

Your Resource for GM Women in Automotive Retail

# WRN LINK



## DRIVEN 2018 Delivers

Nearly 200 women representing GM dealerships across the U.S. and Canada gathered for DRIVEN 2018, hosted by the Women's Retail Network. The event held in September at the Renaissance Center featured programs and initiatives to help increase profitability, growth and retention.

"Relevant information, as well as best practices and realistic solutions, were the reason for the big turnout," said Holly Martin, head of the Women's Retail Network.

"DRIVEN is a critical part of our outreach," said Jackie Vessel, senior manager, Dealer Development, "as is mentoring, education, training, networking and WRN 20 Groups. We want to help women reach their professional and personal goals, as well as identify women for future leadership positions."

Watch the DRIVEN 2018 video at: [www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com](http://www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com).



Participants represented every aspect of operations – sales, service, parts, pre-owned, marketing and more. Top WRN performers were recognized.



Women know that DRIVEN delivers. Participants tell me that. DRIVEN is the one event worth leaving their dealership for because they arrive home with ready-to-implement solutions.

• Holly Martin

## Jackie Vessel appointed new head of Dealer Development

“I do things with a long-term vision to position both current and prospective dealers for success.”

Carlos Latour, director of GM Dealer Diversity Relations, is pleased to announce Jackie Vessel as GM's new senior manager, GM Dealer Development. Mark Rainey, formerly in the position, is now Chevrolet zone manager, Boston Metro.

“Jackie is a GM pro with 25 years' experience working with dealers in the field,” said Latour. “She understands the demands on today's dealers, as well as the growing importance of minority and female customers. We're confident that Jackie will deliver value-added tools that will allow our women and minority dealers to better service their customers, grow their sales and profitability, and attract more minority and female dealers into GM's retail network.”

Vessel started in Chevrolet's Customer Assistance Center, a job she calls pivotal

in developing her passion for delivering customer satisfaction. During her career Vessel has held a variety of cross-divisional field assignments. After a time in Detroit opening the Dealer Business Center, she moved back out into the field. She was appointed a zone manager in 2010, and has since worked in Dallas, Syracuse, Cleveland and, most recently Boston. Latour said Vessel's career success is a direct result of attention to building relationships, developing an empowered team and focusing on process improvements.

“I couldn't be more thrilled at the opportunity to work more closely with minority and female dealers,” said Vessel. “Over the last several years, I've seen the presence of women and minorities in the auto industry evolve — as both dealers and customers. GM, MDD and WRN are industry leading

in growing female- and minority-owned dealerships as a way to increase diversity and provide customers with stores that reflect their neighborhoods. Our job is to ensure those dealers are successful, satisfy their customers and provide access to those interested in joining the GM retail network.”

Vessel graduated from Southern University of Baton Rouge with a degree in Broadcast Journalism. She also attending the Harvard-GM Emerging Leader Program. Throughout her career, Vessel has worked to increase opportunities for women. This includes involvement in mentoring programs, customer outreach initiatives and marketing strategies.

“I'm honored to lead an extremely talented team,” Vessel said, “and look forward to building upon great successes and strengthening relationships across WRN and MDD.”

## GOALS MOVING FORWARD

<p><b>Strengthen</b> the relationship between MDD and WRN. That includes more shared resources and collaborative training.</p>	<p><b>Increase</b> participation in 20 Groups with like-minded members who want to be successful and are willing to share advice and best practices.</p>	<p><b>Increase</b> focus on mentoring as a way to grow MDD and WRN networks, and increase dealer sales, service and profitability.</p>	<p><b>Provide</b> dealers with tools that add value in a measurable way and improve their bottom line.</p>	<p><b>Continue</b> the WRN Drive to Succeed Scholarship program that Vessel calls a “gateway” for women to have the opportunity to become dealers.</p>
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## New members **join and save**

If you're not a WRN 20 Group member, now's the perfect time to join. Learn new ways to make your dealership more profitable and get a first-time participant discount.

Under this offer, **GM will pay the first-year membership and meeting expenses** for female dealers and their managers who've not previously been WRN 20 Group members. Hotel and travel expenses are the participant's responsibility.

Linda Grossman, dealer, Grossman Chevrolet, says the only dealers who aren't 20 Group members are the ones who've never attended a meeting.

**“Audit a 20 Group session and you'll be hooked for life,”** said Grossman, a member of GMW3. “The Group gets me out

of the store three times a year and forces me to look at things I normally wouldn't. As a result, I can make measurable improvements to my store that benefit the customer and the bottom line.”

A retail automotive veteran from Connecticut, Grossman said what happens in the meetings — reviewing composites and sharing best practices — is as important as what happens out of the meetings — getting personal advice from other members. While GMW3 is in the growing process — there is plenty of room for new joiners — she's already starting to build relationships that provide support and camaraderie.

“The WRN 20 Group has a different vibe from the mixed groups I've attended,” she said. “We interact the way women do: we listen, we're patient, we're invested in each other and we try to offer solutions. There's a lot of humility.”

Meetings run only one and a half days, allowing participants to get in and get out. Grossman said her 20 Group leader keeps the team on task, focused and action-oriented.

“I've heard people say that if you come away with three good ideas you can implement — the trip pays for itself,” said Grossman. “I've actually returned to my store with 15 ideas that were cost-effective, realistic and demonstrated direct results.”

For more information, contact Holly Martin at 313.665.5241 or [holly.1.martin@gm.com](mailto:holly.1.martin@gm.com).



Linda Grossman and the dealership's Fixed Operations Director Dennis Pisco, are among those sharing best practices and learning new ways to satisfy customers from GMW3.

**JOIN NOW!**

**Increase Profitability**

**Improve Operations**

**Learn Best Practices**

**Gain Support and Camaraderie**

**Get Solutions**

**And So Much More**

**WRN 20 Group topics may include:**

- Maintaining proper inventory levels
- Best ideas for managing factory incentive programs
- Marketing in today's environment
- Wasteful expenses versus necessary expenses
- Office efficiencies
- Employee productivity
- HR best practices
- Developing Wholesale Parts business relationships

# DRIVE GROWTH DEALERS ALREADY REAPING DATA BENEFITS

Data is king in the world of automotive retail. Knowing which data to target and, especially, how to connect it to the sales process, has remained baffling to many dealers ... UNTIL NOW!

GM's Drive Growth initiative, launched in June, is giving dealers a fail-safe way to collect, review and, most important, act on data in ways that benefit sales and customers. While it does not replace RSI, it's another opportunity to help dealers improve their RSI and profitability.

More than 3,000 dealers have joined the Drive Growth movement — meaning they have signed a data share agreement with GM. Partnered with CVI, GM uses this dealer-specific information to provide two types of analysis:

**Operational analysis** — This report is available just days after the sales-month close. It identifies the top three model opportunities for a dealership.

**Traffic conversion analysis** — Also known as the TCA report, it is available on the first day of each month and updates on a daily basis. It combines dealer data with industry sales data to identify purchases and defections.

According to Hector Flores, Jr., GM Drive Growth manager, TCA is the heartbeat of Drive Growth. "TCA is the money report," Flores said. "It tracks leads — phone, walk-in, Internet and other — for 90 days by source, model, geography and more."

As a result, GM is already learning more about dealer behavior, and dealers are learning more about themselves.

"Our biggest takeaway so far is that dealers must follow leads longer," he said. "GM dealers are great at communicating with leads for about a week. After that, contact drops off. Data shows that customers remain in the market longer than dealers are staying in communication with them. In most cases, customers remain well beyond seven days and often in the 60-90 day range. GM Dealers need to extend their follow-up process to mirror this buying behavior."

To participate in Drive Growth, dealers must first join GM's Essential Brand Elements. The next enrollment for the 2019 EBE program will open up in December. Dealers are encouraged to reach out to their zone teams now for more information on EBE enrollment.

## Webinar Series

To support Drive Growth, the Dealer Development team will be providing additional support that complements the Field Zone team's Drive Growth initiative process. All minority dealers and Women's Retail Network dealers will have an exclusive opportunity to take part in monthly Drive Growth webinar sessions. These webinars will allow participants to **learn about DRIVE GROWTH in targeted increments**, which will be easy to retain and designed to improve specific parts of their sales operations, especially following leads in the market.

We will launch the pilot in early December to dealers that currently have access and have started utilizing the Drive Growth tool. All pilot dealers will receive an invitation from Nicole Mitchell in November with more details.

For more information on the seminars, please contact [nicole.mitchell@gm.com](mailto:nicole.mitchell@gm.com).

## Skype sessions help improve Fixed/Variable bottom lines

GM is now expanding the quarterly Fixed Operations forums to include Variable Operations as well. The interactive Skype sessions are aimed at helping dealers improve profitability, growth and retention. The forums are open to all GM dealership Fixed and Variable Operations employees — especially at minority- and female-owned GM dealerships.

Inventory Balancing is the topic of the first Variable Operations forum, which will be held on December 4, 2018. Following the formal presentation, each session is open for Q&A.

"These forums are great opportunities to better understand or reinforce a program and really bore down into best practices on topics that can positively impact a dealership's bottom line," said Yvonne McKee, Regional service manager (NER) and one of the Skype hosts. "Individuals can ask specific questions to learn the nuances of a program.

We've received very positive feedback from participants."

McKee stressed the importance of field input on topic selection.

"We're asking the dealers and their staffs to tell us what they need help with," she said.

"These folks are on the front lines. It's our job to deliver the resources they need to do their jobs."

### Past Fixed Operations forums include:

- Digitally Driving Traffic
- Leveraging Service Leads to Increase Revenue and Retention
- Good, Better, Best Service, Including Multi-Point Vehicle Inspections
- Business Development Centers

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### 2019 Fixed and Variable Operations Forum CALENDAR

#### Fixed Operations Forum

Tuesdays:

- February 12th
- May 14th
- August 13th
- November 5th

#### Variable Operations Forum

Tuesdays:

- March 12th
- June 11th
- September 17th
- December 10th

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## Cancer foundation drives awareness and hope in Dayton

**JENELL ROSS** has two full-time jobs: she's the very successful dealer principal at Bob Ross Buick GMC, outside Dayton, Ohio, and the very successful founder of the Norma Ross Foundation.

Ross started the foundation after losing her mother to cancer in 2010. She uses her dealership as a platform to create awareness of the devastating disease and to raise funds. Recently, her Pink Ribbon Driven campaign celebrated nine years as the title sponsor of the American Cancer Society's Making Strides event in Dayton. It's just one of the many activities Ross organizes to help fight cancer.

"Our mission is to support youth in our community, sponsor programs that aid cancer patients, and fund and advocate for organizations that continue to do breast cancer research," said Ross. "The Norma Ross Foundation and Pink Ribbon Driven support the American Cancer Society as well as two major medical centers in our area."

To date, Ross and her team have raised about \$275,000 for the American Cancer Society and approximately \$400,000 for the Norma Ross Foundation — all of it dedicated to breast cancer awareness, research, support services and early detection.

Her biggest annual fundraiser is the Making Strides event — a noncompetitive walk that creates awareness and raises money. For many years, Ross' Pink Ribbon Driven team, at 100 members strong, has won top fundraising honors.

Ross said that Pink Ribbon Driven merchandise is a huge driver of her fundraising activities. There is a Pink Ribbon store within her Buick GMC dealership as well as one online at: [www.pinkribbondriven.org/shop/](http://www.pinkribbondriven.org/shop/). She also does pop-up appearances at related events. Ross says that merchandise has the added benefit of increasing awareness year-round and is a very effective way to keep the fight against cancer top of mind.

During the month of October — Breast Cancer Awareness Month — Ross donates a portion of every new vehicle sold at her dealership to the American Cancer Society. That's also when her stores, and her employees, can be found decked out in pink from head to toe.

Pink Ribbon Driven has become a part of the fabric of the Dayton community. Ross says she often partners with other businesses on awareness initiatives, such as taking the message to schools and local civic events.

"The message I hope to send is that the Bob Ross Auto Group is committed and engaged to making a difference in the Dayton Region," said Ross.

“  
My goal is to be  
good stewards of our  
community and represent  
it well through targeted  
philanthropy.  
”





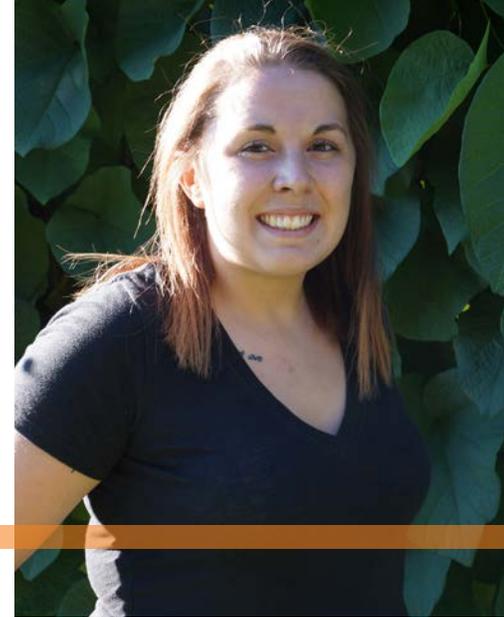
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GM Financial Scholarship



**Katherine Bothe**

Essexville, Michigan  
Northwood University/Automotive Marketing & Aftermarket Management  
American Financial & Automotive Services Scholarship



**Niki Davey**

Williamson, New York  
Monroe Community College/Automotive Technology  
GMW1 20 Group Named Scholarship

## WRN Drive to Succeed Scholarship creates opportunities for **women in automotive retail**

**W**RN continues to lead the industry and change lives by providing female students with scholarships totaling \$215,000 since 2011. This year, the WRN Drive to Succeed Scholarship is contributing more than \$30,000 in tuition assistance to nine women pursuing retail automotive management, business and technical degrees. Thanks to our dealers, vendors and other supporters, the scholarship program has given 69 individual scholarships to female students in its eight-year history. Scholarship winners are full- or part-time students from the U.S. and Canada, and represent a variety of sales Regions, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

**There's a way for you to support the 2019 Drive to Succeed Scholarship Program:**

- ◆ Promote the scholarship program throughout your communities
- ◆ Encourage your own female employees and other qualified candidates to apply. This year's application **deadline is March 31, 2019**
- ◆ Provide the required signature and/or letter of recommendation for applicants
- ◆ Donate to the WRN's general scholarship fund
- ◆ Create awareness of the wonderful career opportunities that exist in retail automotive
- ◆ Become a Named Scholarship dealer

“

Grassroots involvement is our focus for 2019. We're asking that every dealer partner with a school, vocational institution, guidance counselor or education board. We must develop long-term relationships – not just at scholarship time – that establish the importance of women working in business, technology and mobility – right in our communities. That means creating awareness and training at a young age. Personal involvement with the community is a dealer's priority. For female dealers, that includes growing the next generation of women leaders.

◆ Christa Luna, WRN Drive to Succeed Scholarship chair

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**The 2019 scholarship campaign has officially begun.**

**This year's goals include:**

- ◆ Increase individual contributions (no amount is too small)
- ◆ increase the number of Named Scholarship dealers (both male and female)
- ◆ Increase corporate donors and vendor sponsors



**Amanda M. Dixon**  
Country Club, Missouri  
Highland College/Business Management  
**Leson Chevrolet Named Scholarship**



**Anna Hagler**  
Grand Blanc, Michigan  
Kettering University/Industrial Engineering  
**Celeste Briggs Named Scholarship**



**Madelyn Hamilton**  
Manchester, Michigan  
Ferris State University/Automotive Management  
**Knudtsen Chevrolet Named Scholarship**



Our business partners are invested in our success, which depends on diversity. Ask your vendors and suppliers to contribute to this year's scholarship campaign. In doing so, they are helping to create an inclusive dealership culture. Profitable dealers grow the profitability of their suppliers.

♦ Mary Jo Wheeler-Schueller, GM WDAC, North Central Region



We applaud the WRN Drive to Succeed recipients and thank our WRN dealers and business partners for their generous financial contributions.

Please visit [www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com](http://www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com) for sponsor information and profiles on each of the 2018 WRN Drive to Succeed Scholarship winners.

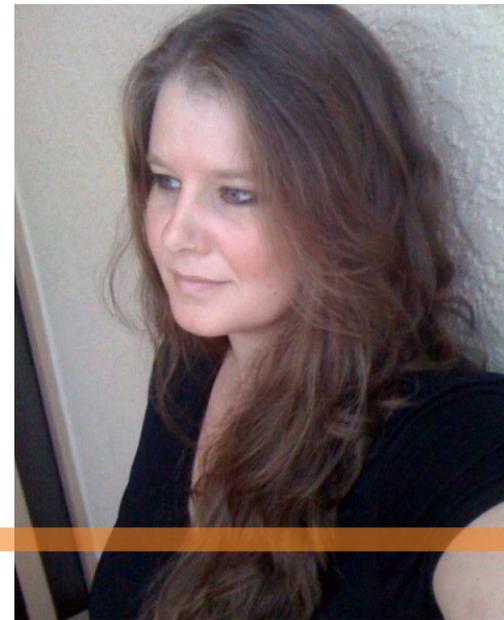
For more information:  
[www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com/business-priorities/scholarship](http://www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com/business-priorities/scholarship)  
CMS Foundation: [www.gmsac.com](http://www.gmsac.com)  
Christa Luna: [christa@gilberthasit.com](mailto:christa@gilberthasit.com)



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Farwell, Michigan  
Northwood University/Automotive Marketing and Management  
**Maryann Wheeler Memorial Scholarship**



**Vanessa Stephens**  
Dexter, Missouri  
Ranken Technical College/Automotive Technology  
**Alexander of Oxnard Scholarship**



**Kimberly Ann Wasko**  
Coatesville, Pennsylvania  
Automotive Training Center/Automotive Technician  
**Women's Retail Network Scholarship – General Fund**



# What's more profitable, new or pre-owned sales?

According to NADA, the majority of dealerships generate more gross profit from pre-owned vehicle sales than from new unit sales.

That's good news to dealers with an effective used strategy. Unfortunately, GM's female dealers are underperforming the market in pre-owned sales. Today, GM women dealers sell roughly nine pre-owned vehicles for every 10 new sales. The national average is approximately 1:1 — a more profitable mix for dealerships.

While there's no silver bullet for increasing these sales, practicing the basics is a good place to start to get your pre-owned units online and off your lot ASAP.

## Check out these five must-dos for increasing pre-owned vehicle sales:

1. Be realistic about each unit's potential using data and competitive pricing tools. With these insights, a dealership can chart a market-informed, time-sensitive retail course for every unit.
2. Eliminate inefficiencies by getting vehicles ready more quickly. Some dealers can prep a car for sale in 24 hours; three days is the max.

3. Get descriptions, photos and even videos ready quickly for online posting with a clear call to action. Every day lost waiting to promote a pre-owned vehicle online slows sales velocity and diminishes the prospect for full gross profit potential.
4. Price a vehicle competitively from day one. The initial asking price should reflect a vehicle's value in relation to competing units on the market.
5. Hold to a firm 45-day retail timeline.

Dealers who consistently adhere to these best practices will typically find that they are able to stock fewer cars while selling more units every month. That results in more inventory turn — up to 13 times annually. Dealers who make pre-owned vehicle sales a top priority discover that all departments benefit — F&I, parts and service. Higher-performing pre-owned operations drive net dealership profits way past the sale. See how Krystal Roberts and her team are putting these best practices into action **(below)**.

## Pre-owned sales gives dealership **heartbeat**

Ask **Krystal Roberts** for one solid recommendation for improving pre-owned vehicle sales and she's quick to reply, "Be fast to market."

Roberts, Variable Operations director at Advantage Chevrolet of Hodgkins, said being slow on the draw loses sales and costs the dealership money.

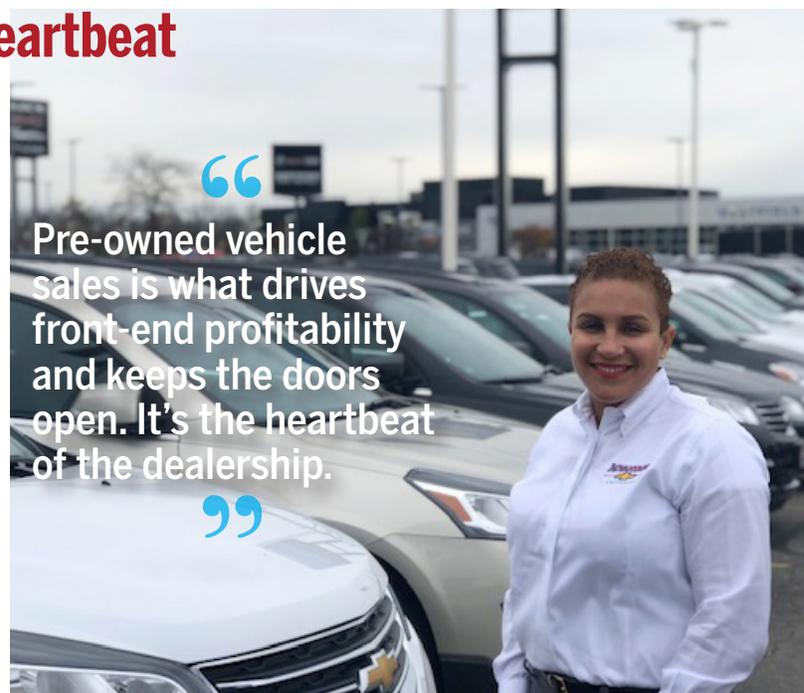
"The quicker you get a vehicle selling online, the quicker you'll find the right buyer," she said. "If it's taking more than three days to start marketing a vehicle, you need to fix your process."

Roberts is a stickler for process. She believes in organization, no matter what specific tools your dealership may be using.

"We use the vAuto pre-owned vehicle inventory appraisal and management software," she said. "It helps us better understand what's in the market, how to manage our inventory, and increase sales velocity and profitability. It doesn't matter which inventory management tool you use, the important thing is to follow a process — every time."

Roberts speaks from experience and success. Advantage Chevrolet stocks up to 180 pre-owned vehicles in inventory and turns nearly all of on a 30-day cycle. She makes velocitizing the inventory a top priority.

"There are 58 Chevy dealers in the Chicago market, so we know what real competition is," Roberts said. "We get the right mix of vehicles on



our lot, we price them to move, and we use social media in smart ways. It takes accountability, the right staff and constant vigilance."

Roberts and her team meet weekly to track the status of every unit. While the pre-owned market is highly competitive, she finds it rewarding.



The GM Women's Retail Network (WRN) is comprised of dealers, dealer management staff and stakeholders working together to improve dealer quality and profitability by leveraging the mutual support systems that benefit its members.

[www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com](http://www.gmwomensretailnetwork.com)

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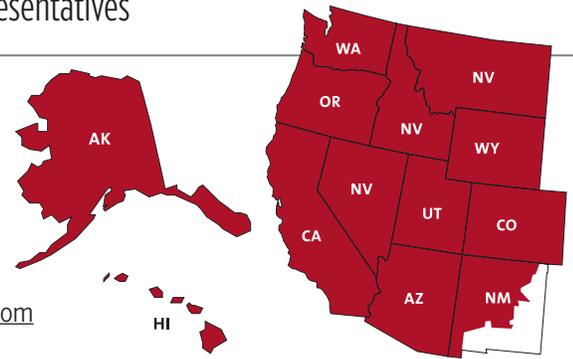
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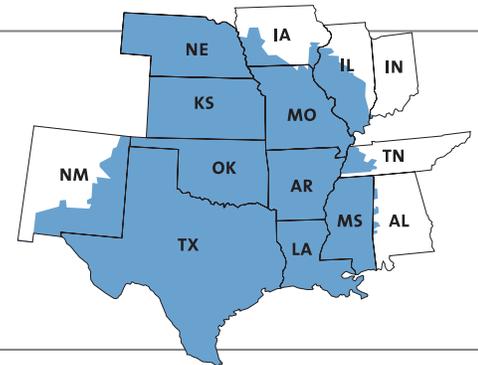
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