

# Effect of E-Marketing Adoption on Brand Engagement Building of Sme's in Osun State.

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**ABSTRACT:** This research examines the effect of E-marketing adoption on brand engagement building of Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in Ede North Local Government area in Osun state. This research provided answers to question like: what is the effect of E-marketing adoption on brand engagement of SMEs in Ede North Local Government area in Osun state? What is the attitude of business owners in Ede North Local Government area in Osun state towards e-marketing adoption? How does external pressure influence brand engagement? The research was conducted through data gathering. Data was collected from a sample of one hundred and twenty four respondents through the use of questionnaire which contained questions that capture the research questions and the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The data was analyzed using multiple regression and t-test techniques. Findings showed that E-marketing adoption by SMEs has a significant effect on brand engagement. It is concluded that SMEs should employ E-marketing effectively so as to improve their marketing strategies, increase their market share and enlarge their customer base.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of technology, the internet has come a long way within a very short time, a mainstream business tool that has transformed business activities. Marketing has always been an essential factor in business success without the ability to identify customers and convince them to purchase the product and service being offered business would not survive. Recent advancements in technology have given rise to new opportunities to engage customers through the use of electronic marketing (E-marketing) (Bolos, et al., 2016).

As it's typical with emerging management areas, there has been extensive discussion in the

business press and academic literature about how e-business and the internet are changing marketing practices. Speculation initially suggested that those developments would lead to a dramatic transformation of marketing, and thus would lead to superior business performance. This optimism subsequently led to the dot.com boom and bust of 1990 since then the potential impact of information technology (IT) has been reevaluated, leading to the realization that it can potentially transform marketing. Globally and their application have had a significant impact on business at all different level in Organizations (Iansiti and Lakhani, 2014).

E-marketing plays an important role in supporting and enhancing business and marketing practices. For example, the recent study of B2 firms by Day and Bens (2005) concluded that while leading companies were using e-marketing to extend their competitive advantages, the transformation impact on marketing practices was modest. Instead the major impact of e-marketing was to complement traditional marketing channels (Caldwell, Harland, Powell and Zheng, 2013).

Several definitions have been presented for online marketing (e-marketing) as an interactive process, when using information technologies long term relations between the company and customers are developed, in the broad sense, marketing comprises strategies and tactic planning process which are to meet customers' needs and bring maximum profit.

Growth in the adoption of e-marketing has been one of the most significant changes to the world economy since the end of the 1980s (Tan et al., 2013). The adoption and development of ICT of nations of the world can be regarded as an important factor in the economic growth and development and there is a rising indication their Nigeria has realized the crucial roles of technology, leading to steady growth of internet users in Nigeria since 2013. The Nigerian Communication

Commission (NCC) in its 2018 report revealed that internet users increased from about 50 million users to 93 millions. However, engaging customers consistently is a continuing challenges for companies that sell online (Mutahar, et al., 2018).

Brand engagement is an act of maintaining arousing by intensive feelings and ration attachment between brand and customer. Generally brand engagement has a positive influence on customers purchase intension and the way brand connect to its consumer via a line of touch points that is sequence list of potential ways the brand makes one with the individual, through e-marketing. New economy era marked by the application of information technology in minimize the economy application of e-marketing required is development model of web-based business applications for small and medium enterprise (SMEs) in order to increase competitive advantage. (Caldwell, et al., 2013).

It is unfortunate, most small business does not have the budget or luxury to run several concurrent campaigns. E-marketing is an efficient way to ensure that small business, can reach out to their customers, grow their customer base, and build their reputation. Benefit of e-marketing to SMEs are; building of strong customers relationship, developing unique brand and e-marketing can be engage effectively and effeciently to one's tune and budget (Gupta, et al., 2013).

Brand engagement has several benefits to businesses; it targets all areas of connecting customers beyond brand awareness. It increase brand awareness and loyalty, organizations has some opportunities to retain its customers with constant positive reactions to new offerings. Brand engagement improves sales turnover which promote business success (Gupta, et al., 2013).

Many opportunities lies in the adoption and integration of e-marketing by SMEs with the constant change in the need of SMEs due to the dynamic nature of the business environment in Osun State, Nigeria. The adoption of e-marketing allows small business to compete efficiently and build brand engagement successful locally and internationally.

## **II. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Despite several interventions by the government and non-governmental organizations concerning the prospects of internet marketing in Nigeria, e - marketing is still compassed with several challenges, especially on brand engagement of small businesses. Part of these challenges are; dependability on technology, security, privacy

issues, maintenance costs due to constantly evolving environment, higher transparency of pricing and increased price competition, worldwide competition through globalization, low connection speed, intangibility, limited face to face contact, inability of customers to feel the product before making purchase, working under different international legal and policies issues which are in most cases not harmonized, etc.

However, with all the problems above which plaque the SME sub-sector in Nigeria, there is need for a good marketing skill. This is due to the fact that the world has become a global village. The appearance on the scene of the internet, especially Web 2.0, and the social networks is challenging the levels of power and influence of the agents who build brand image.

Unfortunately, many companies are clearly still in denial and failing to adopt pro-active strategies for an internet presence. Some earmark a percentage of their communications investment for the internet, but with no overall idea of what the medium can offer them, or of how a web presence must be integrated with other brand communications. Too many companies are still trying to control public network conversations on their brands, and too few are dedicating (Gupta, et al., 2013).

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Importance Of Smes To The Economy**

Small Scale Enterprise (SMEs) contributes greatly to the economy through entrepreneurship activities. The need to focus on small scale industry became important in Nigeria because it was a means of ensuring self-independence, job creation, and import substitution, effective and efficient utilization of local raw materials. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria contribute to employment and a path to entrepreneurship. The focus of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has shifted from providing only social goods but as a vehicle to entrepreneurship. Therefore, it serves as a source of job creation and economic growth. This may well be the reason policy makers in Nigeria pay attention to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In recognition of the crucial role SMEs play in economic growth and development, the Bank of Industry generated over sixty percent (60%) of the entire loans it granted in 2004 to SMEs, the relatively high default rate notwithstanding. The Managing Director of the Bank of Industry, Also confirmed twenty nine (29) of the 594 loan applications received by the bank since 2001 received approval adding that N20.8

million or 19.1 percent of the total approved loans went to the SME sub-sector. The Bank of Industry is also intensifying efforts to source cheaper funds from Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) such as the African Development Bank (ADB), African Export-Import Bank, European Development Bank, etc so as to on-lend to SMEs at concessionary rates and thus maximize their value addition.

SMEs have no doubt been indeed recognized as the main engine of economic growth and development, a major variable for promoting private sector, development and partnership. Various governments, development agencies and experts as well as multilateral institutions do appreciate this fact such that they positively respond to any occasion and situations, which could permit their contributing to or creating opportunities for promoting the lot of SMEs.

In recognition of the crucial roles played by SMEs with respect to economic growth and development, succeeding governments in Nigeria had various initiatives aimed at promoting the course of SMEs in the country (Brodie, et al., 2007).

### **Concept of E-Marketing**

There are many authors with various points of views as regard the definition of E marketing: E marketing is a process of marketing company product using digital technologies to determine the consumer preference. E marketing encompasses of all the business activities conducted through the use internet and other interactive technologies with the aim of attracting new business or retaining current development and brand identity.

E-marketing is growing drastically and has a large amount of impact on customers and business market behavior. As a result of increase in the sizes of the most firms, E marketing is seen as new reform business practice which is concerned with the promotion of goods and services, communicate an idea through online marketing and other electronic means (Ahmed, 2006).

E-marketing has helped the organization in building strong relationship with their buyers, thus making the buyers more loyal to the brand and support in increasing their market position (Avkiran, 2014).

E-marketing is much more than the internet. It takes in other techniques such as customer relationship management, organization resource planning and supply chain management (Albadvi and Koosha, 2011).

### **Brand Engagement and E-Marketing In SMEs**

Branding is not entirely new to SMEs, It's the life wire to maintain adequate surviving strategies. The contribution of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is considered main sustenance of the economy because of their capacity in enhancing the economy output and enhance human welfare.

The relationship between branding and packaging as exemplified by Stanton and Herbst (2005) are: Branding and packaging are both tools used by marketer as strategies to achieve their aims and objectives. The major relationship are branding is usually on package, for example Milo, the leather or container that the content is put on is called package. As a result of this, branding and packaging performs similar functions which are: They both helps in product identification; Changing a brand name as well as packaging help in rejuvenating a product at a very low cost; They serves as a sales appeal; Attractive package and a good brand name build corporate image.

So far, a company's marketing success could depend on its ability to understand and manage its product there is the need for them to manage their brand. The brand management of the product could determine the success or failure of a company therefore, it is essential for the company to predict the shape of its product even before it is been introduced to the market.

It should be noted that, customer is a key element in the success of a business. Therefore, satisfying customers need at profitable level will develop the company and enhance better performance in a market (Cronje, DuToit and Motlatla, 2004).

### **Generic Barriers to the Adoption Of E-Marketing By SMEs**

From the literature, several pro-active and reactive drivers have been identified as motivations for SMEs to adopt the internet and e-marketing activities. Proactive reasons include the chance to eliminate competitive disadvantages of SMEs. The reactive reasons include increased competition from local competitors as well as larger firms, shrinkage in domestic markets, the fear of competitive disadvantage, as well as simply jumping on the bandwagon. Barriers to e-marketing adoption for SMEs these include the impact of the generic SME. This backdrop necessitates that SMEs should integrate Internet-driven marketing principles such as e-marketing into their mainstream business practices. (Coviello, Brodie, Brookes & Palmer, 2004)

The user interface reduces system evaluation and lessens the intention to adopt specific Internet technologies asserts that perceived ease of use has direct and positive impact on perceived usefulness of e-marketing technology since improvements in technology ease of use assist in bringing about positive performance and ultimately defined perceived usefulness. Moreover, underscore that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use will have significant effects on the adoption of Internet technology by SMEs. Organizations will adopt technologies that are attuned to their line of business but such technologies have to offer relative advantages.

The information from users to non-users can positively contribute to the adoption of Internet technologies. There is no psychological or technological acceptance process that is not shaped to some extent by culture". National culture and organizational culture are a driving force behind the acceptance and implementation levels of electronic marketing among SMEs. (Coviello , Brodie , Brookes & Palmer, 2004)

The adoption of e-marketing is also driven by industry type. In this regard, the public, education and charity organizations have been identified as being the lowest adopters of Internet technology. A study conducted by professor also revealed that global adoption of e-marketing by SMEs has been the slowest in the agricultural sector. These findings contradict earlier research findings of who found that no significant relationship exists between industry sector and adoption of e-marketing.

It is suggested that after the initial e-marketing adoption phase, external readiness plays an essential role upon the business fully realizing the benefits of the technology. The preparedness of

customers and business partners to allow an electronic conduct of marketing activities significantly influences the institutionalization of the Internet marketing concept among SMEs.

#### IV RESEARCH METHOD

Quantitative data analysis was adopted for this study. The scope of this research covers Ede North local government of Osun state, Nigeria. Business owners in the areas were randomly selected to achieve the objectives of the study. Data was collected through the primary method of field survey of SME's. A questionnaire using 4 point likert scale with personal interview was used due to time constraints. In carrying out this research, total samples of 124 respondents were taken from a total population of 250 within the study area. This represents about 84.33% of the total number of small and medium scale business within the study area, this is in conformity with random sampling method of Marcor and Raosoft sample size calculator.

#### V. DATA ANALYSIS

##### Description of Data

Out of the 124 respondents, 64 were female and 60 were males as shown in Figure 1. The age of the interviewee were grouped into three which were 18-25, 26-30 and 30- above with frequency of 36, 45 and 43 respectively. This thus implies that majority of the respondents are still in their youthful age, which are generally characterized as computer age range, who are more versatile and current with E-services. From Figure (1a-b), it was observed that the age range of the correspondents was nearly symmetric or normally distributed.

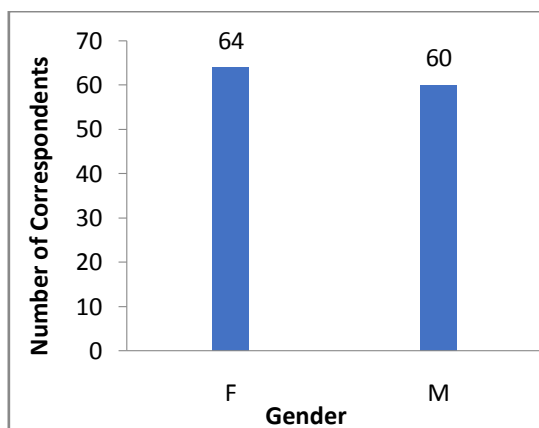


Fig 1(a)

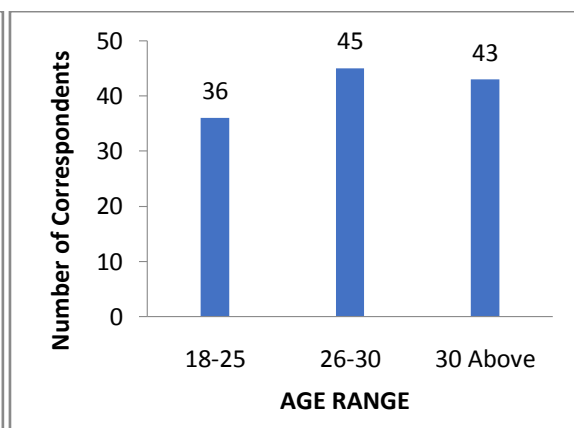


Fig 1(b)

**Data Analysis And Interpretations**

Regression analysis and t-Test via SPSS 20.0 was used to test the research hypothesis and analyze the dependent and independent variables.

**Hypothesis One**

To determine the significance impact Perceived use of E-marketing on Brand Engagements, two test hypotheses were set, which are;

**H0: There is no significant impact of Perceived use of E-marketing on Brand Engagements;**

$$\mu_{\text{Perceived use of E-marketing}} \neq \mu_{\text{Brand Engagements}}$$

**H1: There is significant impact of Perceived use of E-marketing on Brand Engagements;**

$$\mu_{\text{Perceived use of E-marketing}} = \mu_{\text{Brand Engagements}}$$

For testing for the overall significance, a multiple regression analysis and t-tests were done, the results are as shown in Table 1-3

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Standard Error
1	0.426382255	0.181801827	0.175095285		0.48028163

Table 1 presents the model summary. It shows that the correlation coefficient R is 0.426 (i.e. r = 0.426) which indicates that there exists a fairly linear relationship between Brand Engagement by SMEs (dependent variable i.e. the variable being predicted) and Perceived use of E-marketing

(independent variable). It is also crystal clear from the Table 1 that the r<sup>2</sup> which is the coefficient of determination is 0.182 approximately 18.2%. This implies that 18.2% of Brand engagement by SMEs can be accounted for by Perceived use of E-marketing.

**Table 2: Anova**

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	6.25304453	6.25304453	27.10813062	0.0007
Residual	122	28.14179418	0.230670444		
Total	123	34.39483871			

Table 2 presents ANOVA table. The F-statistic as shown from the table above is significant since the ANOVA significance of .00007 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, thus the model is fit. Hence the null hypothesis (Perceived use of E-marketing has no significant impact on Brand Engagement of SMEs operators in Osun

State) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Perceived use of E-marketing has significant impact on Brand Engagement of SMEs operators in Osun State) is accepted. Thus, Table 2 shows that Perceived use of E-marketing has significant impact on Brand Engagement of SMEs operators in Osun State.

**Table 3: T-test**

Variables	Perceived use of E-marketing	Brand Engagement
Mean	3.393548387	3.239919355
Variance	0.279632835	0.296137392
Observations	124	124
Pearson Correlation	0.426382255	
df	123	
t Stat	2.976335801	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.003513403	
t Critical two-tail	1.97943866	

It can be observed from Table 3, that t-score value of 2.976 does exceeds the critical value of t, 1.979, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Perceived use of E-marketing has a significant impact on Brand Engagement. The probability of getting an observed difference between Perceived use of E-marketing and Brand Engagement of 0.154 or greater if the null hypothesis is true is 0.0035.

**Hypothesis Two**

To determine the significance impact of Attitude on Perceived Used of E-Marketing, two test hypotheses were set, which are;

**H0: There is no significant impact of Attitude on Perceived Used of E-Marketing;**

$$\mu_{\text{Attitude}} \neq \mu_{\text{E-Perceived Used of E-Marketing}}$$

**H1: There is significant impact of Attitude on Perceived Used of E-Marketing;**

$$\mu_{\text{Attitude}} = \mu_{\text{E-Perceived Used of E-Marketing}}$$

For testing for the overall significance, a multiple regression analysis and t-tests were done, the results are as shown in Table 4-6

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error
1	0.355413292	0.126318608	0.119157286	0.420658981

Table 4 presents the model summary. It shows that the correlation coefficient r is 0.355 (i.e. r = 0.355) which indicates that there exists a non-linear relationship between Perceived Use of E-Marketing by SMEs (dependent variable i.e. the variable being predicted) and Attitude (independent variable). It is

also crystal clear from the Table 4 that the r<sup>2</sup> which is the coefficient of determination is 0.126 approximately 12.6%. This implies that 12.6% of Perceived Use of E-Marketing by SMEs can be accounted for by Attitude.

**Table 5: Anova**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	3.121292065	3.121292065	17.63900476	0.055
Residual	122	21.58838535	0.176953978		
Total	123	24.70967742			

Table 5 presents ANOVA table. The F-statistic as shown from the table above is significant since the ANOVA significance of .0055 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, thus the model is fit. Hence the null hypothesis (Attitude has no significant impact on Perceived Use of E-Marketing by SMEs operators in Osun State) is

accepted and the alternate hypothesis (Attitude has significant impact on Perceived Use of E-Marketing by SMEs operators) is rejected. Thus, Table 5 shows that Attitude has no significant impact on E-marketing Adoption by SMEs operators in Osun State.

**Table 6: T-test**

	ATTITUDE	E-Marketing Adoption
Mean	3.451612903	3.393548387
Variance	0.200891686	0.279632835
Observations	124	124
Pearson Correlation	0.355413292	
df	123	
t Stat	1.157472746	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.249322036	
t Critical two-tail	1.97943866	

It can be observed from Table 6, that t-score value of 1.157 does not exceed the critical value of t, 1.979, we thus fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Attitude has no significant impact on Perceived use of E-marketing. The probability of getting an observed difference between Attitude and Perceived use of E-marketing of 0.058 or greater if the null hypothesis is true is 0.2493.

**Hypothesis Three**

To determine the significance impact of External Pressure on Brand Engagements, two test hypotheses were set, which are;

**H0: There is no significant impact of External Pressure on Brand Engagements;**

$$\mu_{\text{External Pressure}} \neq \mu_{\text{Brand Engagements}}$$

**H1: There is significant impact of External Pressure on Brand Engagements;**

$$\mu_{\text{External Pressure}} \neq \mu_{\text{Brand Engagements}}$$

For testing for the overall significance, a multiple regression analysis and t-tests were done, the results are as shown in Table 7-9.

**Table 7: Model Summary**

Model	Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Standard Error
1	0.372806728	0.138984856	0.131927355		0.616039861

Table 7 presents the model summary. It shows that the correlation coefficient r is 0.373 (i.e. R= 0.373) indicates that there exists a non-linear relationship between Brand Engagements (dependent variable i.e. the variable being predicted) and External Pressure (independent

variable). It is also crystal clear from the Table 7 that the R<sup>2</sup> which is the coefficient of determination is 0.139 approximately 13.9%. This implies that 13.9% of Brand engagement by SMEs can be accounted for by External Pressure.

**Table 8: Anova**

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
<b>Regression</b>	1	7.473674027	7.473674027	19.69321051	0.02
<b>Residual</b>	122	46.29962346	0.37950511		
<b>Total</b>	123	53.77329749			

Table 8 presents ANOVA table. The F-statistic as shown from the table above is significant since the ANOVA significance of 0.002 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, thus the model is fit. Hence the null hypothesis (External Pressure has no significant impact on Brand Engagements)

is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (External Pressure has significant impact on Brand Engagements) is accepted. Thus, Table 8 shows that External Pressure has significant impact on Brand Engagements SMEs operators in Osun State.

**Table 9: T-test**

	EXTERNAL PRESSURE	BRAND ENGAGEMENT
<b>Mean</b>	2.932795699	3.239919355
<b>Variance</b>	0.43718128	0.296137392
<b>Observations</b>	124	124
<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	0.372806728	
<b>df</b>	123	
<b>t Stat</b>	-5.015109226	
<b>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</b>	1.80446E-06	
<b>t Critical two-tail</b>	1.97943866	

It can be observed from Table 9, that t-score value of -5.015 does exceed the critical value of t, -1.979, we thus reject the null hypothesis and conclude that External Pressure has significant impact on Brand Engagements. The probability of getting an observed difference between Attitude and E-marketing of -0.3071 or greater if the null hypothesis is true is 1.805.

## VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This research empirically examines the effect of Perceived use of E-marketing on brand engagement building SMEs in Ede North local government areas in Osun state. Shreds of evidence show how Perceived use of E-marketing, Attitude towards E-marketing and External Pressure affects Brand Engagements of SMEs, especially small and medium businesses in the study area in Osun State, Nigeria.

From Table 1-3, the result of Regression of analysis and t-test on Hypothesis test one (1) show that there is a significant and fairly positive linear relationship between Perceived use of E-marketing and Brand Engagements among SMEs in both Ede North local government, Osun State ( $R=0.426$ ,  $t=3.976$ ,  $df=123$ ,  $p=0.249$ ). This effect can be explained on the basis that uses of E-marketing tools such as E-mails, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instragram, Website advertising etc., serve as a cheap means of communication through which these SMEs project their brands to targeted customers; obtain and update information on their brands; upgrade their brands to attract more customers and retain old one.

From Table 4-6, the result of Regression of analysis and t-test on Hypothesis test two (2) show that there is an insignificant and non-linear relationship between Attitude and Perceived Use of E-marketing among SMEs in Ede North local government areas in Osun State ( $R=0.355$ ,  $t=1.15$ ,  $df=123$ ,  $p=0.249$ ). This effect can be explained on the basis that individual beliefs or approach by SMEs owners does not affect the adoption of E-marketing by their firms in advertising their brands.

From Table 7-9, the result of Regression of analysis and t-test on Hypothesis test three (3) show that there is an significant and non-linear relationship between External Pressure and Brand Engagement among SMEs in Ede North local government areas in Osun State ( $R=0.373$ ,  $t=-5.015$ ,  $df=123$ ,  $p=1.805$ ). This effect can be explained on the basis that SME's owners can better engage their customers with their brands when customer trust are gained, customer experience are constantly improved, adequate

customer interaction and their product are up to industrial standards.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This research examines the effect to E-marketing adoption on brand engagement building of SME's in Ede North Local Government area of Osun state. Three hypothesis was formulated to achieve this objective. The results obtained from the regression and T-test analysis indicates that perceived use of E-marketing and external pressure have a significant effect on brand engagement by SME's owners. While attitude of SME's owners towards E-marketing have no significant effect on their perceived use of E-marketing. It is thus concluded that adoption of E-marketing will significantly improve engagement of brand with customers and other users of the brand.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Precisely based on the finding, the study recommends that:

- i. Management should put more effort into E-marketing as this tool would have a great impact on their sales performance. They should adopt it as a strategy through which customer patronage can be attracted.
- ii. It is also important that Small, medium enterprises employ E-marketing effectively so as to widen their market share. Efforts should be made to ensure that the tool captures the right audience.

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