PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
2004-2005 NEW ELECTED PRESIDENT MIKE CHISM

It is customary to tell your membership what a great honor it is to serve as your next leader; that the previous presidents have left big shoes to fill and so on. All of that is absolutely true. I did not choose to fill this position because I felt particularly gifted or suited for it. In fact, I did not really choose this position at all. I was just part of the group that met together at one of the Conventions back when and it seemed like a great idea and I was honored to be a part of this group. Hey, I was just along for the ride. Then one day, my fellow Board members basically turned to me and said that it was my turn to be president! I actually put it off for a year...I had too many irons in the fire I complained. John Peek patiently carried the torch for another year adjusting his own irons to make sure that Residential Forum stayed hot. But this year, I could escape my responsibilities no longer. So I said yes albeit, with certain reluctance born of my particular nature.

Whatever my motivations, I know that whatever is demanded will be returned back many times over through my association with the many, many wonderful men and women I have an opportunity to work and become friends with in PDCA. It is these many acquaintances that have helped me to grow and develop my business over the years. It is not only the technical help that I have received but, more importantly, it has been the example of fine people which has helped me to have a new vision of what the painting business is and what it can be. For years I went along hobbled by a vision of the painting trade as a good and noble means of “putting bread on the table” which is true enough and that it is. But it was seeing those ordinary, salt of the earth kind of people, working diligently at their craft and implementing good business practices and enjoying the fruit thereof that gave me the vision of what the painting business could become for my business as well!

I love this business. I grew up in this trade because my father was a contractor; consequently, it is in my blood. (Yesterday, I was in a retail building freshly painted recently with oil base enamel. A young employee was complaining bitterly about the smell. And I am thinking “Smell??” It is at those moments that you know it is “in your blood!”) I love to see other painting contractors begin to catch the vision of seeing what their businesses can also become. Together we can and will make our businesses grow. It is my plan to continue to guide the development of the Residential Forum so that we together continue to elevate the professionalism of our particular niche within the painting industry. Together we can work with National to become even better and stronger. There are many interesting avenues of service that we can contribute to as well and for which I want to enlist the help of our constituency. I am working on a committee to develop a new PDCA Standard: Recommend Levels of Preparation for Repainting and Maintenance Projects. The input of our Forum members would be greatly appreciated! Wouldn’t it be great for residential contractors to offer an annual new written Standard each year for our contribution to the PDCA?!

I also hope to see our Forum continue to grow this coming year. Together we can see 10 or 20% increase. Get the word out to your contractor colleagues and tell them about PDCA and the benefits of membership especially for the residential contractor. I would welcome your thoughts on how we might together grow our portion of PDCA and continue to benefit our trade and Association. It is my hope that all of us will look for ways to serve our fellow contractors and Association. As we get involved and serve, we will truly begin to grow and develop. When you are asked to help and be involved, I hope you will leap at the opportunity to become a leader and a teacher in your industry. Remember, that the teacher always learns more than the pupil. Together we can succeed.

Warm Regards to All,
Michael M. Chism, PDCA Residential Forum President
Outgoing President's Message—John K. Peek

Role Models, Goal Models

I just spent a few days with over 100 of my role models at AST 5. I have found the best way to self improvement is to place myself around others whom I wish to emulate.

It was always a personal desire of mine to run a marathon. For years I had it as a life dream, but it took me putting wheels to my dream and surrounding myself with like minded individuals with the specific objective of running the San Diego Rock and Roll Marathon on June 1 of 2003...a specific race at a specific time. Together we trained for 6 months on a specific, detailed schedule for specific distances. Do you see the recurring word in the above sentence? I have learned that to reach a dream, specific concrete steps must be planned and carried out.

My role model for this was Kevin Nolan, who has run many marathons and who encouraged me to do it. But having a role model was not enough. I wish to accomplish something until I am blue in the face but it does not do much to make it a reality. What is does take is a goal model; a model of a specific plan to attain the objective. The role model is always a person, the goal model is always a plan to achieve the dream the role model has put before you!

Recently, I learned a little bit more about project management. Project management is the systematic technique of planning to reach a specific goal. In order for a final outcome to occur, such as an efficiently run exterior paint job; specific planning and execution must happen in order to produce the desired outcome of a happy customer, a quality job and a profitable bottom line.

But at a more root level under girding project management is personal management. That is, the management of my self. At these AST meetings, some of us joke about what ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder) many of us seem to struggle with. I do not know if I could be clinically labeled ADHD but I do know that I am full of energy and ideas but have always had need of help in focusing on the goal/objective at hand...and judging from all the books and speakers/coaches out there, I am not alone!

As is a common experience for me at PDCA meetings, a serendipity of things came together to teach me a valuable lesson in personal management. We had a wonderful speaker at AST on this very subject who spoke to my soul! I also picked up a book at the airport called “Leave the Office Early” by L. Steck. Both the speaker and the book spoke to the need for people like me to set down specific, measurable, attainable goals and objectives if I want to be successful and not just busy!

Sure, we have all set goals and objectives in the past...but what can we do to better insure that we will succeed? Here are some pointers gleaned from my reading/experience.

For me to be successful in attaining a goal, it must: be specific, be measurable, have a great reason, have motivational tools, have celebration/rewards and have written daily/weekly objectives. Let me give you a personal example. I decided I want to be in better shape so here is the goal model:

1. Specific: to get to 215lbs from present 235lbs.
   a. Lose 1 lb a week with first measure on August 1st at 5PM (weekly goal)
   b. Weigh 220 by Nov. 7th at 5PM
   c. Weigh 215 by Dec 15th at 5PM
2. Measurable: can’t fool the scale; measure only once a week, Sunday afternoons at 5 PM (very specific)
3. A great reason: I want to feel energized, strong and healthy and ride a smaller more agile surfboard!
4. Motivational Tools:
   a. Keep a log on the bathroom mirror of daily exercise, weight goals and check off daily when done.
   b. Have small vinyl stickers made for my truck window with 230, 225, 220 and 215. Have starbursts made to put around the 220 and 215 to celebrate when I hit those goals. These will remind me while at work to stick with the program!
   c. Stock my truck with healthy snacks so I will not be tempted to junk food.
   d. Eat mindfully: small bites, chew slowly, enjoy the food!
5. Celebration/Rewards:
   a. Work toward a specific weekly reward: a CD, workout bag, a new belt!
   b. Daily mark off my mirror log as I do my daily goal for exercise.
6. Daily/Weekly Objectives
   a. Bike/Run/Swim for one hour on MWF and lift on Tu/Thurs/Sat...take Sunday off.

Do you see how using all these focusing tools/reminders/rewards could help you reach your personal and business dream goals? Use the above numbered outline yourself on something specific and let me know how you do at peekbros@simplyweb.net, I would be encouraged to hear from you! Using this tool, I am ahead of schedule with over 5 lbs gone in two weeks!

By the way, thank you all so much for the opportunity to serve on your Board of Directors for the past six years...I still have one year to go as your Immediate Past President. It has been a pure joy and a great time of personal growth for me! See you around PDCA!

John Peek
Believe it or not, the lifeblood of a Paint Contracting business is prospecting for new customers. Many contractors overlook the necessity of maintaining a continuous flow of new customers.

It is easy to sit back and rely on existing clients for the bulk of your business. Having these satisfied customers supply you with referrals is very important and not difficult. Farming your files for new leads is good business.

Establishing relationships is a sure-fire way to build a customer base. But the base keeps changing. Competition, move outs, upsizing, downsizing, all change the structure of your customer base.

The leading way to achieve a balance between maintaining your existing base of customers and attracting new customers is through communication. Direct Mail to a targeted list of qualified prospects can be very effective. You can buy the services of numerous professional Direct Mail companies. The library has many interesting books to guide the DIY contractor. Even the US Postal Service has regular free classes to help you.

A less targeted advertising method is, of course, the Yellow Pages. Depending on your needs and your budget, this is a no-brainer.

Many Residential Painting Contractors use advertising in suburban and gated community Newsletters or their Directories. This is a very effective, highly targeted and cost effective approach to prospecting.

Regular City Newspapers and Classifieds are less targeted, but usually generate a lot of leads. Generally these leads are scattered all around a geographic area and often can be categorized as ‘quote-shoppers’.

E-mail Marketing is growing rapidly. Skilled web marketing professionals can design and build a campaign for you. Having a clear picture of the goals of your company will serve to guide this type promotion.

TV and Radio advertising is very effective in producing new leads. It is important to plan your budget carefully because results often can only be measured over a long-term effort. This means a substantial commitment to make it work for you.

At any rate, you can’t stop marketing. Find new customers. Work at what works best for you to reach your goals...on time, every time and stick to it.

QUOTE FOR THE QUARTER

“In my opinion, little is accomplished when we allow various challenges in life to control us. We become dysfunctional, and passive toward the things that affect our lives. However, when we decide to commit ourselves to a program...we develop within ourselves the strength and attitude that enables us to compete and win.”
ADVANCED SHOP TALK V

Take 72 PDCA companies sending a total of 104 contractors to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in July and at the busiest time of the year for paint contractors, put them in a banquet room at a hotel, ask them to sit eight hours for two days and what do you get? Advanced Shop Talk V!! This annual event, sponsored by the PDCA Residential Forum, was the biggest and best ever.

AST V offered two full days of structured roundtable discussions on vital business issues, a keynote speaker on organization, presentations by members to members on their "shared wisdom" of implementing processes, roleplaying issues that contractors face everyday and of course, the comradery of PDCA members.

AST V also offered fun, starting with a Welcome Party hosted by Nolan Painting. A group of 80 AST participants joined the employees and others at Nolan Painting for a barbecue and tour of their facilities on Thursday evening. On Friday, 70 AST participants rode trolleys through the historical areas of Philadelphia, ending up for a great Italian dinner in South Philly.

The PDCA Residential Council Executive Board added a new layer to this evolving event with a Keynote speaker, Shawn Kershaw, on "Techniques of Organization". In addition to a great kickoff presentation, we all learned that we need to bring Shawn back for a second topic of "Using MS Outlook for Organization". She is definitely a "well spring" of information and helpful ideas.

Also new this year was the first sponsor ever for the PDCA Residential Forum. ICI Paints, represented by Jim Prestage, Manager of Contractor Services Store Division, sponsored the Keynote address. Jim also attended and participated in the event. Special thanks to ICI & Jim Prestage for their support of the PDCA Residential Forum and AST 5.

Speaker Shawn Kershaw on Techniques of Organization
Shawn leads group in the fine art of blowing up balloons. Below right—20% balloon project can stay afloat with help from all.
Roundtable discussions.

Jim Prestage of ICI Paints addresses AST 5.
Our National PDCA was also well represented with President Bob Miller and Executive Vice President Dr. Ian Horen. Both enjoyed the Welcome party at Nolan’s Painting and the event on Friday. Bob Miller participate in the roundtable discussion and in the event for the full two days – way to go!!!

Linnea Blair, Advisors on Target, also participated at AST V, both introducing the On Target groups and participating for the full two days of roundtable discussions. As always, PDCA Residential Council appreciates her support.

Special thanks to the following members who participated in this event:

- Roundtable Discussions designed and scripted by Josh Abramson, John Peek & Mike Chism.
- Shared Wisdom presentations organized by Mike O’Brien, with John Hone, Ken Anderson and Pete Wirtz as speakers.
- Roleplaying organized and scripted by Mark Lewis, with volunteers to play the parts. Volunteers were Dean Ridings, Terry Miller (great impersonation of a 87 year old women client), John and Jay Schnackenberg (hysterical), Alan Swack, John Imhoff, Skip McPherson, Mark Clayton and the now infamous Doug Kitchen.
- The PDCA Residential Forum administration – Barbara Bivens and Tracy.

The pictures and the testimonials in this newsletter speak for themselves. The AST V was a grand success, the participants received the very best in information and ideas to help their business and of course forms, forms, forms!! Every participant left with paperwork shared during the roundtables on Friday and a portion of the paperwork shared on Saturday. The remaining paperwork will be mailed out to participants, along with the notes taken at each table on each topic.
TESTIMONIAL FROM JIM ASHE
FROM PDCA CHAT ROOM

Well once again, the AST was great. Thanks a lot to everyone putting it together—your hard work is appreciated. My men and I especially like the visit to Kevin Nolan's shop—what an inspiration he is. Also, for me, it was invigorating to speak with the many friends I have made in the group again. Thanks you guys, you make me want to work hard to achieve greater things. This year I brought two men again, and they are both still talking about their experiences. It's a real motivator for them as well.

Andrew Wallace shows how his notepad works!

There was a little time to stretch the legs at AST!

Welcome Party at Nolan Painting (above) Kevin in conversation (below).

Roleplaying—Dean Ridings (left) and Terry Miller (right).

TESTIMONIAL FROM KEN FROM PDCA CHAT ROOM

The event was Grrrreat. I echo my appreciation to Kevin Nolan. He's quite a giver. I was really humbled by being in the presence of so many good people who gave of themselves selflessly and who shared so many of the things that made them successful. I hope AST VI will be in Seattle!
Eddie the estimator for Prominent Painting arrived at Herman’s house to begin an estimate for interior and exterior painting.

“Herman, let’s walk around your home together so you can point out any particulars about your painting project.”

“Sounds good,” says Herman.

Eddie fishes in his shirt pocket for a pen as they round the front porch together. “It says here on my prequalification sheet that you have some trim that needs restoration from excessive peeling.”

“That’s right - I think a good coat of paint on the body and some extra attention to the trim boards on the south side would put us in good shape. My wife would also like the ceiling repaired and painted in the master bedroom.”

“Not a problem. You know Herman; our company does the best restoration work in town.”

“Yes, you came highly recommended by my brother.”

“Is that so? And where does he live?”

“Oh, he lives over in South Oaks on the golf course.”

Eddie chuckles, “Yes, we’re more accustomed to doing larger homes.” As they continue walking, Eddie points and says, “Hey - are those your children?”

Herman grins broadly, “Yes, those are mine.”

“Well I hope you’re not planning to have any more or you’re going to need a bigger home,” Eddie gestures to the front of the house. “I’ve finished my measurements out here, let’s take a look inside.”

Eddie lands this job for Prominent Painting because Herman trusts the referral of his brother.

Painting Day One:

To say that Hillary Homeowner is picky is an understatement which is why Hillary’s husband Herman went the extra distance to hire the best painting contractor. When Hillary returns from having her hair hefted she discovers that the dust from the ceiling repairs in her master bedroom has wafted throughout the house and is covering her furniture. She immediately goes to tell the lead painter.

“Sir, my furniture is covered in dust.”

Peter the painter is already running behind schedule so he paints a little denial. “Ma’am, I don’t see any dust,” he replies without looking up.

“I can see it all over the dining room table and by now - I’m sure it’s saturated the carpets.”

Peter glances at his watch. “Do you have allergies, because my sister does and it makes her extra sensitive to everything...even if it doesn’t exist?”

Hillary stood beside him in shock, not knowing how to reply.

Final Day:

“So, Ms. Hillary Homeowner, we’re finished and I’ve been instructed to collect the final payment.”

“Well, you better take a look at something. I think the painters scuffed one of the end tables in the bedroom. See all those scratches and nicks?”

Peter moves a doily to the side and says, “These tables are old, and they already had dents in them. I bet you could find a better replacement at the Good Will. Do you want me to carry them to the dumpster for you?”

Reality Check:

If you think the above story is fiction – think again. While I exaggerated some of the dialogue, the insults have occurred either in my company or to a friend. I took the liberty to lump them all together to illustrate a point about customer service. Let me share with you what really happened in each circumstance.

1. We’re more accustomed to doing larger homes. This statement made by a prominent remodel contractor to a friend resulted in the contractor losing the job.

2. Well I hope you’re not planning to have any more (children) or you’re going to need a bigger home. A neighbor casually leveled this comment at me when I told her I was pregnant. Let’s just say I try to avoid her. It falls into the family-planning category of insults that I have collected over the years. In Minnesota, not to be confused with China, a common response to news of a pregnancy is, “Was it planned?” I may have gone off on a tangent here but trust me - avoid commenting on the reproductive business of others.

3. Ma’am, I don’t see any dust. Yeah right! Good luck with that response. The painter’s could have avoided this catastrophe if they had bagged the doorway of the master bedroom. The real story ended with a cleaning bill paid by the painting contractor.

4. These tables are old, and they already had dents in them. Guess again Peter. In the real scenario, the business owner intervened on behalf of this poor response made by his lead painter and pulled out his bag of tricks. He not only refinished one tabletop but offered to do the same to the second one so they matched. Yes, it took some time, money, and kissing-up, but since there was no way to prove the painters hadn’t scuffed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8....
SALES, LIES & CUSTOMER SERVICE
Continued from page 7....

the table, it was better to have a happy homeowner who will refer business instead of an irate homeowner spreading bad publicity.

Things like this will inevitably occur when you begin to grow your company and trust others to do the work that you used to do. Your great people skills are probably responsible for the growth of your enterprise to begin with. Then when you try to pass along your unique way of doing business to employees, something always manages to get lost in the translation.

I find it’s important to revisit these slip-ups when they occur and discuss why they were harmful and how it should be handled differently in the future.

In addition, include painters in a customer service training session that underscores how to correctly handle customer complaints or requests. Place scripts or even a sequence of steps to take when the customer complains in the employee handbook or operations manual.

A small inconvenience to accommodate the customer today can lead to a large referral tomorrow. It’s not about who’s right or wrong, it’s about exemplary customer service leading to more sales. Sales by insult – doesn’t work in the long run.

A BIRD IN THE HAND...

Submitted Nigel Costolloe, Catchlight, Inc

We have been in business (sometimes profitably!) for 11 years; we currently employ 8 painters in the field and sub out jobs to a past employee as the occasion arises and each and every job has come to us via a referral (I made the mistake of advertising in the yellow pages once, and spent too many hours chasing tepid leads from bargain shoppers!)

Before you accuse me of laziness, indolence and sloth (all character defects I happily admit to otherwise), I don’t mean to say I sit around waiting for the phone to ring: I mean that my marketing has always been driven by a combination of hubris, arrogance and the belief that our workmanship and ethical standards should be sufficient to generate all the referrals and leads necessary to keep us busy year-round.

Well, I was wrong. What I learned was that in order to build and grow a business based on word of mouth marketing I had to become a proponent of our business. Think Tony Robbins pumping the air with his fist and smiling his big toothy smile – whoops, wrong image; that’s not me! I did begin to ask customers for referrals to friends, neighbors and coworkers. I did begin to approach carpenters, electricians, plumbers, floor guys, any and every trade we bumped into on the job or at retail stores, for leads or contacts.

Don’t get me wrong here; I didn’t just out and out ask for work. It was more of a sideways approach (kind of like when your kids want something from you and know that asking directly will get an immediate “No!”) I might begin a conversation about a product, about a technique or skill, even a comment on someone’s new truck. Only when a conversation was underway would I find a way to insert a comment about the hole that just appeared in our schedule, or our preference to work alongside such skilled and proficient craftsmen.

Then I developed the chutzpah to approach builder-remodelers, designers and architects. You would be surprised how many professionals are always on the lookout for a reliable, responsible and enterprising sub; we are few and far between. Those of you reading this article know too well how rife our industry is with cowboys and station wagon bandits. It is possible, in a quick conversation, to show your mettle and at least get your foot in the
door. Always follow-up with a letter on company stationery (no spelling errors, please!) with some business cards inserted and then follow up again in a few months. Two things will happen quickly; you will get the brush-off or the assurance that your info is on file and it's just a matter of time....

How simple is that? We are currently 'recruiting' a new group of designers, architects and builders here in Boston and expect that it may take a year of professional prompting before a proposal is solicited. But each contact may only require 15 minutes of attention in that year! Not a bad return on investment.

It helps, of course, if you have an introduction to the potential client. I am quick to ask the professionals we currently work with for a referral to a peer or associate. A carpenter I met at a wedding in San Francisco suggested I call his company in Boston; it took a year of phone tag before we were invited to bid on one of their projects. Now we are one of their principal painters and are asked to submit not bids but allowances. They have us scheduled out one year on their projects, most of which are in the $80-100K range!

A residential customer recently referred us to a friend from his 'club'; we placed a bid on a project that totaled $68,000, came in higher than the others, and got it.

So, enough bragging. We all have similar stories. My point is this; Be the squeaky wheel; begin to ask your customers, private and professional, for help with your business growth and you will be amazed at the results. But remember, make it personal; no form letters! Make personal contact and follow-up. And definitely recognize the significance of the referral when it does come; someone's reputation and word is on the line and they should be personally thanked!

Five Year Pins were awarded to members who have attended all five AST. From left to right—Andrew Wallace, Mike Chism, Mario Guertin, Barbara Bivens, John Hone, Mark Lewis, Kevin Nolan and John Peek.

MORE AST V PICTURES

Doug Kitchen roleplayed TQM with a twist!!!

Many attendees made AST a vacation before or after, including the Lambs with son from Spearfish SD

A testimonial at the end of the event. Our AST bennie baby "Fred" was tossed around to members who want to share their experience.
STAYING ON TOP AND 
ON TARGET WITH YOUR BUSINESS

BY LINNEA BLAIR, ADVISORS ON TARGET

If you were like most Residential Forum members who attended Advanced Shop Talk, you most likely came away much inspiration and a long list of great ideas and systems to implement in your businesses! Some of you may have been able to get started right away, but more likely you faced what most business owners do when you go away for a few days in what is one of your busiest times of the year – a lot of work “in” the business that needs your immediate attention. When you come back up for air, oftentimes it is difficult to pick up your notes and get started again on implementing those great ideas. Keynote speaker, Shawn Kershaw gave us some wonderful tips to help us become more organized in our businesses and in our lives. If you can take even one or two of her suggestions, and use them faithfully, you can create some space in your day or your week for that all important time to work “on” the business.

In the On Target program, our members are working on their businesses to implement good business management practices, create strategic plans, set goals and put systems in place to achieve them. Even though you are working your own plan, your fellow members are on a similar path and are there to support you and help you stay accountable to your plan. Sometimes, just knowing you will need to report your progress to your group is the catalyst to make the time to do the things you need to do to move your business forward.

On Target membership is now open to join before our Fall Conference, Benchmarking and Brainstorming on the Bay III on October 22-23, 2004 in San Diego. New members will also attend a bonus half day session on October 21. Call 858.320.8996 or visit our website at www.AdvisorsOnTarget.com for more information.

AST TESTIMONIALS

FROM TERRY & PEGGY MILLER
Thank you all for the work and dedication. The AST was again the highlight of our summer. We have already regained our cost for the AST through use of ideas and information we received from our fellow PDCA members at the event. We were able to recharge our batteries and are now on full. Speaking with President Bob Miller and Dr. Horen was informative and a pleasure. We enjoyed Kevin’s hospitality and meeting his great crew. Everyone was excited about our informative sessions. We came away with many exciting ideas and the information will carry us for quite awhile. Again, to all from the Miller’s Thank You..

FROM KEVIN NOLAN
Thanks guys for the kind words and how you made my people feel. It was a great weekend. Thank you and everybody for coming to visit our shop. It was an opportunity to get our building all spic and span. It was also great to see my people so proud of our company. Barbara, Tracy and the Res Forum Board did a fantastic job. The time flew by. The role playing and shared wisdom are a great addition to the shoptalk format. The Residential Forum and AST is a must for all residential painting contractors. Whose shop can we visit next year??
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
PDCA RESIDENTIAL FORUM

What do I get if I join the PDCA Residential Forum?
For your Annual dues of $75.00 you will receive a
one year subscription to "The Painter's Rag" newsletter, back issues of the newsletter, the current edi-
tion plus all previous editions of the Business Sys-
tems Workbook for Residential Contractors. You
will also receive additional mailings on events
planned by the PDCA Residential Forum and the
availability of support from fellow residential con-
tractors around the country.

What are the requirements for Membership in
the PDCA Residential Forum?
You must be a PDCA member, either Nationally or
through a Council or Chapter. The Residential Fo-
rum is designed to be an additional level of mem-
bership information and benefits specifically for the
residential contractor.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please send this form, along with your check made
payable to "PDCA Residential Forum" to
PDCA
15564 Producer Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92649

YES! I want to join the PDCA Residential
Forum. I will receive a subscription to "The
Painter's Rag", the Business Systems Workbook for
Residential Contractors, and a Membership Certifi-
cate. Enclosed is my check for $75.00 or charge my
Visa or MC cards as noted in the application.
This “motley crew” is the 2004-2005 Board of Directors. They are so busy participating in AST that we can never get a serious photo shot!!! From left to right, John Peek, Josh Abramson, Mike O’Brien, Mike Chism, John Hone and Mark Lewis.

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