

LECTURE 5: SKILLS LEADERSHIP THEORY APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP (Part 1)

1. Autocratic Leadership

autocratic leadership

A leadership style where the leader makes the decisions, tells employees what to do, and closely supervises workers while primarily using a coercive power strategy to motivate compliance.

span of control

The number of subordinates directly reporting to a leader or manager.

The autocratic leader makes the decisions, tells employees what to do, and closely supervises workers. Managers are often known to use an **autocratic leadership** style. This style promotes individual control over all decisions with little to no input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. In this sense, it is a singular decision-making process that does not incorporate participation from the follower.

Autocratic leadership can be more prevalent in large organizations where the leader or manager's **span of control** is increased and there's less participation by the followers and where only a few trusted agents or subordinates are used to influence decisions. Span of control can be defined as the number of subordinates directly reporting to a leader or manager. The military provides guidance that a leader's span of control should not exceed three to five suborganizations (dependent on the organization's size in terms of its mission and the number of people), as exceeding that number of suborganizations increases the complexity of controlling the organization's activities. A more inclusive definition of autocratic leadership involves leadership influence and awareness. Using these terms can shift the rigid connotation of the term *span of control* to a more collaborative network that exists in organizations today. Another feature of using autocratic decision making is delegation as a means to reduce the administrative workload.

Autocratic leadership often leverages coercive power to motivate subordinates to accomplish tasks. For example, an instructor provides you with an assignment or project and defines not only the task and purpose but also how you will accomplish the task and states that if you do not meet the rubric content, you will receive a low grade; in addition, if you do achieve the intended outcome of the task or project, you will be rewarded. The coercive approach is aimed at dictating the behavior and outcome of the task; through coercive motivation, the subordinate is provided little to no flexibility in defining how to best solve a problem or complete a project. Furthermore, the subordinate knows that unfavorable consequences will result if the task is not accomplished.

2. Charismatic Leadership

charismatic leadership

A leadership style that manifests itself in nonverbal emotional expressiveness, or cues to move, shape, inspire, or captivate others. It can be a spiritual power or personal quality that gives an individual influence or authority over large numbers of people.

Charismatic leadership manifests itself in a leader's emotional expressiveness, interpersonal communication style, or cues to shape, inspire, and captivate others based on the personal identification of the followers to the leader. It can be a spiritual power or a personal quality that gives an individual influence or authority over large numbers of people.

Chapter 1 provided us with a basic understanding of what charismatic leadership entails. As a review, we identified charismatic leaders as using a wide variety of pragmatism, flexibility, and opportunism while using a combination of different leadership styles to achieve their end goal. Charismatic leadership is usually considered a subform of transformational leadership, and transformational leadership is basically the opposite of transactional leadership. Inspirational motivation is a component of transformational leadership.

The charismatic leader's personality characteristics are described in Table 1.2. It is important to understand charismatic leaders in terms of their high self-esteem and desire to take ownership of their

actions; they also tend to be generous, open, and honest and tend to have a deep concern for the welfare of others. Charismatic leaders are also highly sensitive to the needs of followers, communicate effectively, are willing to take personal risks, act as change agents, and are idealistic in their vision of the future. Regardless of the situation, they are consistent in displaying high levels of emotional expression, self-confidence, self-determination, and freedom from internal conflict, and they have strong moral and ethical convictions for their principles and highly idealistic beliefs.

The Greek word *charisma* means "divinely inspired gift." According to Max Weber,^[24] charisma is based on followers' perception of what the leader offers in terms of inspiration, or the leader is extraordinarily gifted with a combination of interpersonal skills and traits that form his or her charismatic leadership style. So what is the basis of charismatic leadership? Table 3.4 identifies the source of charismatic leadership and the situation that brings the charismatic leader to the forefront of the group. Robert S. Lussier and Christopher F. Achua,^[25] in their book *Leadership: Theory, Application, & Skill Development*, state that the "question centers on the debate over whether charisma is primarily the result of social situations or individual qualities, namely:

- The situation or social climate facing the leader.
- The leader's extraordinary qualities.
- A combination of the situation and the leader's qualities."

TABLE 3.4 Source of Charismatic Leadership and Situations

Source of Charismatic Leadership	Situation
Situation or social climate	Society is in a state of crisis. The leader is capitalizing on the crisis to assert or share his or her viewpoints so followers recognize the need for the leader's extraordinary qualities.
Leader's extraordinary qualities	The leader's charisma is borne out by his or her exceptional attributes as seen by followers. The leader effectively communicates a strong and unique vision, strong personal conviction, trustworthiness, high self-confidence, and intelligence.
Combination of the situation and leader's qualities	Charisma is the result of follower attributions and is influenced by not only the leader's characteristics and behavior but also the context of the situation.

The effect of charismatic leadership on followers can manifest in several ways as the leader inspires and transforms the followers by using an emotional appeal to effect radical change in a situation or organization. Followers believe the leader has the power to effect radical change and can change the status quo and strongly believe in the leader's transcendent vision. Because of the belief, the charismatic leader is grounded in core values like integrity, hard work, responsibility, respect, and accountability; it has a transcendent effect on the follower. First, followers may develop a strong sense of trust and emotional bonding with the leader that is hard to find in any other leader-follower relationship. Second, based on this trust, followers tend to assume greater risks than they would with other types of leaders. Third, followers develop unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the leader. Lastly, followers are motivated to set or aim for higher goals and have greater confidence in their abilities to achieve the vision and goals set by the leader.

The acquisition of charismatic qualities requires a determined personal developmental effort that includes the following:

- Improving communication skills through practice and training
- Using strategic and operational art to create vision and mission statements
- Practicing assertiveness skills and learning how to have a more extroverted personality when the leadership situation requires it
- Developing personality traits that reflect a behavior pattern of enthusiasm, optimism, and an energetic personality

The dark side of charisma can also be a reality, and it would be foolhardy to follow someone who is charismatic and does not possess the appropriate legitimate and expert skills as well as an appropriate moral compass.

If not careful, the charismatic leader who is overdependent on his or her charismatic style can be viewed as narcissistic and promoting highly self-serving and grandiose goals. Narcissistic charismatic leaders will commonly focus on self-glorification and self-transcendence motives. The self-glorification motive is about the self-maintenance and self-enhancement of the leader and not the greater good of the organization or society. Instead, the dark side of charisma seeks to protect, maintain, and enhance the leader's self-esteem and is consistent with negative or destructive charisma. Therefore, it is common for a leader who is overdependent on charisma to be motivated more by extrinsic values and

rewards rather than intrinsic rewards and values. Furthermore, it is very common for leaders to use the dark side of charisma as a compensation tactic to offset their deficits in expert power and skills.

Kenneth Lay,^[26] former head of Enron's leadership, focused his energy on creating an aura of charisma around his leadership team. Consistent with the leadership image the company presented to the press, Enron's leaders engaged in dramatic self-promotion and were described by the press as "revolutionary." Jeffrey Skilling, another key Enron leader working for Lay, was equal to the task of self-promoting a charismatic image. Both acted with draconian intimidation measures to control subordinates' behavior.

Charismatic leaders and managers are easy to identify. They are seen as charismatic because they possess charm, a high energy level, and an ability to conceptualize and articulate a strategic vision. Yet charisma has its dark side. This type of leader at first appears confident and skilled to his or her peers and bosses and does well on most evaluative assessments but then turns out to be terrible for the organization. The dark side of their charismatic leadership style proves costly to the organization as it develops poor morale, excessive turnover, and reduced productivity. Charismatics have a knack for moving to the top of an organization too quickly when driven by their overpowering desire for extrinsic rewards and/or narcissism. With increased power, they soon reveal their personality flaws that were not readily apparent when they had less power.

Differentiating between good and bad charismatic leaders may come down to the distinction of the level and type of narcissism and the degree to which leaders' self-interests motivate their behavior. Leaders who display a grandiose sense of certainty, with a conviction that subordinates or followers must find the leader irreplaceable and flawless, may be in the wrong. Additionally, for followers to be accepted by the leader, the followers will be required to ingratiate themselves to their seniors and often to tolerate leader abuse. In her book *The Allure of Toxic Leaders*, Jean Lipman-Blumen^[27] refers to this dark side of charismatic leadership as toxic leadership. Charismatic leaders who are toxic seduce the follower to the extent that the follower is trying to survive and succeed in an organization where a leader first charms and then manipulates, mistreats, undermines, and ultimately leaves the follower worse off than when he or she first believed in the leader.

The central figure that provides an example of the dark side of charisma is Adolph Hitler,^[28] whose style helped lift the German nation out of stagnation in early 1933 and then led it to ruin by 1945. Hitler used a very charismatic personality type to first take control of the National Socialist German Workers Party. His vision was to carry out a program calling for the restructuring of Germany on a racist basis so that the country could dominate the globe and expand the German people's living space. To many in Germany, this was a compelling idea, and Hitler was a master of communication in popularizing the thought. He believed that Germany should fight wars for vast tracts of land to enable its people to settle on them, raising large families that would replace casualties and provide soldiers for the next war of expansion. The dark side of Hitler's charisma was demonstrated by his willingness to take more risks by invading neighboring countries and creating a series of wars around the globe. His single-minded decisions led to one catastrophic failure after another, making enemies who used his failure as an opportunity to remove him from power. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic,^[29] professor of business psychology at the University College London, identifies several negative consequences of charismatic leadership:

- Charisma dilutes judgment.
 - Being in awe of the leader clouds or impairs the good judgment of followers.
 - Leaders influencing by charm rather than reason often run out of charm and then tend to revert to coercion.
- Charisma is addictive.
 - Charisma can result in reciprocal dependence that encourages both parties to distort reality in order to prolong the charismatic effect on the follower.
 - Followers' criticism of the leader is inhibited by their need for acceptance by the leader.
 - Failure to develop successors creates an eventual leadership crisis.

- Charisma disguises psychopaths.
 - Egocentricity, deceit, manipulativeness, and selfishness are key career advancers for politicians and management leaders, who both rise to the top and are motivated by their own problems with authority.
 - Excessive confidence and optimism blind the leader to real dangers.
 - Denial of problems and failures reduces organization learning.
 - Impulsive, nontraditional behavior creates enemies as well as believers.
- Charisma fosters collective narcissism.
 - Charisma facilitates ideological self-enhancement. The adoration for someone who expresses our beliefs is a socially acceptable way to ingratiate ourselves and the group to which we are affiliated.
 - Adoration by followers creates delusions of leader infallibility.
 - Taking sole credit for outcomes alienates key stakeholders.
 - Risk and overreach on projects increase the chance of failure.

Charismatic leaders need to be optimistic and possess self-confidence to influence others to support the leader's strategic vision and operational mission. Yet it is excessive optimism that inhibits leaders' recognition of flaws in the strategies they profess to followers, with the followers becoming unwilling to point out the errors and provide recommendations.

It is wise to recognize that charismatic leadership can be a transitory phenomenon that can only be sustained by creating crisis situations where the leader identifies with the followers who perceive him or her to be extraordinary during the crisis. One example used in the situational leadership theory was Winston Churchill,^[30] who took the helm of leadership for England during World War II as the central public servant at the height of a situational leadership crisis. Churchill used a charismatic leadership style to lead England out of the crisis presented by Hitler. Churchill possessed a clear vision and a compelling message, represented the epitome of selfless sacrifice, and was able to clearly communicate his enduring and single-minded message to the people of England to protect the country from invasions and later defeat Germany. Churchill stood fast and alone as a pragmatic idealist in the face of what appeared to be insurmountable odds: facing a German invasion of England in 1940. However, as successful as Churchill was in securing England from invasion and later helping to end the war in 1945, his charismatic leadership style fell aside after leading England to victory and through the crises of war. The English people elected a new prime minister in his stead once the crisis was overcome and the situation changed. His charismatic attributes waned as his vision and message were no longer required. England no longer needed a charismatic hero but rather a new prime minister to lead the country out of a wartime mentality.

3. Democratic/Participative Leadership

Democratic/participative leadership encourages the participation of followers in making decisions and working with employees to determine what to do and does not require the close supervision of employees. Follower participation is central to this leadership style, as the formal procedures for making important decisions give members significant influence and participation in group decisions. Followers in a democratic leadership organization may have the right to participate in open meetings of the board or council to express opinions about important issues before a decision is made. In some organizations, elected representatives come from each major subunit of the governing council, allowing lower-level members to elect one or more representatives to serve on the board of directors.

democratic/participative leadership

Encourages employee participation in decisions, working with employees to determine what to do, and supervising employees less closely. Empowerment of the follower is central to this leadership style as the formal procedures for making important decisions give members significant influence over group decisions.

Democratic leadership encourages participation in decision making.



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One example of participative leadership in a very top-down, line-and-staff organization is the US military. At all levels of military organizations, plans are developed using a structured Military Decision-Making Process^[31] (MDMP) where the organizational leader provides his or her initial commander's intent, based on the mission the organization receives from the higher headquarters. In addition to receiving operational input from their staff, leaders also receive input from each subordinate leader's organization's operational assessment. Once the leader receives staff input, he or she provides additional planning guidance and makes a decision on the operational plan's framework. The staff then develops the final operational or strategic plan to disseminate to subordinate organizations. The leader retains overall decision making and responsibility when using the MDMP, but the staff is a full participant in the organization's direction in achieving its mission, as the leader is dependent on the professional and skill expertise each member brings to the decision-making process.^[32]

The benefit of having a democratic leadership style is that employees feel they contribute to the organization at a high level, tend to have high satisfaction, and are more productive because of their participation in the organization's decision-making process. Employees may feel they develop personal skills and fully participate based on intrinsic motivation to contribute to the organization rather than being extrinsically motivated by the leader. The downside of democratic or participative leadership is that it is less effective in crisis situations where time is scarce and a quick decision is required to achieve organizational success. Another downside may be that the employee does not have the skill set or expertise to participate in the decision-making process.

4. Inspirational Leadership

inspirational leadership

Involves the use of influence tactics that involve an emotional or value-based appeal. The leader makes an inspirational appeal to stakeholders' values and ideals or seeks to arouse the group's emotions to gain commitment to a new task or proposal.

Inspirational leadership is often considered a component of transformational leadership. Inspirational leadership involves the use of influence tactics that have an emotional or value-based appeal. The leaders make an inspirational appeal to the stakeholder's values and ideals or seek to arouse the group's emotions to gain commitment to a new task or proposal.

The inspirational appeal is an influence tactic to develop enthusiasm and commitment by arousing strong emotions and linking a request or proposal to a desire of fulfilling a task and purpose by relating individuals' goals to organizational goals. The leader's intent is to make the followers feel important and useful, all the while supporting their values with the aim of accomplishing something worthwhile and exceptional for them and the organization. Inspirational leadership is especially important for gaining commitment from stakeholders to work on new projects. The leader's inspirational appeal is a good tactic to gain support for proposed changes that involve values and ideas as they affect subordinates and peers.

5. Laissez-Faire Leadership

laissez-faire leadership

Passive indifference about the task and subordinates. This is where the leader ignores problems and may dismiss subordinates' needs for guidance, purpose, and direction.

Laissez-faire leadership is defined as passive indifference about the task and subordinates. This is where the leader ignores problems and may dismiss subordinates' needs for guidance, purpose, and direction. Laissez-faire leadership can be described as the lack of effective influence tactics and leadership. Laissez-faire leaders do not interfere, instead allowing employees within the team to make many of the decisions.

This approach works well when the team is highly functional and capable, is intrinsically motivated, and does not need extrinsic motivation by the leader. An example is large organizations that provide employees the latitude to work from home and only come to the office on scheduled dates or to participate in organizational meetings. These organizations may institute control measures to assess output or outcomes, yet they are trusting enough to allow employees latitude to select the time and place to perform their job functions as long as the employees perform the tasks and achieve the appropriate or desired outcomes.

The negative side to this approach is when laissez-faire is an outcome of a lazy, incompetent, or distracted leader. In this case, the organization may be at risk of failing. An example of a leader becoming distracted is when a chief executive officer (CEO) who is the founder removes himself from the day-to-day activities of performing his leadership and management role and becomes involved in businesses unrelated to the company's product. Though the subordinate executives and directors are competent, the leader focuses elsewhere, desynchronizes the effort, and causes certain strategic business units to fail, jeopardizing the entire organization.

Additional Perspectives

Assertiveness in Leadership

Assertiveness refers to the degree to which individuals are engaged, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others. Highly assertive people and societies tend to value competition, success, and progress while focusing on direct communication. They expect subordinates to take the initiative. Lower assertiveness people and societies tend to expect subordinates to be loyal and value cooperation. In addition, they prefer indirect communication.^[33]

Assume you are a highly assertive individual, preferring to communicate directly. You tell one of your low assertive employees he needs to “pick up the pace” on his sales figures for the quarter. Your employee doesn’t say anything to you, but over the next few weeks you can see him avoiding contact with you.

What happened in this situation? How might you have handled this communication better, given his low assertive nature?

6. Servant Leadership

Servant leadership describes leaders who lead from positions of moral influence, not from a power relationship, and who are follower-centric. The attributes most commonly associated with servant leadership are empathy, kindness, honesty, humility, and respect for others, especially the less powerful followers or subordinates. Servant leadership transcends self-interest to serve the needs of others by helping followers grow professionally and personally.

At the core of servant leadership is self-sacrifice, which is often displayed by a leader’s need to lead by example. The servant leader makes a conscientious decision to place importance on followers’ needs and respects their contributions no matter the level of responsibility. The leader in this case is singularly focused on serving others.

The character of a servant leader is grounded in a strong moral base operating from a moral compass, with a strong sense of team effort and duty between the leader and follower. Leadership in this sense becomes a privilege and not a right; this type of leadership exhibits personality traits high on agreeableness, active listening, empathy, and integrity of action and word.

servant leadership

Leaders who lead from positions of moral influence, not from a power relationship, and who are follower-centric. The attributes most commonly associated with this style are empathy, kindness, honesty, humility, and respect for others.

Table 3.5 identifies the four attributes of effective servant leadership, according to Robert K. Greenleaf, the founder of servant leadership,^[34] along with their corresponding applications, as identified by Robert N. Lussier and Christopher F. Achua^[35] in their book *Leadership*.

TABLE 3.5 Servant Leadership Characteristics

Attribute	Application
Service to others	Servant leaders are focused on helping others and take great pleasure in seeing those they influence succeed. Taking the right action to help others takes precedence over the protection of their position. The decisions servant leaders make are aimed at serving the group’s interest and not their own.
Earning and keeping others’ trust	Integrity of word and deed are the hallmarks of earning follower or subordinate trust. There are no hidden agendas, and they are not afraid to empower others or recognize and acknowledge the strengths and accomplishments of those they lead.
Effective listening	Psychologists use the analogy of having a third ear to listen to their clients and help them formulate a strategy to help them help themselves. Servant leaders carefully listen to the problems facing those they lead in order to develop effective solutions. They demonstrate care, acceptance, and encourage their followers in an empathetic manner.
Helping others discover their inner spirit	Setting the conditions for the follower to succeed is how the servant leader helps others to help themselves. Servant leaders do not usurp the responsibility for others’ actions but instead help them find their inner strength or spirit to realize their inner potential to attain high standards and accomplishments. It is imperative for servant leaders to display empathy toward followers and not fear displaying their own vulnerabilities.

Organizational Values

Organizational values provide the observer or organizational rater a means to evaluate the emerging leader's adherence to the espoused values of those that lead them. It is important to remember that an individual's personal values may differ than those of the organization. If an individual chooses to work for an organization, he or she should understand the differences and work to obtain congruence between his or her own values and those of the organization. In this case, those organizational values that are not displayed by the emerging leader are identified by the organization's coach or rater so as to work on them and reinforce compliance. The following are examples of character traits adapted from the Leadership Assessment Report:^[41]

- **Loyalty.** Bears true faith and allegiance to the organization and those they serve with.
- **Duty.** Fulfills professional, legal, and moral obligations.
- **Respect.** Promotes dignity, consideration of others, fairness, and equal opportunity.
- **Selfless service.** Places the organization's priorities before self.
- **Honor.** Adherence to the organization's publicly declared code of values.
- **Integrity.** Possesses high personal moral standards: honest in word and deed.
- **Personal courage.** Manifest physical moral bravery.

Leader **attributes**, **skills**, and **actions** are three areas that are assessed during the US Army Cadet Leadership Development Program evaluation process of cadet leaders as they strive to become commissioned military officers. Table 3.7 defines the attributes that are most desired in an employee (in this case, an emerging cadet leader) and evaluated by the rater (one supervisory level up) and senior rater (two supervisory levels up). Each attribute, skill, and action is evaluated as it pertains to the particular task being observed. In this case, the cadet will receive immediate evaluator comments and verbal feedback on the performance that is observed.

As a refresher, it is important to understand Table 3.2, where Barnard Bass^[42] provides example factors of traits appearing in three or more of the fifty-two surveys he evaluated. The table also highlights whether the leader or employee possess one or more specific traits that lend to or detract from achieving organizational success. A summary of skills and traits that were identified in the study follow.

TABLE 3.7 US Army Cadet Leadership-Development System

Written and Verbal Feedback Areas	
Attributes	Include an assessment of the leader's mental, physical, and emotional self-control
• Mental	Possesses desire, will, initiative, and discipline
• Physical	Maintains appropriate level of physical fitness and personal bearing
• Emotional	Displays the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions
Skills	Conceptual, interpersonal, and technical skills relating to the professional body of knowledge
• Conceptual	Demonstrates sound judgment, critical/creative thinking, and moral reasoning
• Technical	Possesses the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions
• Operational	Demonstrates proficiency in required professional knowledge and judgment, as well as in the application of this professional knowledge and judgment
Actions	Highlight major activities leaders perform in the areas of influencing, operating, and improving
• Influencing	Method of reaching goals while operating and improving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicating (displays good oral, written, and listening skills for individuals and groups) ■ Decision making (employs sound judgment, logical mission standards, and takes care of people/resources) ■ Motivating (inspires, motivates, and guides others toward mission accomplishment)
• Operating	Short-term mission accomplishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning (develops detailed executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable) ■ Executing (shows tactical proficiency, meets mission standards, and takes care of people and resources) ■ Assessing (uses after-action and evaluation tools to facilitate consistent improvement)
• Improving	Long-term improvement in the larger organization, its people, and suborganizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developing (invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders) ■ Building (spends time and resources improving teams, groups, and units; fosters ethical climate) ■ Learning (seeks self-improvement and organizational growth, envisioning, and adapting and leading)

attributes

Include the leader's mental aptitude, physical skill, and emotional self-control.

skills

Conceptual, interpersonal, and technical knowledge specific to a profession, including its operations. Skills refer to the ability to do something in an effective manner. Like traits, skills are determined jointly by learning and heredity.

Skills

The following factors can be used to identify effective leaders with regard to their interpersonal, administrative, technical, and intellectual skills:

- Social and interpersonal skills
- Technical skills
- Administrative skills
- Intellectual skills

- Leadership effectiveness
- Achievement
- Social nearness
- Friendliness
- Support of the group task
- Task motivation and application

The next most frequent set of factors concerned how leaders relate to groups. The behaviors include the following:

- Maintaining cohesiveness of the group
- Coordination
- Task motivation
- Task performance
- High quality of output

Concern for the group's performance was modified by using nurturing behavior and the use of informal controls. The factors affected are as follows:

- Maintaining a cohesive work group
- Maintaining standards of performance
- Maintaining informal control of the group (group freedom)
- Sustaining nurturing behavior

Traits

The next most frequent factors concerned the personal leadership characteristics. These included description of leaders in terms of the following:

- Emotionally well balanced
- Willing to assume responsibility
- Ethical in conduct
- Able to communicate readily
- Dominant
- Energetic
- Experienced
- Courageous
- Mature

The orders of frequency of the factors are significant as they relate to successful leadership performance. The Leadership Assessment Report identifies specific values, attributes, skills, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the action taken by an emerging or developing leader.

In summary, the US Army's cadet leadership assessment report identifies leadership development areas that are important to a specific organization. At the completion of the evaluation, the person—cadet in this case—is counseled and informed of those areas that require improvement as well as those areas that are encouraged to be sustained. The values, attributes, skills, and actions listed in the Leadership Assessment Report provide a means to better understand how theories and leadership styles interrelate with each other.

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