



Enhancing the People Experience for the Hybrid Workplace

A white paper with
Capgemini

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Hybrid working has fundamentally changed the relationship between organizations and their employees, placing new challenges on organizations' ability to recruit and get the most from their personnel. This paper aims to assist executives in major enterprises in identifying the mechanisms and success factors for enhancing the people experience in these new hybrid environments through combinations of process, technology, and operations.

The people experience is “a holistic approach to affecting how people feel about an organization”. It expands on employee experience to take into account work/life balance and take into consideration how people’s work circumstances may impact life outside of their jobs. While the HR organization has an important role to play in the people experience, delivering it requires a holistic approach within the daily work environment across the enterprise.

This paper is based on interviews with 1,000 HR leaders, conversations with NelsonHall clients, and findings within NelsonHall projects. It addresses:

- The key people experience challenges faced by organizations operating in hybrid environments
- The key actions required to improve the people experience in these new environments at the critical moments that matter
- The necessity of understanding employee expectations and mechanisms for doing so
- Achieving exceptional recruitment and onboarding experiences
- The importance of learning & development and developing continuous personalized learning experiences and benefits
- The key factors in delivering seamless processes and employee support in the daily work environment
- The importance of making adjustments to manager and co-worker interaction
- The potential role of third parties in delivering an enhanced people experience
- The success factors for delivering superior people experience in a hybrid working environment.

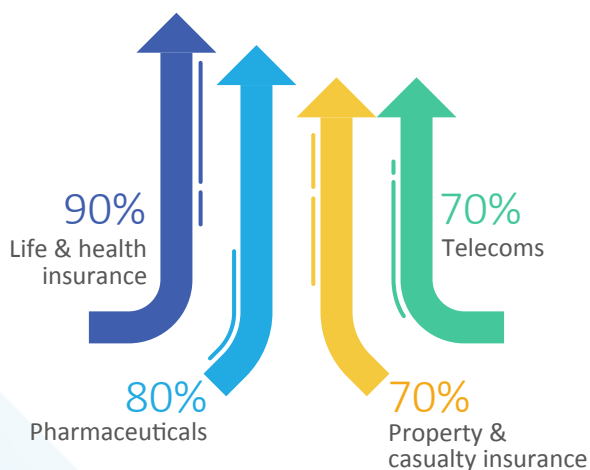
Where percentages are shown within an infographic, they indicate the proportions of HR leaders that perceive the characteristic to be "highly important".

This white paper was developed in collaboration with Capgemini subject matter experts.

The Need to Address "Moments that Matter"

The recent pandemic initiated a huge increase in remote working, and enterprises are finding employees now seeking a more flexible lifestyle and reluctant to return to the office full-time. The result has been the widespread adoption of hybrid working, with most enterprises adopting hybrid working to a significant extent.

Services sectors are much better placed to adopt hybrid working than product-driven organizations and the sectors with particularly high adoption of hybrid working are



The move to hybrid working has a major impact on how enterprises need to interact with their employees, and 72% of enterprises perceive a strong need to improve the people experience within their organizations due to hybrid & remote working.

Indeed, enhancing the people experience is a growing element of boardroom strategies for enterprise performance and as part of human-centered corporate visions.

However, improving the people experience within an enterprise requires a fundamental rethink of people processes both individually and end-to-end. While enterprises will want to address individual HR pain points, and 79% of HR leaders identify a need to do so, this should be done within the context of a wider and more fundamental redesign of the people experience. Indeed, the majority of HR leaders identify a strong need to reimagine their HR operating models as a result of the introduction of hybrid and remote working.



Within the people experience are particular moments that matter for individual employees. These include:

- The recruitment experience
- The onboarding experience
- The learning and career development experience
- Changes in personal circumstances
- The daily work environment
- Interactions with managers and co-workers.

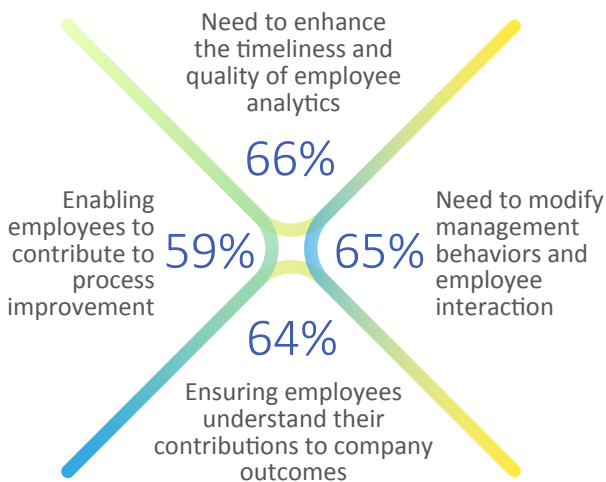
Overall, it is important to elevate the people experience and boost engagement to attract and retain top talent, supporting hybrid working by empowering managers with predictive insights and enabling employees to own their data and career paths.

The remainder of this paper will analyze enhancing the people experience for each of these "moments".

Understanding Workforce Expectations

Key elements in reinventing and developing the people experience in hybrid environments are providing employees with clear roles and a feeling that they are contributing, listening to employees, and modifying management behaviors and employee interactions accordingly.

Highly important to address in a hybrid work environment:



This includes making employee satisfaction a higher priority for senior management and improving the HR skills of middle managers who interact with employees daily.

Internal organizational disconnects can lead to higher turnover and quiet quitting, with what employees want and what managers think they want sometimes misaligned. Removing these disconnects requires more continuous listening to employees via, for example, ongoing sentiment analysis surveys and listening events, not just quarterly or yearly performance reviews.

Listening and employee analytics are key to creating more flexible employee policies and practices to boost hiring, engagement, and retention. This includes gathering employee feedback to drive key workplace policy-shaping decisions, enhance total rewards and wellness, increase engagement and retention, support employee career and personal aspirations, and enable improved work-life balance.

However, while it is important to listen to employees continuously, it is also important to enhance the organization's ability to improve continuously in response to this feedback and to communicate these developments to employees acknowledging their input and involvement. Most HR leaders recognize that enabling employees to contribute to process improvement is highly important in establishing a world-class people experience in a hybrid working environment.

While analytics enables access to insights for leaders and front-line managers for more informed, real-time decision-making and speed and agility in reacting to emerging trends, analytics also has a key role to play in supporting employees, for example, in engaging users with predictive and prescriptive, data-driven insights and recommendations across their career journeys.

Indeed, next generation workforce management solutions are increasingly employee-centric, incorporating cognitive technology to continuously augment, personalize, guide, support, and engage employees along their journeys. They are increasingly advancing toward AI and ML-enabled 'experience platforms' designed to augment and support users for enhanced personal and HR outcomes. Two-way employee communication functionality is a priority, leveraging technology for effective communication, information sharing, and community building with employee pulse surveys increasingly important.

The Recruitment Experience- Achieving Optimum Staffing Levels & Scalability

The recruitment experience is critical, with candidates needing to perceive:



The organization's values match their own



The role will provide job satisfaction and the desired career development opportunities



The organization will be flexible in offering an appropriate level of hybrid working.

The pandemic (i.e., shrinking of the working-age population globally) has enhanced the importance of these factors, as longer-term planning to attract and retain GenZs to replace baby boomers is a priority for many organizations to offset the general lengthening of the hiring process and global talent shortage. The demand versus supply gap will remain with enterprises struggling to skill, reskill, or upskill at the pace required. Accordingly, the people promise, the promise indicating what an organization will deliver to employees to secure their commitment and loyalty, and employer branding are critical in assisting the organization to differentiate and outperform other organizations in attracting external candidates. For example, a culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging tends to be a key consideration for the younger generations. Yet, in a recent NelsonHall study, 92% of HR leaders indicated this as requiring significant improvement within their organizations.

Traditionally separated, the permanent recruitment, contingent recruitment, and training functions are growing ever closer, focusing on securing in-demand skillsets via buying, borrowing, or building talent as enterprises increasingly shift towards total talent strategies.

This requires a change in organization and process, and 79% of recruitment leaders participating in a recent NelsonHall study indicated that recruitment transformation is planned within the next 24 months, with improved scalability, candidate experience, quality of hire, and stakeholder satisfaction as the key transformational outcomes sought. As part of these initiatives, many organizations are creating their own talent marketplaces to support finding top talent.

Despite the potential shortage of candidates, it is important to be selective and recruit employees well-suited to the role and the company. Accordingly, the use of persona mapping and cultural assessments, together with predictive and prescriptive analytics, has a role in supporting candidate quality and employee retention goals.

As elsewhere in HR, the recruitment process is becoming increasingly digital. While organizations have become familiar with the use of e-documents, video interviewing, digital events, digital assessments, automated screening, digital onboarding, and mobile-enabled platforms to speed up hiring, the arrival of generative AI is adding a major new dimension. Machine learning is already widely used to analyze resumés for key skills and experience; generative AI now allows the capabilities of candidates to be automatically summarized for recruiters.

At the same time, economic instability will likely prevail until at least 2025, creating business uncertainty and requiring organizations to adapt their staffing levels at short notice.

Creating Exceptional Onboarding Experiences

The onboarding experience is critical in making a positive impactful start to the employee's career journey with an organization and forming an employee's impressions of an organization.

The keys to a successful onboarding experience include:



Automating basic administrative tasks and workplace provisioning, preferably in advance of the joiner's start date

Providing clear expectations of the employee



Providing onboarding training in a timely manner.

Speed and ease of carrying out these tasks are fundamental. Accordingly, enterprises are now using employee experience portals, for example, Microsoft Viva, to act as a single point of entry to the organization which helps with onboarding and subsequently ongoing daily work. Such portals can be used to guide employees through onboarding giving access to the right content, people, and tools from their PC or smartphone.

Automation and orchestration are also used to improve the onboarding process and automate the joiner, leaver, and mover process. This includes the use of Microsoft Intune and Autopilot to enable auto-provisioning, while newer technologies such as generative AI can be used to develop personalized onboarding plans.

DEM, digital experience monitoring, tools and virtual agents are also used to improve employee onboarding. For example, when a user logs into their device for the first time, a message is sent to the user.

This can be used to check if everything is O.K. and the laptop is correctly configured and provide help if required. This effectively resolves issues proactively before the end user even needs to connect with the service desk on day one.

Many learning platforms have built-in onboarding modules geared for a mix of multi-generational new hires, requiring a multi-modal and multi-layered approach to onboarding, with an element of personalization. Using a mix of modalities – videos (e.g., welcome by the CEO, employee stories), animation, gamification, podcasts, and nanolearning – addresses the preferred learning styles of the various generations.

Day One onboarding often covers mandatory compliance training, which all new hires must undertake, so learning journeys require learning content to be consumed in a specific order (say modules 1 to 10) and to a deadline, before progressing (and given access) to Day Two content. Driving the engagement to complete the learning is vital for “must-do” training elements and more social elements, for example, follow-up 1-to-1s to check sentiment and progress with the line manager, and peer group interactions are used to drive employee engagement.

The integration of the Metaverse into the onboarding process represents an exciting frontier for organizations seeking to optimize the employee experience. By utilizing immersive and interactive virtual environments, companies can create a more engaging and effective onboarding experience, enabling new employees to acclimatize quickly, develop essential skills, and form a strong connection with the organization from the start. As the business landscape continues to evolve, leveraging innovative technologies like the Metaverse will undoubtedly become a vital aspect of successful onboarding practices.

To tackle the shortage of talent, organizations must put effort into onboarding to ensure all new hires have a positive onboarding experience, so that they move onto the next phase of their career journeys highly motivated and engaged to learn more, upskill, embrace, and perform well.

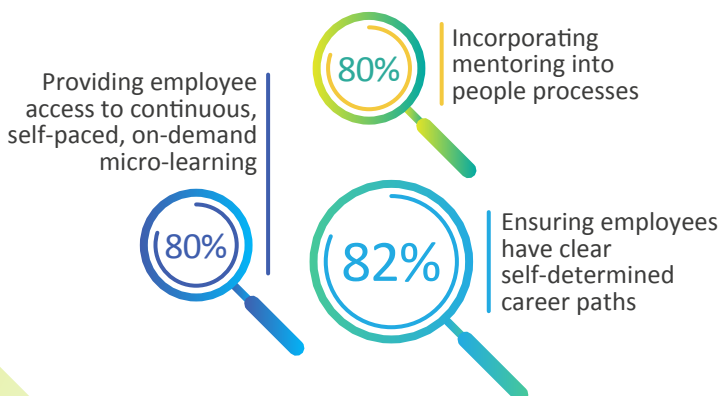
Learning & Development – Providing A Continuous Learning Experience

The impact of The Great Resignation and quiet quitting on increased employee turnover is focusing enterprises on improving learner engagement and satisfaction, increasing the adoption rate of learning, and accelerating the learner time to competence. This is resulting in a shift from focusing on the learning experience in isolation to learning as part of a holistic talent or people experience.

Accordingly, with the move to hybrid working strengthening these requirements, approaches to learning need to change, and 93% of enterprises purchasing third-party learning services are undertaking or planning learning transformation. Irrespective of their learning maturity, organizations' priorities will continue to focus on skilling/reskilling/upskilling, personalizing the learning experience, and creating engaging digital content.

However, learning and development is about more than presenting learning opportunities. Learning needs to be persona- and role-based and be viewed by the employee as a key mechanism for personal advancement. Following this up with targeted career opportunities and individual development is important to achieve “chosen retention” and reduce quiet quitting. HR leaders note that it is important to offer and communicate better promotion opportunities to chosen employees and aim to fill a greater proportion of senior roles within the organization rather than via external recruitment.

HR leaders identify these learning & development factors that strongly increase in importance in hybrid and remote working environments:



These same factors are highly important in establishing a world-class people experience in a hybrid working environment.

Organizations should emphasize a culture of lifelong learning, enabling learners/employees to skill/upskill/reskill on their terms via self-service skilling while also meeting wider business needs via compulsory/mandatory learning. Generative AI has a key role to play here in tailoring learning paths to individual employees' needs by adaptive creation of learning paths based on skills, experiences, and career goals. There is also more adoption of AI in OCM to target training by persona, track sentiment through surveys, and increase digital adoption across the workplace.

A consumerized approach within the flow of work is essential. Learning should be offered, delivered, and monitored through a single interface integrated into the employee's standard working environment. Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Viva are increasingly used to embed learning in the flow of work. Where appropriate, organizations are also introducing techniques such as gamification, simulations, and VR to enhance the learning experience.

Social learning is also important with a rise in the use of chat, content sharing, forums, communities, coaching, mentoring, and live events into the learning mix, with personalized learning increasingly collaborative and social in nature. More timely, at-the-point-of-need feedback is being given to learners from managers and peers on an ongoing basis to encourage them to tweak their newly-learned skills.

An increasing focus on recognition and rewards is an important element in encouraging learning adoption, as are bite-sized real-time learning interventions, where needs for changes in behavior are identified. Badges and leaderboards add a fun element to recognition and engage learners in the short term, but learners also need long-term sustainable recognition and rewards to drive ongoing engagement. These recognitions then lead to rewards in the form of career-enhancing assignments or promotion.

The importance of the benefits function to HR and the wider enterprise has often been neglected and oversimplified in the past, largely focusing on physical health insurance. However, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis have changed the importance and scope of benefits considerably. Benefits are now an increasingly important strategic lever at the organizational level.

“The benefits package is a key element now in retention and in many cases is equally important as remuneration.”

| HR leader – healthcare sector

“The shift has been from a nice-to-have to an essential element of some employees' engagement with us.”

| HR leader – manufacturing sector

Indeed, the role of benefits has changed markedly between the start of the pandemic and today. Benefits have shifted from being "a nice-to-have" feature to an essential element of employee engagement and a key tool in employee welfare and retention. Organizations now typically offer a much wider and more flexible range of benefits beyond physical health benefits than previously, and there is an increased focus on measuring the impact of benefits on employee satisfaction and ensuring that benefits provide tangible value to employees.

In particular, the mental health of many employees has been severely impacted by the pandemic and the switch to work-from-home, while financial wellness is becoming a critical issue for some employees. Accordingly, rather than just providing financial support for physical ailments, it is increasingly common for organizations to alert their employees to potential wellness opportunities such as telehealth and mental health support.



Enterprises can also use Microsoft Viva Insights for well-being and utilizing insights to enact a more proactive approach to employee well-being, with intelligent well-being apps being used to suggest, for example, breaks, neck stretches, and eye exercises, adding to the overall people experience.

At the same time, enhanced benefits, such as financial wellness measures, help promote employee loyalty and increase recruitment and retention, with analytics important in understanding and optimizing benefits' impact and assessing benefits providers.

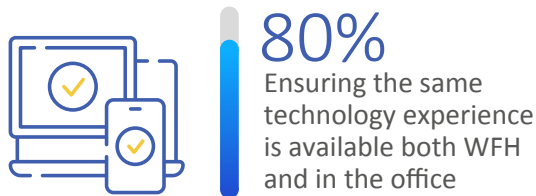
Self-service technology is also important, enterprises are starting to adopt People/Employee Experience Portals to improve accessibility and employee engagement with a goal of end-to-end touchless processing to reduce processing times and enhance the people experience.

The Daily Work Environment- Delivering Seamless Processes & Employee Support

Enterprises increasingly take a people-centric design approach to workplace services to drive a seamless daily work experience, embedding IT, HR, admin, and finance processes, within day-to-day operations.

IT issues arguably have the greatest negative impact on the daily work experience and employee productivity, so it is important that the employee portal provides a single point of access for IT and administrative support as well as employees' day-to-day operational working practices.

This involves deeper integration of IT systems. Fifty-nine percent of HR leaders perceive that seamless integration of HR systems and workplace systems increases in importance in a hybrid working environment and is highly important in establishing a world-class people experience in a hybrid working environment. Consistency of technology experience is highly important.



A key element is a unified omnichannel platform providing a single place for employees to access IT support and HR support, including through AI conversational virtual agents. This is typically integrated with Microsoft Teams.

Providing mobile-enabled self-service technology across all HR and support functions is regarded as highly important by 64% of HR leaders to establish a world-class people experience in a hybrid environment. Yet, current forms of enterprise mobile employee self-service are typically insufficient for the future working environment, with 81% of HR leaders perceiving that their enterprises need to enhance their mobile employee self-service due to the introduction of hybrid and remote working.

AI-enabled conversational chat solutions are particularly appropriate for multinational hybrid work environments since they:



- Facilitate borderless support and empower home workers
- Enable multilingual support
- Support 24x7 operations.

With the current wave of interest in generative AI, most organizations are exploring the concept of virtual assistants and co-pilots incorporating generative AI into employees' day-to-day tasks. Potential use cases being considered include:

- 01 Assisting trainees with conversation simulations and knowledge access during the learning process and new hires with QA & coaching
- 02 Assisting employees with knowledge retrieval, summarization, and next-step guidance
- 03 Assisting team leaders and line managers with reporting summarization and information extraction, and structuring
- 04 Assisting employees with organizational culture integration via branded interactive bots.

Workforce planning and scheduling for hourly, shift, and deskless workers has often been a pain point for employees. It can be alleviated by automated scheduling, absence management, and workforce and business forecasting/planning which can contribute significantly to the People Experience by allowing employees to easily choose and swap shifts. Integration with payroll to offer on-demand pay options is increasingly important as employees faced with a cost-of-living crisis need more flexible access to pay.

Enhancing Interaction with Managers and Co-Workers

Hybrid environments fundamentally change the nature of the relationships between employees and their managers and co-workers.

This changes the role of managers. They can no longer guide by demonstrating and paving the way. They now need to learn new skills and ways of working with employees and focus on mentoring and developing personnel through remote coaching, influencing, and feedback. Much leadership and management learning content has been adapted to incorporate elements of managing employees operating in remote or hybrid environments.

It is also important to provide mechanisms for employee collaboration. While much of this will be virtual, and collaboration mechanisms and technologies, such as Teams, should be a seamless part of the day-to-day operating environment, the office must take on a greater role in employee collaboration than in the past. Indeed, organizations have typically moved on from the isolated hot-desking approach to office accommodation frequently taken in the past and are redesigning the layouts of their offices with an emphasis on providing collaborative environments. Indeed 93% of HR leaders identify a high need to redesign the the layouts of their offices due to the introduction of hybrid and remote working.

Increasing opportunities for collaboration



77%

Implementing virtual collaboration spaces & opportunities



50%

Emphasizing the role of the office in collaboration & networking



Any redesign has the potential to incorporate smart buildings, office and conference room technology. Using IoT, employees can see who is in the office today, book desks and conference rooms from their phone, and get turn-by-turn navigation to the room, desk, device, or person they need to see. All of which is intended to minimize inefficiency, and boost productivity and the people experience.

Social collaboration is being taken to another level. Collaborative features for creating groups (short-term or long-term) and building communities can be used to enhance interactions between employees and their managers and co-workers. Within these communities, participants can follow subject-matter experts within their organization, chat, and like and share content.

Performance-related data and analytics to identify, for example, where individuals are missing their goals (sales targets, etc.), can be used to flag performance issues to managers initiating 1-to-1 discussions. The appropriate issues can be immediately addressed and additional learning/skilling put in place to close the performance gap.

This greater level of automated timely collaboration drives better stakeholder relationships, and maintains employee motivation, engagement, and retention.

Role of Third Parties in Enhancing the People Experience

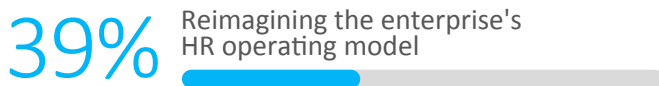
It is important for organizations addressing their people experiences to take a holistic approach to redesigning the overall people experience, considering all the factors discussed above, but then tackle individual pain points within their overall visions.

Third parties potentially have a key role to play in assisting organizations to reimagine their people experiences. This can encompass operating model enhancements and improving workflows and providing the appropriate technology within day-to-day operations.

From the HR perspective, the extent to which vendors can play a role in people experience transformations was perceived by HR leaders to be:

Involvement of vendors

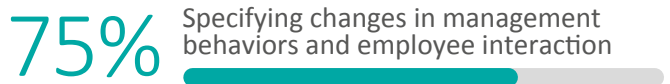
Reimagining the HR operating model and addressing specific pain points



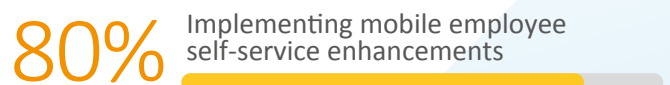
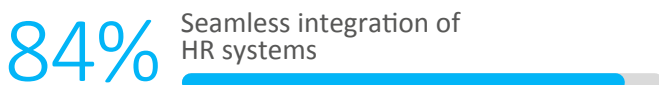
Understanding workforce expectations



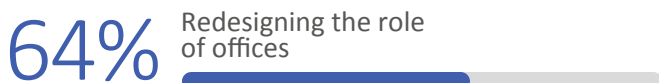
Change management



Enhancing seamless access to HR system



Redesigning office environments



Rethink the People Experience for Hybrid Work Environments

- Make the people experience a higher priority at the boardroom level
- Reimagine the organization's people experience including its HR operating model addressing key moments that matter
- Ensure employees understand their contributions to company outcomes

Optimize employee selection and engagement

- Employ persona mapping and cultural assessments to deliver employee quality
- Automate administrative tasks and workplace provisioning to facilitate onboarding
- Engage employees with data-driven insights and recommendations across their career journeys

Integrate Continuous Learning & Development with Career Development

- Ensure employees have clear, self-determined career paths and offer clear promotion opportunities
- Provide employees with access to continuous, self-paced on-demand micro-learning
- Incorporate mentoring into your people processes

Implement Seamless HR and Operational Processes

- Provide a single interface, such as MS Teams, for all day-to-day working and support
- Ensure the same technology experience is available both WFH and in the office
- Deploy automation and analytics technologies such as generative AI to facilitate the people experience

Enhance Employee Interaction with Managers and Co-Workers

- Implement continuous listening to employees to remove potential disconnects between managers and employees
- Enhance the HR skills of middle management
- Implement virtual collaboration spaces & opportunities
- Reinvent the role of the office in facilitating collaboration & networking





About NelsonHall

NelsonHall is the leading global analyst firm dedicated to helping organizations understand the 'art of the possible' in digital operations transformation. With analysts in the U.S., U.K., Continental Europe, and India, NelsonHall provides buy-side organizations with detailed, critical information on markets and vendors (including NEAT assessments) that helps them make fast and highly informed sourcing decisions. And for vendors, NelsonHall provides deep knowledge of market dynamics and user requirements to help them hone their go-to-market strategies. NelsonHall's research is based on rigorous, primary research and is widely respected for its analysis's quality, depth, and insight.

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