

# Recruitment and selection essay sample

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#### Part i – ReCRUitMent

When HR planning indicates the need for additional labor, organizations have a number of choices to make. This may be the first step in a full-scale recruitment and selection process, but sometimes hiring additional employees is not the best method to obtain additional labor. It may be appropriate for an organization to consider alternatives to recruiting, such as outsourcing or contingent labor, instead of hiring regular employees. If this is a temporary fluctuation in work volume, the simplest solution may be part-time labor or overtime by existing employees. The costs of recruitment and selection can be staggering; hiring new employees should occur only after careful consideration and only when the organization anticipates a long-term need for additional labor. Estimates on the cost to replace supervisory, technical and management employees run from 50 percent to several hundred percent of employee salaries. 1 Careful HR planning must consider

the overall growth prospects of the organization and accurate forecasting of future labor needs. Recruitment planning begins only when other alternatives have been considered and eliminated.

**RECRUITMENT:** The process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs with an organization. 2

**INterNaL eNViRoNmEnt** Promotion From Within Your organization's promotion policy will have a significant effect on the recruitment process. If the open position is above entry level, it may be appropriate to promote someone already working for the organization. Many organizations use promotion from within as a motivation tool and a reward for good work or longevity with the organization. When employees see their co-workers being promoted, they become more aware of their own career opportunities. Promotion may be especially important in a stagnant economy where people have little chance of improving their lot by changing organizations. Their only opportunity for career growth and increased income is to move up within their current organization. The problem with promotion from within is that the promoted person leaves a staffing gap in his or her "former position, so there is still a position to be filled. However, that gap is likely to be at a lower, less-skilled position, and therefore it may be an easier position to fill. The advantage of promotion from within is that your promoted employee is already comfortable with the corporate

culture, knows organization policies and will likely get up to speed much faster than a person new to the organization. The disadvantage of promotion

from within is that the organization loses out on the chance for new ideas and the creativity that can come from a new person entering the organization for the first time. Clearly, there are pros and cons to both promotion from within and outside hiring. It's not that one way is right and the other is wrong—it simply depends on organizational policy, the type of job being filled and its level within the organization. Higher-level jobs are more likely to be filled by promotion than are lower-level jobs.

**Nepotism** Nepotism is the hiring of relatives. Be sure you know your organization's policy on nepotism before one of your staff approaches you about hiring a member of his or her family. If you hire staff relatives (or if you don't), be careful of civil rights violations because in many states it is illegal to discriminate in hiring based on a person's marital status. So when your administrative assistant asks you to hire her husband, refusing to hire him just because he's married to her may be an inappropriate and an illegal employment decision. Many organizations have nepotism policies, so find out where your employer stands on the issue. When hiring relatives, most employers require family members to work in different areas of the organization to prevent issues of favoritism and possible morale problems among employees. It is never appropriate for family members to be in supervisory positions where they are required to manage their own relatives.

**eXterNaL eNVlroNmeNt** Labor Market Conditions The strength of the economy and labor market conditions will significantly affect your organization's ability to attract and retain top-level employees. When the economy is strong, with little unemployment, your organization may have to

compete with other employers for a limited number of skilled employees. This may require increased compensation or benefits incentives to attract quality applicants. The reverse may be true in a soft economy, with high levels of unemployment. The problem then is not a shortage of qualified applicants; instead, the problem is managing the huge number of applications that must be pared down to find a few good hires. Local labor market conditions strongly affect nonmanagerial and supervisory positions, and depending on your industry, global considerations may affect your labor market for professional and technical applicants.

**Legal Issues** There are a number of laws that will affect your hiring process, particularly in the area of discrimination. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment practices when the discrimination is based on a person's race, color, sex, religion or national origin. The federal law applies to organizations with 15 or more employees. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967 extends discrimination protection to persons aged 40 and older for organizations of 20 or more employees. Pay attention to your state's discrimination laws as well. Some states require compliance with age discrimination law for employers of two or more workers, and some states have lowered the age discrimination threshold far below 40 years old. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The Act makes it unlawful to refuse employment to a woman based on pregnancy, childbirth or any related medical condition. The basic principle is that a woman affected by pregnancy or other related medical condition must be treated the same as any other applicant in the recruitment and selection process. The Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in organizations of 15 or more employees. The ADA also requires that the employer offer reasonable accommodations to disabled individuals so they have equal opportunity to apply for job openings and, if hired, to be successful in their job functions. If you are unsure what accommodations may be reasonable, check with your state department of labor.

Employers are prohibited from using an employment test to disqualify a disabled candidate unless that test is valid for the skills necessary in the job to which they are applying and unless the same test is given to all applicants, not just to those with disabilities. Many states and local communities have passed legislation that extends discrimination protection beyond the scope of federal laws. Always contact your state department of labor for information on appropriate laws in your area and remember that it is important that you remain current on employment law as regulations are frequently updated. Discrimination costs employers millions of dollars every year, not to mention the countless hours of lost work time, employee stress and the negative public image that goes along with a discrimination lawsuit. The best way to avoid the trauma and expense of a lawsuit is to simply not discriminate. Focus your recruitment and hiring decisions on job skills and qualifications, endeavoring to find the best person for the job. For additional information on discrimination law and compliance, see the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission web site at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov) and the web site for the U. S. Department of Labor at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

INterNaL recrUltmeNt Job Posting The most common method used to find qualified applicants from inside the organization is job posting.

JOB POSTING: The procedure to inform employees that job openings exist. 3

The traditional method to announce a job opening was to post notice of the job on the HR bulletin board; no doubt this is the origin of the term job posting. Today, many organizations post jobs electronically through organization-wide intranets or send e-mails to all employees about the job vacancy. Other employers publish employment newsletters or distribute job announcement flyers. Whatever the method used, the job announcement should include information about the position, the required qualifications and instructions on how to apply. It is important that the job announcement is made available to all employees. Adequate job posting can ensure that minority workers and other disadvantaged groups are aware of opportunities within the organization. The downside to job posting is employee cynicism that occurs when jobs are posted as open, but in reality, the organization has already selected a strong internal candidate. Such practices create resentment and mistrust among employees when they believe the job posting is just a formality with little real opportunity for advancement.

Employee Referrals Some managers believe that the best method to find top performers is to hire individuals referred by existing employees. Current employees can play an important role in recruiting new employees, and some organizations pay a bonus to employees for successful referrals.

Bonuses typically range anywhere from a \$25 gift certificate to a \$200 cash reward, but employers have been known to pay several thousand dollars for

the referral of a successful employee in a position particularly difficult to fill. It sounds like everyone wins—the organization gets a successful new hire, the new employee has a job, and the referring employee has a bonus in his or her pocket. There is a downside to extensive use of employee referrals, though. The 2006 EEOC Compliance Manual updated guidance on the prohibition of discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The manual clearly warned that relying on word-of-mouth recruiting may generate applicant pools that do not reflect the diversity of the labor market and may be discriminatory. Therefore, it would seem prudent to use employee referrals sparingly.

eXterNaL recrUltmeNt Applicant pools can be generated in a number of ways. Depending on your organization's policies and the size of your hiring budget, you may want to use an employment agency. Private agencies and executive search firms are usually used for recruiting white-collar employees, but they can be used for virtually any type of position. Using job criteria provided by your organization, an agency will generate the applicant pool and do the preliminary interviews, thereby screening out unqualified candidates and sending you only those who are actually qualified. This can save a great deal of time; however, private agency fees can be costly because they are often a percentage of the position's annual salary. This can be a significant expense, particularly when filling executive-level positions. If you register your job opening with your state employment office, it may send you similarly qualified referrals at no charge.



Depending on the nature of the position, you may also get some unsolicited walk-in applicants, but these still may not generate a large enough applicant pool without further recruitment efforts. Large organizations often hire in-house recruiters whose sole focus is to generate qualified candidates for open positions. Recruiters are generally used in high-tech industries and focus their efforts on technical schools, community colleges and universities. Since in-house recruiters are employees of the organization, applicants generally base their perception of the organization on their interaction with the internal recruiter. Therefore, recruiters must be made aware of the image they present during the screening interview; it can significantly influence the applicant's attitude toward the organization. You may choose to advertise the open position in local newspapers, trade journals, radio and television. Advertising can range from a simple help wanted ad in the classifieds to an extensive multimedia campaign. Help wanted ads often include a URL for online applications well as more traditional methods for reply. Some organizations have eliminated traditional methods altogether and accept only online applications.

Historically, local newspaper advertising was the common recruitment method, particularly for entry-level positions, because it was low cost and could generate a good number of applicants. If the job you are hiring for requires technical skills not commonly found in your local labor force, you will have to broaden your search geographically by advertising in other areas or working with employment specialists outside of your local area. In general, the more technically specific the job, the wider the geographic recruitment area. Some positions lend themselves well to internships. An internship is an

arrangement in which a student is placed temporarily in a position with no obligation by either the student or the organization to make the position permanent. The internship may be a summer or a part-time job while the student is in school, enabling the student to learn the organization and try out the job before settling into a career. It also enables the organization to try out a possible future employee before making a job offer.

**INterNet recrUItING** The most significant change in recruiting practices has been the rise in the use of online recruiting. Many organizations post job openings on their web sites or on specialized sites like Career Builder and Monster. com, and some accept only online applications, completely eliminating the hard-copy application. There are advantages to online recruiting. First, it costs less than traditional advertising. It's easy and quick to post an ad; responses arrive faster and in greater quantity; and a wider range of applicants can be generated. Online processes can also screen applications and administer some selection tests, thereby significantly reducing the HR time required to generate a pool of qualified candidates. The online format is immensely popular with job seekers as well because the ease of submission allows them to send out dozens of résumés with just a few mouse clicks. This can create a problem for HR, however. There must be processes in place to filter out those who do not meet minimum job qualifications. The ease of applying for a job online can generate a great number of applications, requiring HR staff to spend time sorting through applications to glean out the few that are actually qualified for the job.

There are as many different methods of recruiting as there are organizations, and there is no one best method for recruiting job applicants. Most organizations use a variety of methods, depending on the nature of the job to be filled, the time needed to properly fill the position and the size of their recruiting budget. Your organization may already have a valid track record for recruiting that will determine what methods work best for your situation.

recruitment For Diversity Equal employment opportunity legislation outlaws discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability and age. Some organizations abide by discrimination law simply to keep out of court, but most employers recognize the inherent advantage of employee diversity, including greater creativity and an expanded customer base. Employers who wish to develop a diverse workforce must ensure the use of recruiting methods that generate applications from a variety of individuals. It is important that recruiters receive training in the use of objective standards because recruiters are in a unique position in terms of encouraging or discouraging diverse individuals to apply for positions.

Recruitment flyers can include pictures of minority and disabled employees, advertisements can be bilingual, and interviews can be conducted using translators, if appropriate. It is important that the employer generate credibility to the image of equal employment opportunity and that these are not just words printed at the end of a recruitment announcement.

#### Part ii – Selection

**SELECTION:** The process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and for the organization. 4

the application Asking the candidate to complete an application form is generally done early in the selection process. Despite the widespread use of application forms for employee selection, research demonstrates that illegal (or inappropriate) application items are still quite common. Questionable items are those that request information on gender, race, national origin, education dates and disabilities. The most commonly found inappropriate questions involve past salary levels, age, driver's license information, citizenship information and Social Security numbers. Questions about past salary are considered inadvisable since they can perpetuate lower salaries for women and minorities as compared with white males. If an employer bases a starting salary on an applicant's prior earnings, minorities and women will likely be offered less pay. Although the majority of applications do not explicitly ask about age, many include inquiries about an applicant's education dates (year of high school graduation), which can be used to infer an applicant's age. Citizenship information is not appropriate on the application and can be discriminatory if used as a factor in the hiring decision.

Certainly new employees must provide the employer with a Social Security number when hired, and it may be needed for applicant background checks, but it is not necessary on the application, and many people concerned with identity theft are reluctant to give Social Security numbers. Since driver's license information can be used to obtain demographic (and possibly discriminatory) information, it is best not to ask for that information unless possession of a driver's license is a valid requirement for the job. If your organization has an affirmative action (AA) plan, your applicant may be

asked for demographic data for AA records. This information must be collected separately from the application form, and applicants must be advised that submission of demographic information is voluntary and that the affirmative action form will be separated from the application and stored.

The information requested on an application form may vary from organization to organization and even by job type within an organization. Typically, though, the application form should include sections for the applicant's name, address, telephone number, education, military background, work experience and reference information. There should be a place for the applicant to sign and a preprinted statement that the applicant's signature indicates his or her attestation that everything on the form is true; if not, the candidate can be released. When it is not prohibited by state law, "many organizations include an employment-at-will statement reminding employees that either the employer or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time. And finally, the form should include a statement from the applicant giving permission to have references checked.

Many applicants include résumés along with their applications, and HR can direct applicants to submit forms either online or in hard copy. Most large organizations now use automated tracking systems that require online submission. Automated systems can scan applications and résumés for keywords, thereby eliminating the time spent by HR in reviewing documents. Obviously, this saves time in the HR department, but employers using automated tracking systems must be cautious. Applicants are becoming

more sophisticated in the process and stuffing their applications and résumés with keywords even when they are not truly qualified for the open position. Regardless of the methods used, you may get hundreds of applications for only a few open positions, particularly in a slow economy with high unemployment.

**ScreenING INterVieW** Before moving further into the selection process, many organizations prefer to do a screening interview of those applicants that appear qualified based on information submitted on their résumé and application. Screening interviews are usually conducted by telephone. The interviewer asks a few straightforward questions to determine the candidate's job qualifications and appropriateness for the open position. If it is determined that the applicant is not appropriate for the position, the interviewer may refer the candidate to another open position within the organization if there is something available that matches the applicant's skills. If there is nothing else available and the candidate is obviously unqualified for the position, the process ends there, saving both the candidate and the organization the time and expense of going further into the selection process.

**SeLectIoN teStS** **SELECTION TEST:** Any instrument used to make a decision about a potential employee. There are a number methods organizations use to determine if an applicant has the potential to be successful on the job. Selection tests are used to identify applicant skills that cannot be determined in an interview process. Using a variety of testing methods, applicants are rated on aptitude, personality, abilities, honesty and motivation. Properly

designed selection tests are standardized, reliable and valid in predicting an applicant's success on the job. Standardization: The uniformity of procedures and conditions related to administering tests (R. Wayne Mondy)

To equitably compare the performance of several applicants, the processes used for testing those applicants must be as identical as possible. The content of the test, the instructions and the time allowed must be the same for all candidates. For example, when giving a timed keyboarding test, it would be unfair for one applicant to be tested on a manual typewriter while the other candidates were tested on contemporary computer keyboards.

Reliability: The extent to which a selection test provides consistent results (R. Wayne Mondy) A test's reliability should be questioned if it does not generate consistent results each time it is used. For example, if a person scores 125 on an intelligence test one week and scores only 80 on the same test the following week, you should assume the testing instrument is not reliable. Validity: The extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure (R. Wayne Mondy) Do higher test scores relate to higher success on the job?

The skills tested in a selection instrument should be the same skills used on the job. Therefore, we can assume that higher test scores will correlate to higher success in job performance. If a specific test cannot assess the ability to perform the job, it has no usefulness in the selection process. For example, for an administrative assistant position that requires skilled keyboarding for job success, a keyboarding test would be valid in the selection process. We could assume that a higher score on the keyboarding

test would indicate higher performance on the job. Requiring the same job applicant to complete a lifting test would not be valid for the position because the ability to lift specific weights is not a job requirement and therefore a higher score on lifting would not be a valid predictor of job success. Tests are generally administered and evaluated before interviewing candidates.

Testing helps trim the applicant field by further eliminating those with inadequate skill levels to be successful in the job. Applicant testing has two major advantages: test results are objective and free from personal bias and they are usually expressed numerically so they can be validated by statistical analysis. Employers usually use tests to determine the applicant's knowledge or proficiency level in the required job skills. Some organizations also use aptitude tests as well as personality, honesty and physical ability testing. If your organization does testing for substance abuse, it must occur at the end of the selection process and be done in conjunction with a job offer.

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES Selection testing will trim your recruitment pool, but you'll likely need to narrow your list of candidates even further to establish a reasonable number for interviewing. The nature of the job and how much time you can afford to allot to the interview process will determine how many applicants you choose to interview. Three or four may be plenty, but more may be important for you to get a good feel for the candidates' qualifications. The interview is really a verbal test for the candidate. However, unlike a paper and pencil test, there is no clear right or



wrong answer in many cases. The results are subject to interpretation by the interviewer and thus can have a huge potential for error, depending on the questions asked, the answers given and the interviewer's own personal bias.

Think carefully about the kind of information you want to get from the candidate during the interview. Don't waste time asking questions that give you the same information found on the application. Use the interview to find out how the person will conduct him or herself on the job. Successful interviewing results from a thorough understanding of the job requirements. Therefore, you must have a complete and accurate job description that identifies the critical job competencies. These competencies become the target list against which each candidate is measured, and they provide the basis for developing your interview questions. The most widely used interview techniques are the structured or patterned interview, the nondirective interview and the situational/problem-solving interview. In a structured or patterned interview, the interviewer follows a pre-set list of questions asked of all candidates. This allows for consistency in the process, ensures that important questions are not left out and helps guarantee that all candidates will be assessed by the same standards.

Though consistency is desirable, the interview should not be so rigid that interviewers are not allowed follow-up questions based on the candidate's answers; you don't want to miss important information that the candidate may provide from further questions. Situational interviewing is characterized by questions like, " what would you do in this situation," allowing the candidate to speculate on how he or she would handle a particular job

problem. Behavioral interviewing asks the candidate to describe what he or she did in a particular situation. It requires the candidate to give real examples of past actions and results, and it is based on the theory that past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior. Generally, behavioral questions are more likely to give real-world information that may be relevant in making a good selection decision. The nondirective interview takes the opposite approach from a structured interview. It is conducted with a minimum of questions asked by the interviewer and questions are not always planned in advance.

This technique involves open-ended questions such as “tell me about the work you do in your field,” allowing the candidate to “express his or her thoughts and feelings that might be relevant to the job and allowing the interviewer to follow the direction set by the candidate. This technique can reveal information that may never arise in a structured interview, but it can lead to problems if the candidate reveals inappropriate or potentially discriminatory information. Sometimes interviews without structure can become nothing more than casual conversations, with the interviewer focusing solely on getting to know the candidate. This may be nice for social gatherings, but it has almost no predictive ability in the hiring process. You’ll have a more successful new hire if you stay away from the “casual conversation” trap and instead plan carefully for a structured interview that focuses on job-related information.

team or INDIVIDUaL INterVleW In the past, the supervisor may have been the only person interviewing the candidate, but the trend now is to use an

interview team consisting of representatives from the various areas of the organization that will interact with the new person. The advantage of this approach is that multiple interviewers represent broader areas of interest, and when interviewing is completed, there is more than one person to make the selection decision. This may also help the new hire to be more quickly accepted by the team, since those who participated in choosing the new team member are generally supportive of that choice. The downside to team interviews is simply logistics. The larger the team, the more difficult it is to find a time and a place in everyone's busy schedules to make the interview happen. In addition, candidates are likely to find a panel interview more stressful than an interview by a single person.

**BackGroUND VerIFicatioN aND reFereNce cHeCK** Once you have made your selection decision, you must verify the information provided by the candidate and check the candidate's references. Millions of background and reference checks are done on applicants annually, and unfortunately, much of the information on application forms and résumés is inaccurate. According to ADP Screening and Selection Services, 40 percent of applicants lie about their work histories and educational backgrounds and about 20 percent present false credentials and licenses. Nationwide, an estimated 30 percent of job applicants make material misrepresentations on their résumés. 5 Another survey found that 95 percent of college students said they would lie to get a job and 41 percent said that they had already done so. One survey of top executives found that 15 percent admitted falsifying résumé information. 6 Difficult as it may be to check references, you must get accurate information on your prospective new hire. Unfortunately, past

employers are increasingly reluctant to give references mostly because they fear defamation lawsuits from disgruntled former "employees. Consequently, many employers strictly limit the information they provide about former employees. It's a no-win situation for employers, though, because they can be sued either way. Withholding negative information about former employees may offer protection for the employer from a defamation lawsuit, but it increases its exposure to a lawsuit based on negligence if the employer withholds information regarding the volatility of a former employee.

**DEFAMATION:** The act of harming the reputation of another by making a false statement to a third person. 7

**NEGLIGENCE:** The failure to exercise the standard of care that a reasonably prudent person would have exercised in the same situation. 8

A past employer that fails to warn about an employee's known propensity to violence may be guilty of negligent referral, and a potential employer that fails to do proper reference checks that may have uncovered the potential risk of a new employee may be guilty of negligent hiring, if the new employee causes injury to another in the workplace. It is a reminder to HR that we must diligently ferret out information on new hires and, at the same time, keep accurate employment records on current employees so that when asked, we can provide verifiable and reliable reference information. Because of the difficulty of obtaining information from past employers, many organizations conduct criminal background checks, credit checks and Internet searches to find information on job candidates. In 2006, according to research from SHRM, 96 percent of employers conducted background checks

on applicants, up from 66 percent only a decade ago. 9 Though controversial, these background searches are not illegal if the candidate has given proper permission. Before conducting any background check on a potential employee, be sure your candidate signs the proper release forms.

maKING tHe joB oFFer A job offer may be extended by phone, letter or in person—whatever is customary in your organization. Most commonly, the job offer is handled by the HR department. At this time, salary and benefits are discussed and the prospective employee is told of any further conditions that must be met. If your organization requires a physical examination or a drug screen, arrangements should be made to complete the process. If the candidate needs time to think over the job offer, a time should be established for notification. At this point, you must ensure that your potential new hires receive a realistic job preview.

Tell them everything they need to know about the job, the bad as well as the good. If this job requires travel, tell them. If this job is high stress with little advancement opportunity, tell them. Employers that treat the recruiting and "hiring of employees as if the applicants must be sold on the job and exposed to only the organization's positive characteristics set themselves up to have a workforce that is dissatisfied and prone to high turnover.

Remember, you are hiring for long term; the job must be a good fit for both the new employee and the organization. People are most at risk of quitting within the first few months of hire, usually because the job turned out to be something they did not expect.

This is expensive for your organization and stressful for HR if you are continually repeating the hiring process for the same positions; and, of course, it is also stressful for the new hire. When you make the job offer, avoid quoting an annual salary. Quote compensation by the hour or the month, whichever is appropriate. Annual salary quotes have sometimes been interpreted by the courts as a contract for employment for a minimum of one year. If the employee is let go before the completion of that first year, you may be looking at a potential lawsuit—breach of employment contract. This is easy enough to avoid—don't quote an annual salary! See *Eales v. Tanana Valley Medical-Surgical Group, Inc.* for court opinion regarding enforceability of oral promises made during the hiring process. After your selection decision, you must verify the employment eligibility of your new employee. Under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, employers are required to hire only American citizens and aliens legally authorized to work in the United States.

Eligibility for employment must be verified for all new hires within three days after they start work. Both the employee and the employer must complete and sign the I-9 form, with the employee presenting the necessary documents to verify identity and the legal right to work in the United States. The form indicates which documents have been presented and the employer's signature verifies that the documents appear to be genuine. The I-9 form must be retained by the employer for at least three years.

eVaLUatING tHe recrUItmeNt aND SeLectIoN ProceSS Most organizations keep at least minimum statistical information on their recruitment and hiring

processes. You will want to evaluate the processes to ensure that it is cost-effective, timely and, most importantly, that you hired the right person! Information gathered may be invaluable for further recruiting as your organization grows. Some things to think about: Were your methods cost-effective? Did you stay within budget? Did your recruitment generate a large enough applicant pool to make a good selection decision? Were your applicants qualified for the job? How many applicants must you generate to get a good hire? How long did it take to fill the position? How long does it take for a new employee to “ get up to speed?” What about turnover? Do your new employees stay with the organization?

Answers to these questions can provide valuable information for the next time you recruit and hire a new employee. CONGRATULATIONS – You have a new employee!

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