

Introduction

Nurse shortages have significant negative effects on patient outcomes, clinician well-being, and hospital costs. In a large hospital in 2024, overtaxed nurse managers faced challenges in nurse recruitment, leading to a strategic initiative focused on enhancing the recruitment process.

Background

In 2023, a large Midwestern hospital faced a 36% RN vacancy rate and struggled to hire new nurses, only successfully recruiting 20 net new RNs. The existing recruitment processes were inefficient and created confusion among applicants and stakeholders. In response, nurse leaders set an ambitious goal to hire 140 net new nurses in 2024, necessitating the development of a tailored and effective recruitment strategy.

Purpose

The purpose of the initiative was to develop an innovative and efficient approach to nurse recruitment. The strategy focused on leveraging nurse-to-nurse recruitment, matching applicants' interests with suitable positions, and improving the transition for new nurses to increase recruitment and retention rates.



Nurturing the Future: The Impact of Nurse-to-Nurse Recruitment

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Methods

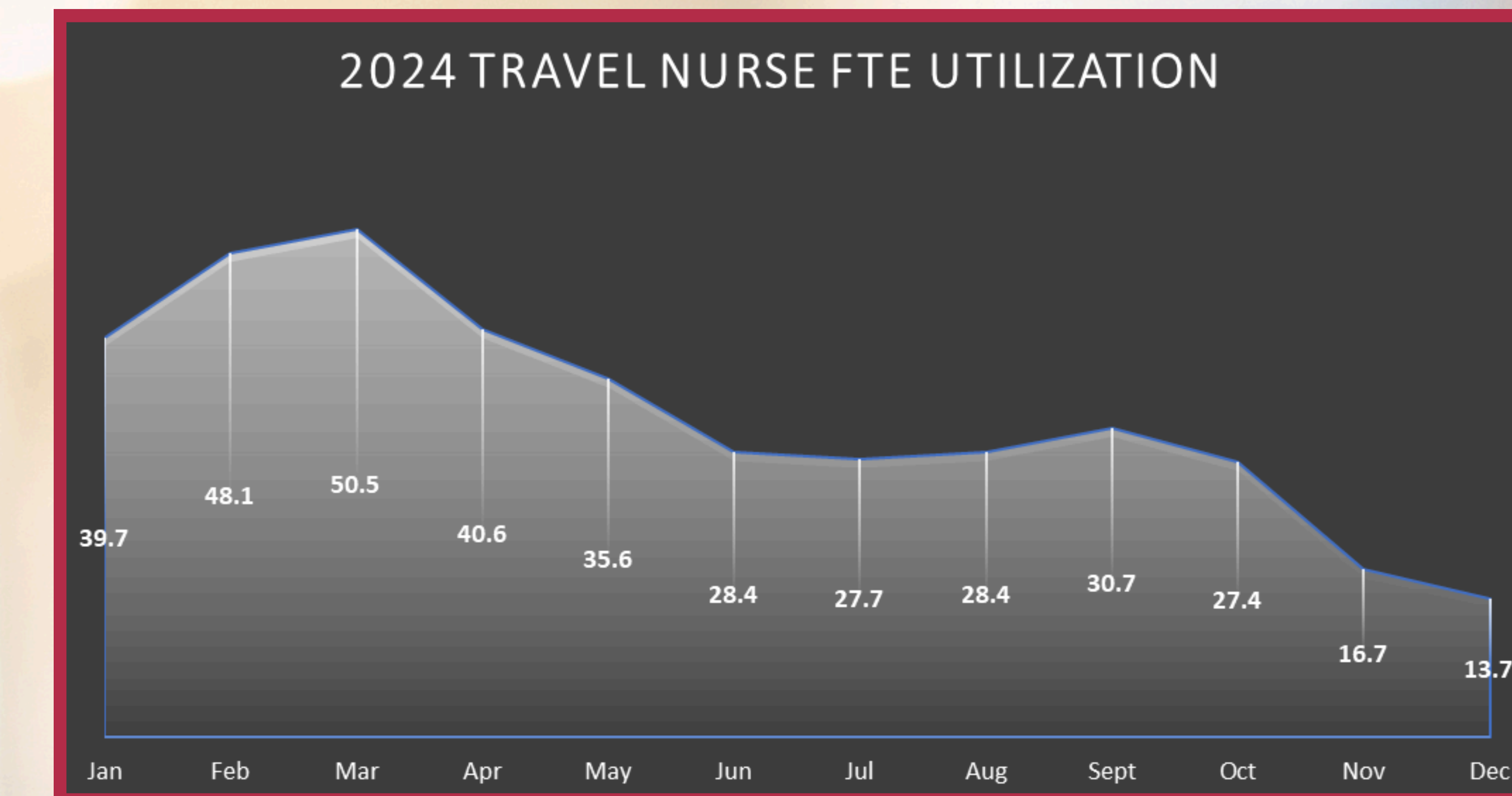
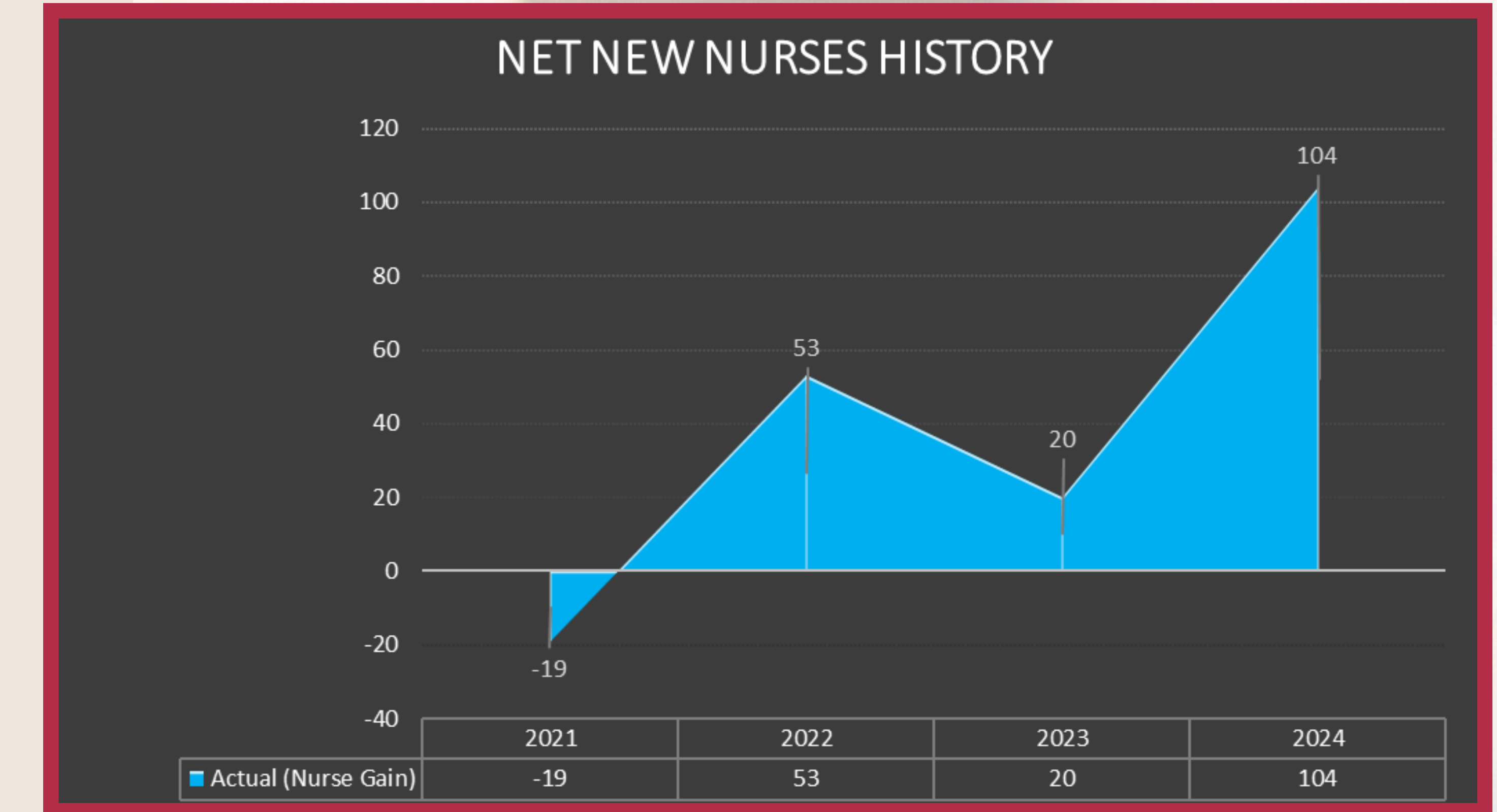
The initiative introduced a new role, the Nurse Manager of Recruitment and Retention (NMRR), based on the competencies of the American Organization of Nursing Leaders. The NMRR implemented several key strategies, including:

- Redesigning recruitment processes to reduce time from application to job offer
- Building relationships with local nursing schools and senior students
- Creating a tailored professional development plan for each applicant.
- Revitalizing the Discovery Program for new RNs, offering unit rotations during orientation.
- Investing in current nursing students employed in non-licensed roles and developing a flexible work program.
- Offering a bonus program for RNs who recruited other RNs.

Outcome metrics included the number of new nurses hired, their retention at one year, engagement with universities, and time from contact to job offer.

Results

- ▶▶▶ 400% increase over the previous year of NET new nurses hired.
- ▶▶▶ 31% overall decrease in functional vacancy - 22% in 2024 compared to 32% in 2023
- ▶▶▶ 67.3% decrease in travel nurse expenditures, leading to significant cost savings.
- ▶▶▶ 9% first-year nurse turnover rate, significantly lower than the national average.
- ▶▶▶ 179 total nurses hired in 2024 - 159 RNs and 20 LPNs
- ▶▶▶ Increased number of college visits
- ▶▶▶ Increased current employee nursing student touchpoints
- ▶▶▶ 11 Discovery Program new graduate nursing hires



Conclusions/Implications

The nurse-to-nurse recruitment initiative demonstrated substantial success, improving staffing levels and reducing workloads for unit managers. The collaborative approach between the NMRR, unit managers, human resources, and academic leaders was crucial to its success. This model can be adapted for other healthcare settings facing similar recruitment challenges. Key lessons learned include the importance of selecting an experienced nurse manager for the NMRR role and being flexible in adopting new recruitment procedures.



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