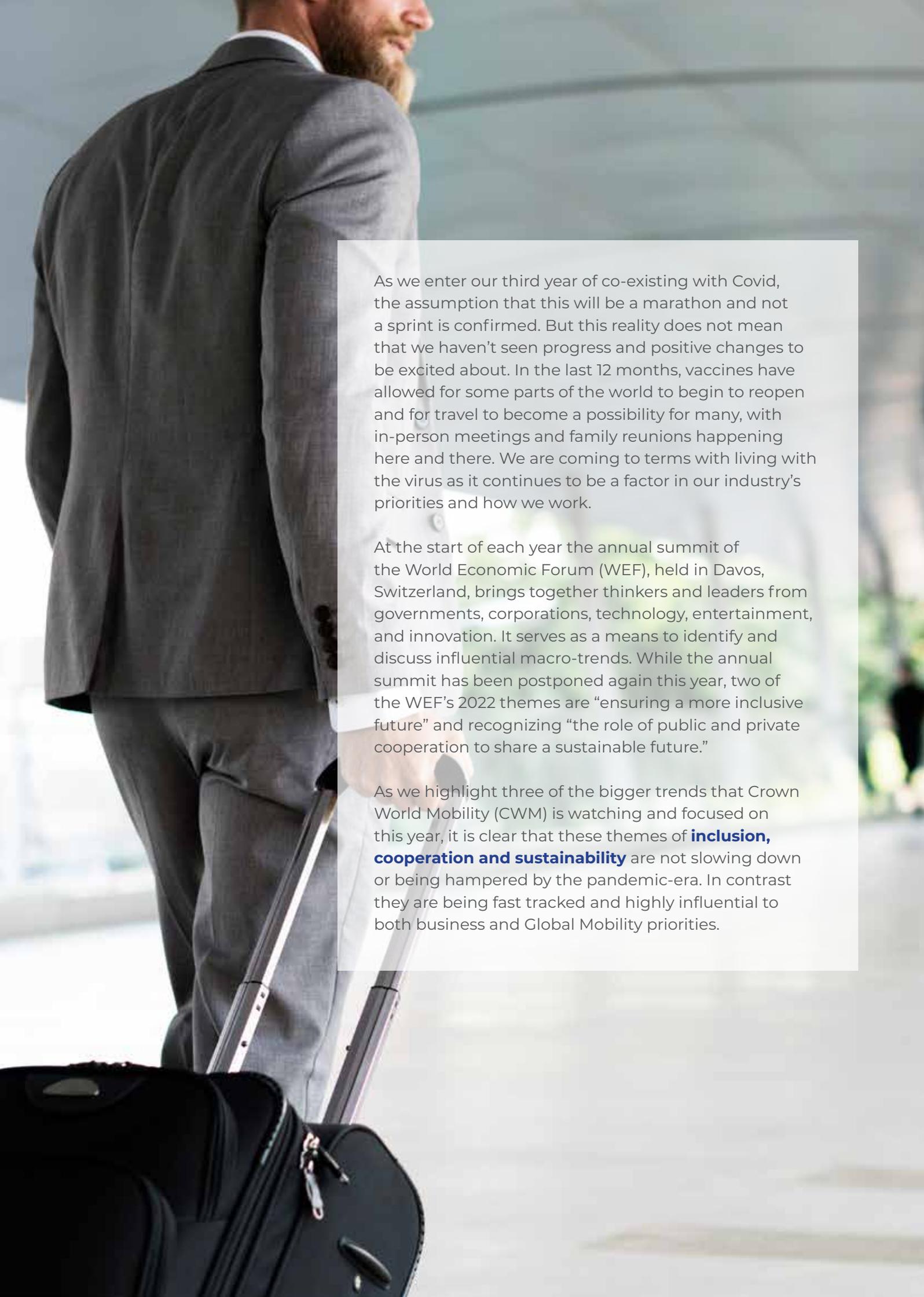




World Mobility Perspectives

# Top 3 Global Mobility trends and innovations in 2022

*How the world works better*



As we enter our third year of co-existing with Covid, the assumption that this will be a marathon and not a sprint is confirmed. But this reality does not mean that we haven't seen progress and positive changes to be excited about. In the last 12 months, vaccines have allowed for some parts of the world to begin to reopen and for travel to become a possibility for many, with in-person meetings and family reunions happening here and there. We are coming to terms with living with the virus as it continues to be a factor in our industry's priorities and how we work.

At the start of each year the annual summit of the World Economic Forum (WEF), held in Davos, Switzerland, brings together thinkers and leaders from governments, corporations, technology, entertainment, and innovation. It serves as a means to identify and discuss influential macro-trends. While the annual summit has been postponed again this year, two of the WEF's 2022 themes are "ensuring a more inclusive future" and recognizing "the role of public and private cooperation to share a sustainable future."

As we highlight three of the bigger trends that Crown World Mobility (CWM) is watching and focused on this year, it is clear that these themes of **inclusion, cooperation and sustainability** are not slowing down or being hampered by the pandemic-era. In contrast they are being fast tracked and highly influential to both business and Global Mobility priorities.

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*This article was authored by Crown World Mobility Consulting services. If you have any questions regarding this information or would like to find out more about our other services, visit our website:*

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# 1 Covid drives both instability and creativity in mobility

The impact of Covid on mobility programs and our industry as a whole cannot be understated. The global supply chain's increased and unpredictable costs, delays and shortages of drivers for trucks and containers for shipping, continue to make headlines. From an immigration standpoint, we see visa processing backlogs and government restrictions. Such as, entry requirements in key assignment locations that force employees to spend weeks in quarantine "hotels".

This results in delayed and sometimes canceled assignments. We also see employees and their families continuing to juggle virtual work with overseeing virtual education and activities for their children. There is also the ongoing need to focus on mental health and personal safety.

What's the good news in all of this? Plenty. Whether you are a fan of Winston Churchill's "never let a good crisis go to waste" or Albert Einstein's "in the midst of every crisis lies a great opportunity," a crisis is often the impetus to create change and innovate. That gives us something to celebrate. Let's look at some of the creative changes emerging during the Covid crisis.

“  
*Never let a good crisis go to waste.*  
Winston Churchill



### Vaccine home leave

A decade ago, leading companies in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) space started adding flexibility to home leave. This change in mobility policy supported globally diverse families whose home locations were not their country of origin. Flexibility in home leave was also considered for employees with same-sex partners or other split families who might need options such as “reverse home leave” (where the partner staying in the home location is able to visit the host location).

With the pandemic, we have seen an inconsistency of vaccine roll-outs, their availability and varying preferences for one vaccine brand versus another. As a result, some companies are allowing for home leave in mobility policy to be used as a vehicle to get assignee families vaccinated in their home or a third-country location. Other companies are offering paid days off for vaccine travel.

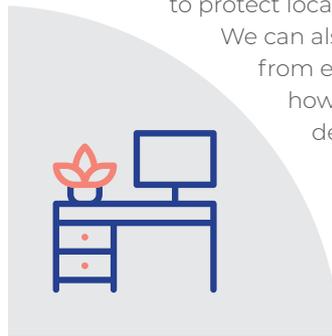


### International remote work

This continues to be a hot topic this year as companies determine what strategy will be right for their risk tolerance threshold. Organizations need to consider compliance requirements alongside today's recruitment and retention requirements for having flexible work options. Companies with business travel tracking technology will have a head start in formalizing international remote work options. They are able to anticipate challenges for assignees due to the potential for global inconsistency of remote work assumptions within the same organization. An employee working in their home country on a team where remote and hybrid work is the norm might accept an assignment to a location or team where employees are being encouraged to work in the office. This would be an important discussion to have prior to the assignment in order to manage expectations.

We can expect more scrutiny from governments to protect local jobs in some locations.

We can also expect more scrutiny from employees in determining how well potential assignment destinations are handling pandemic management, vaccinations and community safety.



### Policy booster shots

Creative global mobility teams are giving their policies a boost in areas that are supportive of employee and family needs. For example, after more than two years of disruption for children who have missed out on in-person education, faced limited social activities, and visits with grandparents, families may hesitate to add more disruption with an international assignment or relocation. Authorizing cross-cultural training, enhanced school searches, tutoring services, settling-in service upgrades, assignee mental health and well-being support, and allowing for destination housing options that include space for home offices and homeschooling, are all examples of ways to give a policy a boost this year.



### Immigration

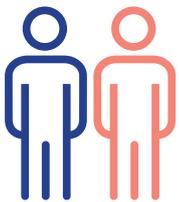
With changing immigration requirements around the globe, the consequences of human error on paperwork and a lack of awareness of the entry rules that vary from country-to-country are potentially disruptive and costly, both emotionally and financially. Needless-to-say, immigration teams remain hard at work.

Some good news? The online processing of visa paperwork during Covid will likely become a permanent shift from traditional mandatory in-person appearances going forward.

# 2 Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) – making the shift from words to actions

As current events unfold, the world has been jolted towards the recognition that long-standing inequalities and injustice emphatically need to be addressed. While world histories differ, racial and social inequalities are not unique to one part of the world. Many in the mobility industry have made personal calls to action on LinkedIn and other social media sites on various causes that are close to their hearts. Corporations have accelerated DEI hiring and training practices. More and more companies have created advisory boards and strong commitments to increasing DEI in supply chain partnerships and other business decisions. Companies see their employees engaged in these efforts; clients and customers expect it.

Whether you see this as a silver lining, a window of opportunity, or both, a shift in the Global Mobility industry is moving us from words to actions when it comes to DEI strategies.



## LGBTQ+ marriage equality advances

In 2021, Switzerland and Chile announced the legalization of same-sex marriage, bringing the total up to 31 countries where it is legal. Japan's courts have ruled that the government's ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional which means marriage equality is closer to passing. Angola recently reformed their penal code to allow for same-sex relationships while also banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

While we celebrate progress, there is still work to do. There continues to be 69 countries in the world where homosexuality remains criminalized. These laws impact the international opportunities available for LGBTQ+ employee mobility and their safety and well-being. Global organizations and the industry are working with governments to continue to make progress in this space.



## Work from anywhere and remote work

These pandemic-era flexible workplace alternatives are real game changers for recruiting diverse candidates. Recruiters have long been limited to candidate pools near a company's office locations. When you can recruit from any location, you can attract talent from almost anywhere, too.

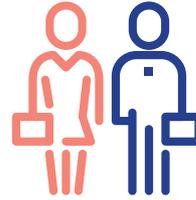
Companies have begun to determine which roles fall into the remote or hybrid categories and are starting to tap into a more diverse candidate pool. This shift will change the faces of the leadership and mobility pipeline in many organizations.



### Core-flex policy, education, marketing

Core-flex is the clear winner for companies looking to align their mobility policy with DEI strategy. The core section of policy ensures that compliance issues – tax, immigration, travel to the new location – are covered along with those benefits that reflect a company’s core values. Best practice DEI companies will put cross-cultural training in the core policy to reinforce their commitment to global competencies and recognize that an employee’s technical skills are not the only factor to assignment success. The flex section of policy will have flexible options that meet diverse employee needs. An early career new hire just out of university won’t have a lot of personal belongings and furniture, and might want an alternative such as a furniture allowance. A single parent might want an extra plane ticket to the new location to bring along a friend or family member for a few weeks to help their children settle in while they get started with the new (and often challenging) career opportunity. An employee with visual disabilities might opt for more settling-in assistance to adjust to becoming independent and familiar with the new location. Employees focused on green initiatives might opt to live inside the city, near public transportation and find housemates. Core-flex policy allows for different lifestyles and needs.

Mobility teams have been quick to recognize how well a core-flex policy can support flexible DEI benefits, this year we anticipate more emphasis on making the DEI benefits easy to recognize. Adding the company’s DEI logo to those policy elements to make them stand out is a simple example. Education and awareness raising is also going to be the next step for DEI programs. This is especially the case for companies that have a history of rewarding managers for cost savings in mobility packages or for those programs where core-flex policy was originally intended a means to create “expat lite” and “local plus” packages. Educating managers on the rationale for the DEI flex benefits is a key step in making the core-flex policy a successful vehicle in meeting its objectives. After educating managers, the next step would be holding them accountable for diversifying the mobility program.



### Dual-career couples

The historical challenges of the accompanying partner in a dual-career assignment couple are well known. Often an assignment results in the spouse/partner having to temporarily put their career on hold due to work visa challenges or the inability to find a similar job in the host location. This reality has been central to the barrier for many women asked to accept an international assignment when spouses/partners are not able or willing to leave their jobs. It can also be an economic barrier for dual-career couples whose lifestyle is dependent on both incomes. Remote work is opening new possibilities for accompanying partners to continue with their careers from the assignment location. Depending on the company and role, there is more of a possibility than ever to find companies and managers willing to support a remote employee who is accompanying their partner on an assignment. Remote work continues to have compliance issues attached to it and is not always simple, but companies are better equipped and more prepared to understand the process and make it work than they were prior to the pandemic.

*A shift in the Global Mobility industry is moving us from words to actions when it comes to DEI strategies.*



## 3 Sustainability and mobility with purpose

When broad trends emerge and eventually become important priorities in corporations, there is almost always a delay in defining what the trend will mean to Global Mobility as an industry and settling into norms and practices. Sustainability first appeared on CWM's trends list in 2020. It is now on a fast track that is not going to slow down any time soon. Certain themes are emerging that we will want to talk about this year.

At this stage, our industry is still defining what sustainability means to mobility. AirInc's Sustainability and Global Mobility pulse survey of more than 120 companies shows that 77% of global companies have not done anything specific to their mobility programs to align with their company's sustainability initiatives.

Certainly, one critical aspect of sustainability is focused on climate change, global warming and the environmental impact of business on the environment. While some years are cooler than others, according to NASA's records, which began in 1880, the Earth's seven warmest years were the past seven. At the global summit, COP26, held in Glasgow in 2021, countries and companies newly committed to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse emissions.

Sustainability also has to do with social issues, including inclusion, equity, and human rights. Doing the right thing and creating a culture of purpose are critical aspects of attracting and engaging employees, and confronting what is being called "the big resignation." Sustainability is an area where we see important and innovative developments emerging and, in some cases, already in place.



### Defining what the environmental metrics will be in your organization

Start to connect with the sustainability goals and metrics that your organization is already setting to reduce their global footprint along with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. We see the aircraft industry developing lighter planes that use less fuel and the transportation industry developing fuel-efficient vehicles. We see recyclable and reusable materials for packing, the use of virtual meetings, training and services to reduce optional business travel. Companies

are making sure that their facilities are LEED certified. Sustainability measurements may also be in place around DEI goals, such as accessibility for employees with disabilities, gender equality and mental health and well-being initiatives. We see companies and global mobility programs starting to add sustainability KPIs in their supply chain management and in selecting business partners.



### Talent Beyond Boundaries

When it comes to organizations making a difference in today's unstable geopolitical world, the organization Talent Beyond Boundaries is at the top of the list. A non-profit, whose mission is to unlock skilled migration pathways for refugees, focuses on both the job seekers and employers looking for skilled talent. Forcibly displaced people can use their skills and talents to move and secure their futures.

Talent Beyond Boundaries has taken the Global Mobility industry knowledge and used it to support peace and justice, and reduce poverty and inequality. It is worth visiting the website [www.talentbeyondboundaries.org](http://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org) and learning more about donating to this important work. They are also dedicated to sharing their resources and knowledge to help others replicate their mission.



### Authentic experiences for assignees and business travelers

For years, best practice partnerships between corporate global mobility teams and their RMC partners have taken time to collaborate on annual CSR activities that help them have a common purpose and shared values. Today, a critical component of employee engagement and retention in any organization involves integrating purpose in the work environment. This shift includes assignees and business

travelers. Companies that offer employees the chance to participate in authentic experiences that allow the assignee or visitor to learn more about the local communities, to participate in activities that benefit local communities and adding philanthropic projects to onboarding or settling-in to new locations will come out on top.

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*Sustainability is now on a fast track that is not going to slow down any time soon.*

# Conclusion

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As we enter another year of co-existing with Covid, many of us will struggle at times to keep our energy up and to help our colleagues, friends and family to stay safe and sane. At the same time, we look forward to embracing the opportunities we have to innovate and open some of those doors that have stayed closed for too long. A lot of progress is being made in our industry that we can celebrate and move even further ahead in the coming months.

What parts of your policy and program can have innovation and flexibility? What words will you turn into actions in the EDI space? And how can you add sustainability goals and purpose to your mobility program? As always, our hope is that CWM's annual trends inspire you to look up, think differently and make positive changes to your program and for our industry. Our goal is to show examples of changes large and small that may fit your organization's culture and needs. We look forward cooperating and innovating together this year.

*The time is always right to do the right thing. If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.*

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



**Crown World Mobility** helps corporations manage global talent and talented individuals perform on the global stage.

We work with all stakeholders to find the right solution, implementing a global mobility program that is successful for everyone. Services include research and consulting, assignment management, immigration services, compensation administration and employee and family support.

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