



CERTIFIED PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST

## **CERTIFIED PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST (CPRS)**

### **STUDY GUIDE**

Sponsored by:



**Business Training Institute**

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Please use this guide to assist in preparation for your Certified Public Relations Specialist (CPRS) exam. The contents of this study guide are as follows:

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## **I. BUSINESS TRAINING:**

**The Business Training Institute** is the leading online program for this specialized niche business certification program. The team behind the Business Training Institute is comprised of industry experts in niches including online marketing, project management, public relations, consulting, and many more.

This experience, combined with our advisory board's expertise in online education and training, is what makes it possible to provide the training and certification programs found on our website.

The Business Training Institute is a global training and certification organization that has provided practical industry-specific certification to over 15,000 clients from the United States, Europe, and more than 30 other countries around the world.

We provide high value training programs that provide function knowledge on very specific business topics such as public relations, online marketing, project management, international business, and consulting.

**The Business Training Institute's Mission:** To provide professionals with high impact business training and certifications in niche subject areas that are functional and immediately beneficial.

**The Business Training Institute** helps you to:

- Quickly gain specialized knowledge in highly valuable business niches.
- Enhance your credibility, resume, and overall value in the marketplace.
- Complete our training programs in 5 months from anywhere in the world.

Our programs accept participants year-round and are flexible to work with your current work schedule and academic constraints. You can complete one of our programs in 2 months or 2 years; the choice is yours.

## **II. CPRS DETAILS AND TIMELINE:**

### **PROGRAM DETAILS:**

The **Certified Public Relations Specialist (CPRS)** certification program is unique in that it is modeled after many online courses offered at Ivy League institutions today, offering more value for a more cost-effective program. The CPRS Program is a self-study program that includes educational multimedia resources in video form, a study guide, required readings, and a flexible online examination process, accessible around the world.

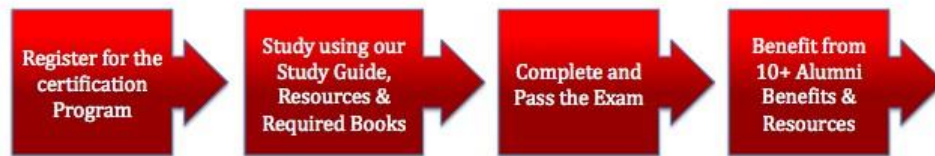
The online exam is structured so that in order to complete the exam within the 2-hour time frame one must read through all of the assigned materials and conceptually understand the majority of the material to score well enough to pass the exam.

Our goal is to offer the most challenging program in the industry while also providing all of the learning tools possible to ensure participants get the most out of the experience. By testing the knowledge depth and comprehension from the materials digested, the CPRS certification prepares individuals for successful, real-world application.

The Certified Public Relations Specialist (CPRS) program is by The Business Training Institute. This certification program is designed to show and certify that you have gained an in-depth understanding and high-level, specialized knowledge.

In addition to the benefits of gained knowledge, growing industry recognition, more knowledgeable career choices, and networking, our organization is also developing additional resources for CPRS Participants. This includes video and MP3 recordings on Q&A or strategies and tactics, webinars, access to interviews with internet marketing professionals who have more than 10 years of experience in the industry, among many more benefits.

#### 4 STEP CERTIFICATION PROCESS



#### TIMELINE & EXAMINATION DATES:

Programs are offered through open enrollment, making our programs 100% flexible to accommodate your current work or academic schedule. After joining, you can select an examination date that works best for you. We hold examinations on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each new month, providing you with 12 different options each year.

The Business Training Institute exams are administered 100% online.

## **To register for an examination date:**

- 1.) Email your desired exam date to [Support@businessstraining.com](mailto:Support@businessstraining.com).

## **BENEFITS OF THE CPRS:**

- Speak the PR Language - Earning the CPRS Designation assures that you can attend conferences, interviews and other networking events while being able to contribute to conversations and understand discussions about current events or trends within the industry. Our program will help you to understand the terms and implement the tactics and tools of leading PR professionals.
- Advance your business or career by raising your level of public relations knowledge and increasing your ability to work quickly and effectively. Specialized knowledge is valuable and an asset in our knowledge economy and mastering PR Strategy allows you to work more efficiently than your competitors.
- Exclusive Access to tools and multimedia training resources found online within the CPRS Certification Program
- Add the CPRS Designation to your resume, assuring employers that you are dedicated to working in the industry, passionate about learning more about and able to work more efficiently after being promoted or hired.
- Gain valuable insight into PR tactics that you can implement now without the need of a costly PR agency,

## **PARTICIPANTS OF THE CPRS PROGRAM CAN INCLUDE:**

- Those interested in furthering his/her education and knowledge in business
- Business owners looking to improve their company's PR
- Marketing professionals who want to better understand public relations to be better involved in the PR efforts
- Students looking to work in the PR industry
- Seasoned professionals looking to enter the public relations industry
- New business professionals who have just taken a position as part of a PR team
- PR professionals looking to improve their PR knowledge and leverage the changes the PR industry has experienced in the past 10 years
- Public Relations Consultants
- Marketing Directors
- Business Managers responsible for Business Development, Marketing, PR and/or Branding

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE CPRS PROGRAM:**

- How to quickly improve your media relations and successful industry communications with the appropriate tone and structure
- Why public relations has become more complex over the last 7 years and how that is forcing leading firms to transform their approach to Public Relations
- How to leverage technology to utilize opportunities to directly connect with your tech-savvy consumers and clients on multiple platforms
- How to structure effective PR materials such as press releases, media kits, and pitches
- How to be responsive and conscientious of consumer inquiries and concerns, helping improve client loyalty and identify opportunities

- How to implement a proven Strategic Public Relations Plan for your business or client
- Why Social Media Must be an Integral Part of a Successful Plan, and how exactly it should be leveraged to manage your online presence
- How to get your customers and others to provide you feedback, opinions and product insights for free
- How to create an authority position for your firm in the industry which will bring continuous warm leads to your website and team

**THE CPRS EXAM WILL TEST PARTICIPANTS IN 5 MAIN AREAS:**

1. Introduction to Public Relations
2. Public Relations Strategies and Tactics
3. Public Relations Writing
4. Social Media, the Internet, and PR
5. Branding

**III. REQUIRED READING**

1. The New Rules of Marketing & PR by David Meerman Scott. (ISBN:978-0-470-11345-5)
2. Strategic Public Relations by Jennifer Gehrt and Colleen Moffitt. (ISBN: 978-1-4363-8725-5)
3. The Public Relations Writer's Handbook by Carol Ames, Mary Aronson, and Don Spetner. (ISBN: 978-0-7879-8631-5)
4. Public Relations Book by Ashley Wirthlin. (You can download this book from the Student Area for the CPRS program.)

We recommend that you read the books in this order:

1. The Public Relations Book - eBook
2. The Public Relations Writer's Handbook
3. Strategic Public Relations
4. The New Rules of Marketing and PR

**In order to pass the CPRS certification and earn the CPRS title, participants must earn a minimum grade of 80% on the exam.**

**IV. CPRS EXAM PREPARATION**

**EXAM COMPOSITION:**

There is a total of 100 points available to earn for the exam, 80 of which can be earned from the multiple choice or true/false questions that are worth 1 point each, and 20 of which can be earned from 2 short answer questions that are worth 10 points each. This exam is worth 50% of the overall CPRS grade participants can earn, or, 100 of the possible 200 points participants can earn in the CPRS.

Please see below for the composition and distribution of the points in-depth.

<b>Topics and Weights</b>	
Introduction to Public Relations	20 MC questions (20 pts)
Public Relations Strategies & Tactics	25 MC questions (25 pts)

Public Relations Writing	10 MC questions (10 pts)
Social Media, the Internet, and PR	15 MC questions (15 pts)
Branding	10 MC questions (10 pts)
Case Study Examples/ Situational 2 Essay Questions	2 Questions (20 pts)

You will have 2 hours to complete the exam. Those who have not made the effort to read the materials will have a hard time completing the exam within the allotted time, but for participants who have read the required readings, 2 hours will be sufficient. **In order to pass the CPRS certification and earn the CPRS title, participants must earn a minimum average grade of 80% between the exam and PR plan.**

**TERMS AND CONCEPTS TO KNOW:**

Below, please find the exam topics and the corresponding terms and concepts that you should be able to define after having read the required readings.

Please define the terms from the required readings rather than a dictionary. You will be tested on the definitions that authors have written.

You may see some terms repeated; these are not typos. In each section and area of PR, terms can have different meanings. Try to define the terms in each area and how they change from one area to another.

**1. Introduction to Public Relations**

- Audience
- Pitch
- In-House
- Agency
- Hybrid Approach
- Demographics
- Press/News Release (What purpose it serves)
- Who is Edward Bernays?

**2. Strategies & Tactics**

- Press/News Release
- Target Audience
- Press/ News Conference
- Business Wire
- Embargo
- Media Kit (What purpose it serves)
- Media/Press List
- Public Service Announcement
- Gorilla Marketing
- PR Stunts



### 3. Public Relations Writing

- Copy
- Jargon (Define the term and why it ought to be avoided. Also define a situation/circumstance when it can be used.)
- Target Audience
- Writing for your buyers
- “Gobbledygook” (New Rules)
- Content drives action
- Boilerplate
- Ghostwriting
- Media Kit (What is included)
- Press/News Release (What is included)
- Editorial Calendars (For news releases, blog content, etc.)
- Inverted-Pyramid News Style
- Trade Press (Define and understand why writing for this sort of press is different from the other.)
- Consumer Press (Define and understand why writing for this sort of press is different from the other.)
- Newsworthy

### 4. Social Media, the Internet, and PR

- Interactive Content Tools
- User-Generated Content (UGC) What are some examples?
- Viral Marketing
- Blog
- Blogosphere
- Wiki
- Podcasting
- Videocasting/ Vodcasting
- Vlogging
- SEO (search engine optimization)
- Search Engine Advertising
- Search Engine Marketing
- The Press Release online
- Benefits of a forum
- RSS
- Landing page
- Webinars
- “Call to action”
- Forum
- Chatroom

### 5. Branding (For more Q’s please see the chapter questions below.)

- Define branding
- What is a brand?
- Expansion
- Extension
- Contraction
- Fellowship
- Name

- Logo
- Category
- Generic
- Subbrands
- “Mindshare”

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS:**

Please choose the answer that best answers the question or completes the phrase. *The answers are on the last page of this study guide.* Try answering the questions before looking at the answers.

1. Which of the following is **NOT** a benefit/ reason to advocate the use of strategic public relations?

- a. The ability to build your brand
- b. Increased demand for your product or service
- c. Enhanced perception of the value of your company
- d. Guaranteed success in every PR campaign

2. Which of the following would/should not be considered a target audience when designing a PR plan?

- a. Employees
- b. Consumers, based on demographics
- c. Stakeholders/ Shareholders
- d. Investors
- e. All of the above can be considered target audiences

3. What is the biggest advantage of having an in-house PR team?

- a. Internal control
- b. Specifics can be asked without hesitation
- c. It is more cost effective than hiring an agency
- d. More media contacts are available in-house

4. All of the following are considerations that need to be made when optimizing social networking sites **except**:

- a. Target a specific audience
- b. Hide contact details
- c. Participate
- d. Make it easy for people to find you

5. Please complete the following sentence: The birth of a brand is achieved with \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Advertising, Publicity
- b. Publicity, Advertising
- c. Money, Marketing
- d. Common Sense, Advertising

## V. BOOK REVIEWS:

To read the book reviews for the CPRS Program, please download the book reviews from the classroom area. If you have trouble locating these, please let us know.

## VI. CHAPTER QUESTIONS:

In order to prepare for the exam, you should be able to answer the following Chapter Questions after each reading; these questions are meant to assist you in preparing for the exam and in understanding the material. Try taking notes here while you are reading so that you can adequately grasp and comprehend the meaning the authors were trying to convey, as that is what will appear on the exam. There is also a section for notes after each book's set of chapter questions

### Public Relations Blogger eBook

by Ashley Wirthlin

- **Chapter 1: A Short Introduction to PR.** What *does* PR stand for? Why is it important? What role does PR play in a company, specifically, what are its main objectives? What are some things PR can do for your company? (This will be found in the "Strategic Public Relations" book as well, though with a few differences.) What does it mean to form a position of leadership for a company? What is one of the two main societal functions of PR and why is it important? Also, be aware of the PR associations, though you will not be tested on these. The main idea to grasp from this section is to understand perhaps why associations are important, and what purpose they serve.
- **Chapter 2: Career Related Tips.** Describe what a PR professional does for a company? What are some typical PR jobs?
- **Chapter 3: PR Tips: Public Relations Planning.** Why is important to plan for any business venture? Why is it particularly important to know who your target audience is? Why is it even important to plan for a crisis? What are some examples of a crisis? (For more examples please see *The Public Relations Writer's Handbook*, which will also have questions below.) What is the difference between in-house and outside PR? (The ideas here will also be found in *The Public Relations Writer's Handbook*. You will benefit from reading this section and the section in the text.)
- **Chapter 4: PR Tips: Social Media.** What are some benefits of using social media at work, or allowing your employees to use social media? Why is it important to set guidelines and rules to their use of these tools? How can you use social media to your advantage? What should be avoided when using social media as a company? (While you won't be tested on Twitter, it would definitely be to your benefit to understand how to use this social media tool if you don't already use it or know how to use it.) What you may be tested on is the benefits of using Twitter, which you should have answered in the aforementioned questions. Lastly, why are these tools great for social networking? Why should you network?
- **Chapter 5: PR Tips: Blogging.** What are some tips for making a successful blog? What are some tools you ought to use to make that blog successful? Where does SEO come into play?
- **Chapter 6: DIY Public Relations.** What are the 5 PR things you can do on your own? Why do you think these should be done in-house instead of using an agency or PR boutique? How can you promote your firm with PR?

- **Chapter 7: PR Tips: Etc.** What is a Webinar? How do you create one? Why do they add value?
- **Writing:** What is found in a press release? Why is it important to know how to effectively write? How can writing well maximize your PR efforts?
- **Branding:** Why is it important to think about your brand online and off? What happens when an online brand has a generic name?
- **PR Online:** What does your online presence represent? (The answer here should be: YOU. But why, and why is it important to know that your online presence represents you?)
  
- **Chapter 8: Branding**
  - Why is it better to contract rather than expand? What is at stake?
  - Why is it that brands are built/born with publicity, and not advertising? What purpose does advertising serve?
  - What is in a “word”? How does a word capture “mindshare”?
  - What is important about credentials and quality?
  - What is a category and why ought the brand promote the category, and not vice versa?
  - What’s in a name? Why are names so important?
  - What is considered an extension? How do they differ from a brand expanding? From that, what is fellowship?
  - Why is a generic name a sure way to fail?
  - Define the difference between a brand and a company. What happens when the two are interchangeably used?
  - What is a subbrand? How does it destroy the brand?
  - What is a sibling? What benefits can arise from a sibling? Why do siblings need different identities?
  - What is the importance of the shape of a brand’s logo? Why does it matter? To add to that, why is color important? What can color mean?
  - Why should a brand know no borders? What is important about branding and thinking global?
  - What good does consistency do for a brand and company?
  - When is change appropriate? What damage can a change do to a brand?
  
  - Why is every brand destined to die? Why is it best to put a brand down before it dies?
  - Lastly, what is the importance of singularity? What thoughts do you have about this? Do you think singularity could be avoided? If so, why?

NOTES

## Strategic Public Relations

by Colleen Moffitt and Jennifer Gehrt

- From the **introduction**: Why should we use strategic public relations?
- **Chapter 1**: How would you “sell” PR to key stakeholders? What needs to be included in your “pitch” to get them on board? Why do you need them on board?
- **Chapter 2**: Why does it matter what sort of PR team you have? What are the advantages and disadvantages of both kinds? Why would a hybrid be best in most situations?
- **Chapter 3**: What are some ways to identify your target audience? Why is it important to do this?
- **Chapter 4**: Why do new technologies and trends need to be watched? What are some of the trends and technologies that, of late, have changed the way PR is done? What is social media? Why do we need to utilize the tools available within social media?
- **Chapter 5**: What are some characteristics of a successful PR plan? What are the 10 building blocks for creating a Strategic PR plan?
- **Chapter 6**: What are the reasons (benefits) for a compelling story? What are the key elements of a compelling story? What are the other rules of writing a narrative that should be applied to PR writing?
- **Chapter 7**: Why is it so vital to make the right choice when it comes to spokespeople? What sort of questions should you ask yourself (and of candidates) when establishing who your spokesperson should be? What are the 11 best practices for interviews?
- **Chapter 8**: Why would keeping an open information flow be helpful when trying to avoid a crisis? Briefly describe the roles of the executive, employees, and the PR team.
- **Chapter 9**: Why is it crucial to measure success? What are five ways the authors suggest for doing so? How do you decide which one is best to use?
- **Chapter 10**: How do you keep your PR plan relevant? What are some ways to keep your PR acumen current?

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## **The New Rules of Marketing and PR**

by David Meerman Scott

### **Section 1: How the Web Has Changed the Rules of Marketing and PR**

- Chapters 1, 2, & 3. Why are the new rules different from the old ones? Why are the old rules ineffective now? What has changed? (i.e., audience, mediums, etc.) What is the long-tail theory? Write out a few sentences and get in-depth with reasons.

### **Section 2: Web-Based Communications to Reach Buyers Directly**

- Chapters 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. Why are social media tools so vital to the new rules and the new way of doing PR & marketing? What is the significance and importance of blogs? What are the new rules of the news/press release, and why have they changed? What are the three uses of the blog? Why is it important to comment, get involved with, and monitor blogs and the blogosphere? What does it mean to go viral? Is it something everyone can do easily? What is a Wiki? What is its significance in PR and marketing? Why are forums important? Lastly, what is so important about the content-rich website?

### **Section 3: Action Plan for Harnessing the Power of the New Rules.** Chapters 10-20.

- **Chapter 10.** What is a “Buyer Persona” profile? Why are they important? How does this chapter relate to the branding section from the eBook? Why is it important to stake a piece of the customer’s mind with a word? Why does it matter what type of media you use to get in touch with your buyers?
- **Chapter 11.** What is Thought Leadership Content? What are some examples? How does one create such content?
- **Chapter 12.** What is gobbledygook? Why is it such a problem? How do you overcome that problem? (To see a prime example, take a look at page 147, and really try to guess the company before reading on to the next paragraph.) What is Effective Writing?
- **Chapter 13.** What should you convey to your visitors? How can content influence the buying process? Why is it important to segment our buyers when we write web content? What are some elements of a Buyer-Centric website?
- **Chapter 14.** Why is it important to be able to reach consumers directly with a news release? What are some good reasons to write a press release? When is it a good time to send out a press release? Lastly, why is it important to post a press release to your website and to publish/submit it to a distribution site?
- **Chapter 15.** What is a media room? Why should it be targeted at everyone, not just journalists? What are the best practices for online media rooms?
- **Chapter 16.** Why is a Nontargeted press release considered spam? What are the new rules of media relations? What are the steps to pitching the media?
- **Chapter 17.** Optional. Topics covered here are also in the eBook.

- **Chapter 18.** Also optional. What should be gathered from this chapter is the importance of these mediums, and how it can affect your marketing and PR efforts. There is information about these in the eBook as well.
- **Chapter 19.** (Reading the portion on SecondLife is optional.) What are some ideas for getting the most out of social networking sites?
- **Chapter 20.** Why is search engine marketing important? Differentiate search engine marketing, search engine optimization, and search engine advertising. What is the long tail of search, and why is it so important? (Think effectiveness.) What are important things to consider when creating a landing page?

NOTES:

## The Public Relations Writer's Handbook

This is a very in-depth book; because it is so thorough, we will focus on the following chapters: 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, & 14. If you would like to learn more about financial writing, writing for multimedia presentations, speeches, biographies, and broadcast.

- **Chapter 1: Public Relations Goes Digital.** Why is it more important than ever to know how to write well?
- **Chapter 2: News Releases, Photo Captions, and Media Kits: Making Your Story Newsworthy.** What is the Inverted-Pyramid News Style, and why is it effective for pitching journalists? What are some questions you should ask yourself when targeting a trade or consumer publication? What is an embargo? What are some points of style to keep in mind when writing a press release?
- **Chapter 3: The Pitch: Creating Media Interest.** What are the three steps to creating and carrying out a pitch? What is important to remember about submitting a pitch to a reporter, journalist, or blogger? What are the components that every pitch needs to include?
- **Chapter 8: Special Events: The Art of Getting Noticed.** What is a press/news conference? Why are they useful? What are some ethical issues that could arise due to press junkets? What should you do to prepare for a special event; what are the steps you should perform to prepare?
- **Chapter 11: Writing for the Internet.** What is important to remember when writing on the Internet? What, especially, needs to be recalled when creating and writing content for a company website? Define what blogs are, and how they should be approached when attempting to write one.
- **Chapter 12: Responsive Writing: Setting the Record Straight.** What are the key times responsive writing is needed? What are the reasons a responsive piece of writing would be created? Why send a letter to the editor? Why use web responses? (Think back to the eBook and why it is important to get involved with your customers who are online and active. What are guest editorials? How can they benefit a company in a time when responsive writing is needed?)
- **Chapter 13: Crisis Communications and Official Statements.** What needs to be done when a crisis hits? What materials need to be written? Why are they important? What is a crisis media plan?
- **Chapter 14: Program Writing: Selling Your Concept to the Client.** This information relates well to what was written in *Strategic Public Relations* but it is a good, concise review of the in-depth content that *Strategic Public Relations* has. Notably, list and observe the structures of a PR program/plan.

### NOTES



## VII. SAMPLE QUESTION ANSWERS:

Please see the following answers to the sample questions provided. A brief explanation was given for each answer and why the other options were incorrect. If you didn't do as well as you thought you would have, please consider re-reading the books or supplementary readings as the sample questions were drawn directly from them.

1. *D.* Reason being: no PR campaign is guaranteed success, regardless of the lengths a company may go to in order to ensure that it is. The other three are definitely reasons to advocate for the use of strategic PR, and can be found in the introduction of **Strategic Public Relations**.
2. *E.* All of the above can be considered a target audience. Depending on the company, mission statement, etc., target audiences can include anyone and everyone who has a stake in the company's success. In **Strategic Public Relations**, these groups are the sample company's (Hunsk Motorcycles) target market because as a PR group or firm, your target market includes everyone who has concern for the company's wellbeing and operations.
3. *C.* According to the authors, this is perhaps the most important benefit of doing PR in-house. While the first two answers can apply as a benefit of in-house PR, the last option, D, should definitely not be considered a benefit. Unless you hire a PR professional internally and have them on your in-house team, and unless they have years and years of experience and networking, a PR agency is bound to have more contacts than your in house team; they do PR 5 days a week, and for a number of other companies. As such, they should have a longer list of contacts than your in-house team. Moreover, that PR agency may have more insight into other opportunities from activities they engaging in on behalf of other clients.
4. *B.* You ought to make it *very* easy for people to contact you! Consumers love to get involved and give their opinions, and they especially love it more when they can give it directly to you. Encourage people to get in touch with you, and make it easy. Also be sure to reply to fans or consumers when contacted.
5. *B.* *The birth of a brand is achieved with publicity, not advertising.* Read the chapter on publicity from the **22 Immutable Laws of Branding** if you answered false.

## **VIII. FAQ – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

Have more questions or need more information? Please see our **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)** section on the Business Training Institute website here:

[PublicRelationsCertificate.com/Frequent-Questions](http://PublicRelationsCertificate.com/Frequent-Questions).

You can also get in touch with the Business Training Institute team over email at [Team@BusinessTraining.com](mailto:Team@BusinessTraining.com), or by phone, and through our ClickAndChat tool, accessible from our homepage: [PublicRelationsCertificate.com](http://PublicRelationsCertificate.com)

Lastly, be sure to use your login and password to access the student area on the Business Training Institute's homepage. Click on the Student Login link from the homepage and you will be taken to your member area. Download the Public Relations Book and the Study Guide linked to there to find the book reviews. These book reviews will assist you as you read through the required texts.

Thanks for joining The Business Training Institute. Please let us know if you have any questions.

### **-The Business Training Institute Team**

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