</i>	<i>Artifacts are always perceived by the senses and that they have certain intentions, aiming to satisfy a need or a goal.</i>
<i>Schein</i>	<i>1996, p. 232</i>	<i>Artifacts include all the visible items in an organisation, such as, the physical environment, the way in which the employees dress, the language they use, mission statements, emotional displays, office layout, myths and stories told and the visible behaviour of the organisational group</i>
<i>Brown</i>	<i>1998, p. 12</i>	<i>Artifacts refer to the total physical and socially contracted environment of an organisation</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>2001, p.2</i>	<i>These are the objects we use in our mental or conceptual space.</i>
<i>Young</i>	<i>2000, p. 19</i>	<i>Artifacts are the visible, audible, tactile manifestations of underlying cultural assumptions, such as behaviour patterns, rituals, physical environment, dress codes, stores, and myths</i>
<i>Higgins &McAllaster</i>	<i>2003, p.64</i>	<i>Artifacts are those sets of attributes objects and behaviours that help definitively characterize one organizations opposed to another.</i>
<i>Snow</i>	<i>2005, p. 15</i>	<i>Artifacts can be thought of as cultural keys to the past that reveal the values, norms, and behaviours of a group, and ultimately reveal their culture</i>
<i>Bonavia et al</i>	<i>2009, p. 3</i>	<i>Visible organizational structures, processes and behaviour</i>

Table 1: Definitions of Artifacts created by the researcher

It is clear after compiling the above table that there are many definitions of artifacts in the literature and that these definitions vary from one academic to another. However, what is

evident in the above definitions are that artifacts are visible manifestations of an organisations culture, they are encountered when one visits a culture as they can be seen, heard and felt. They have been described with words such as objects, structures, processes, behaviours patterns, cultural keys, rituals, the physical environment, phenomena, rituals, stories and myths. The next section will present various categorisations of artifacts that have been put forward by academics.

2.2 Categorisation of artifacts

The preceding section presented identified an array of definitions for organisational artifacts. However it was evident that a clear picture of artifacts was not acknowledge, therefore to further add to the knowledge of artifacts this section will present various categorisations of artifacts.

As far back as 1998 academics were putting forward categories of artifacts in order to simply their definitions. One of the first academics to this was Brown (1998) who identified 7 types of artifacts and states that this list not exhaustive, these 7 types of artifacts listed below:

<i>Categories of</i>	Explanation
<i>Artifacts</i>	
1. <i>Material Objects</i>	The organisations actual product, advertising brochures, logos and annual reports.
2. <i>Physical Layouts</i>	Office space layout – open or closed plan or individual workplaces, quality and functionality of the furnishings, dress code
3. <i>Technology</i>	Computers, fax machines, photocopies, equipment to manufacture product
4. <i>Language</i>	Jokes, anecdotes, stories, metaphors, jargon terms
5. <i>Behaviour patterns</i>	Rites, rituals, ceremonies and celebrations
6. <i>Symbols</i>	Material objects, physical layouts, events such as posters one off actions by executives to demonstrate a point
7. <i>Rules, Systems, procedures and programs</i>	HR Management, Compensation, appraisal and promotion, rules governing the structure, composition and periodically of committee meetings

Table 2: Brown, 1998 p. 14Adapted by the researcher

Different categories of artifacts have been put forward in the literature by academics such as, Shrivastava (1985) who refers to them as cultural products; myths and sagas, language systems and metaphors, symbolism, ceremony and rituals, values systems and behavioural norms. Furthermore, he argues that there are many cultural artifacts but these categories are the most important and extremely beneficial when trying to understand and change an organisations culture. Higgins and McAllaster, (2003) in agreement with Shrivasta, (1985) added a fifth artifact known as physical evidence which he states characterises the culture including its facilities, equipment and interior and exterior design and decoration. Rafaeli and Yavetz, (2006) argue that artifacts are both physical and social constructs and suggest artifacts need to be considered according to how appealing they are, the senses they engage and how they are

interpreted and perceived. Academics consider artifacts as symbols representing the values of organisational culture (Trice & Beyer, 1993; Schein, 1990; Hatch, 1993; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; George and Onakala, 2012).

2.3 Importance of artifacts

Other academics have argued that the importance of artifacts was the link they have with the “deeper levels of an organisational culture in that they can be used as a powerful guide for understanding an organisations culture” (Trice and Beyer; 1984, Schein, 1984). Brown, (1998) argues that there is a wide gap between perceived culture and actual culture and if you want to decipher an organisations culture by looking at their artifacts then you would have to become part of the organisation (Snow, 2005).

In addition, Higgins and McAllaster, (2003) argue that the importance of artifacts are not only in the understanding of an organisations culture but for managing and changing an organisations culture. Furthermore, they add that organisational culture cannot be completely changed in one strategic change but managers must try to change the values and norms of the culture that relate to strategy and its objectives. They further add that cultural artifacts can help reinforce desired changes in behaviour so that it supports the new values and norms. Similarly, Shrivastava (1985) argue that artifacts can be used as a tool for integrating strategy in organisations. May (2001) argues that artifacts can be used as a tool if you want to spread a certain type of culture throughout your organisation you can do so by infusing the culture in the organisations different artifacts such as stories that bind, metaphors that inspire, activities that shape and patterns that capture (May, 2001).

Furthermore, artifacts are context dependent which means they will differ depending on what type of organisational culture and subcultures are present in the organisation (Harris, 1996). Academics have also stated that for this reason it would be impossible to create an exhaustive list of artifacts. Furthermore, academics have highlighted the importance of organisational artifacts as tools for interpreting an organisations culture and for managing organisational culture change but very few have provided analytical indications (Harris, 1996).

It is reasonable to conclude that there are different types of organisations and these organisations cultures will differ (Harris, 1996). Thus, the artifacts that exists in these cultures will also be different. Therefore, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of artifacts in an organisation whose culture is market oriented, one would have to examine the artifacts of a market oriented culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Farrell, 2005; Byrne, 2014; Tiernan, 2015). Therefore by drawing on the organisational literature in relation artifacts and the marketing literature the next section will present an understanding of organisational artifacts of a market oriented organisational culture.

3. Market Oriented Artifacts

In the proceeding sections, we have seen various definitions and categories of organisational artifacts and their importance as a component of organisational culture. This section will there present the literature surrounding artifacts of a market oriented organisational culture.

The importance of market oriented artifacts is their ability to indicate the degree to which an organisation is market oriented (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Furthermore, market oriented artifacts are created by organisational members and have symbolic meaning because they strengthen the degree of market oriented behaviours in the organisation. Thus, 'if an artifact symbolises market orientation, it can inspire members of the organisation to behave in a market oriented way' (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000 p. 452).-Farrell (2005, p. 271) found that 'market-oriented artifacts . . . do not have a significant impact on behaviour'. Thus, contradicting Homburg and Pflesser (2000) findings that market oriented artifacts can inspire market oriented behaviour. In a latter study Byrne, (2014) found that the market oriented artifacts contribute to the successful communication of values that a company stands for and norms that the company wants to encourage'. Furthermore, behaviours and are central to the development of a market oriented organisational culture. Conversely Tiernan (2015) found that market oriented behaviours may influence the overall level of market orientation but artifacts communicate this level. (Tiernan, 2015). Market oriented artifacts are presented in the literature as one of the four components of a market oriented organisational culture and contain four categories; stories, arrangements, rituals and language (Homburg and Pflesser 2000, p. 450).

3.3.1 Arrangements

Arrangements cover what Schein (1984, p.9) described as "the architecture of its physical environment" which cover the offices, meeting rooms and communal areas along with the buildings and exterior surroundings. Arrangements also cover what Higgins and McAllister (2003) refer to as physical evidence. They add that physical evidence refers to the organisations facilities, equipment, interior and exterior design and decoration. Snow (2005) argues that physical evidence is wired into the organisational culture and is more permanent and quantifiable than dialogues such as language and stories.

In relation to a market oriented culture Homburg and Pflessers (2000) study, arrangements were the most frequently mentioned artifacts of market orientation. They suggest that market oriented arrangements would be an open friendly customer entrance and welcome area (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000).

3.3.2 Language

Language covers what Shrivasta (1985) referred to as language systems and metaphors. Language is defined as "a shared system of vocal sounds, written signs or gestures used by members of a culture to convey categorized meanings to each other" (Trice and Beyer 1993, p. 78). Shrivastava (1985) argues that the cultures in organisation are verbally demonstrated by members of the organisation in the language and metaphors they use when interacting with each other. However, language will vary from one organisation to another and from one department to the next. Some business organisations use warlike language when they speak of fighting competitive battles or firing employees. Some organisations speak a language to help with the functioning of their organisations such as 'capturing market share' or 'maintaining employee and customer relationships' within their organisation.

In relation to a market oriented culture Homburg and Pflesser (2000) identified two categories of language for a market oriented culture; market oriented language and non-market orientated language and stated that language can indicate the degree to which an organisation is market oriented (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Turner and Spencer (1997) agree that language is an important artifact for market orientation and stated that language can be epitomised in an

organisations mission statement to convey the values of a market oriented organisational culture.

3.3.3 Stories

Stories are defined ‘as a narrative based on true events - often a combination of truth and fiction’ (Trice and Beyer 1984, p. 655). Many stories are about company heroes who serve as models or ideals for serving cultural norms and values. Some stories are considered legends because the events are historic (Daft, 2001). “Stories are an important feature of an organisations culture because they reflect the member’s mutual understandings of important organisational events” (Shrivastava, 1985 p. 104).

Stories describe heroes such as management’s favourite employees and describe battlegrounds where organisational issues are resolved such as board, annual and departmental meetings (Turner and Spencer, 1997). Furthermore, storytelling has been known to encourage employee involvement and a sense of belongingness. Stories can be told in diverse ways such as informally for example over lunch with friends or when the manager of an organisation is telling the board of directors about his employee’s extraordinary effort. The importance of stories is that they can be communicated and remembered and can be customised depending on the audience they are intended for. The main drawback of stories is that they are open to interpretation and very hard to retract (May, 2001). It is important to note that, stories grow differently across organisations and departments. For example, a story in a marketing department would focus on heroic effort of an employee in customer service whereas in the R&D department stories would relate to how problems were overcome in design or how the marketing department were trying to dominate new product specifications by being difficult and pushy. Homburg and Pflesser (2000) highlight two categories of stories for market orientation; stories about heroes of market orientation and stories about problems of market orientation.

3.3.4 Rituals

A ritual is defined as “standardized, detailed set of techniques and behaviours that the culture prescribes to manage anxieties and express common identities” (Trice and Beyer, 1993, p. 80). Daft, (2001), states the most important artifacts for culture are rites and ceremonies which are sumptuous planned activities that make up a special event. Managers often hold rites and ceremonies to show their audience what their company values are. Ceremonies such as award dinners and annual gatherings are especially important for conveying the organisation values because they alert members to who management see as important to the organisation (Shrivastava, 1985). Turner and Spencer, (1997) argue that rituals allow for mutual understanding of the organisations customers and employees because they reinforce the organisations values.

Rituals are noted in the marketing literature to be events planned by organisational members such as staff outings and open days or reward systems to encourage employees who are customer focused (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Farrell, 2005; Byrne, 2014; Tiernan, 2015).

In summary, market oriented artifacts have been highlighted in the literature as containing distinct categories; arrangements, language, stories and rituals. However, the importance associated with these categories of artifacts in relation to a market oriented culture is limited with only four key studies to draw on.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion we have learned that a market oriented organisational culture had four distinct but interrelated components; values, norms, behaviours and artifacts. Values form the basis for market orientated behaviours, norms originate from values and artifacts reflect these unique norms and values. We have also learned that artifacts have been argued as one of the components of organisational culture and there is an array of different types of artifacts observable in an organisation. (Schein, 1984, Rousseau 1990 and Hatch, 1993, Brown, 1998). Furthermore we have learned that the importance of organisational artifacts is that they can be used as powerful guide for understanding an organisations culture, for reinforcing desired changes in organisational behaviour for managing and changing an organisations culture and as a tool if you want to spread a certain type of culture throughout your organisation (Trice and Beyer, 1984; Schein, 1984; Griffiths and Grover, 1998 and Higgins and McAllaster, 2003). However what is also evident is that artifacts are context dependent which means they will differ depending on what type of organisational culture and subcultures are present in the organisation.

When it comes to market oriented artifacts for distinguishable categories have been identified; stories, arrangements, rituals and language (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). The importance of these categories of artifacts for market orientation is that they have been found to have an influence on the degree of market orientation and play a crucial role in determining behaviour within an organisation. (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000, Byrne, 2014 and Tiernan, 2015). Furthermore, the importance of market oriented artifacts has been noted in the literature as indicators of the level of market orientation, for influencing market orientated behaviours and are central to the development of a market oriented organisational culture. Moreover, market oriented artifacts have been found to embody an organisations culture by preserving and communicating the values and beliefs that encourage market oriented practices (Farrell, 2005 cite Griffiths and Grover 1998, p. 314).

However, there is a limited amount of literature specifically relating to the categories of artifacts; stories arrangements, rituals and language. It is therefore not surprising that academics have called on other researchers to develop a deeper understanding of market oriented artifacts (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Farrell, 2005; Byrne, 2014; Tiernan, 2015). Considering the importance artifacts as a component of a market oriented culture I to would encourage researchers to investigate the nature and influence of artifacts in a market oriented firm.

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