



The State of **Sales Coaching** in 2026

What's changed, what hasn't, and why coaching still defines top-performing sales teams.

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Executive Summary

Sales coaching remains the most powerful and most underused lever in modern sales. And in 2026, that contradiction has never been more obvious.

Quota attainment continues to fall, in spite of the overwhelming tech and AI to support sellers to spend more time selling, to the right prospects and be more productive.

This year's State of Sales Coaching report paints a clear and uncomfortable picture: **leaders believe they're coaching more than ever — yet salespeople aren't feeling it.** The conversations, the cadence, the consistency — they're still not where they need to be. For all the talk of “**coaching cultures**,” the reality is that far too many teams are still winging it: ad hoc sessions, quick deal reviews, and surface-level feedback replacing the kind of deliberate, skill/behaviour-focused coaching that drives real performance.

Beneath the surface, a deeper divide has opened up:

- Managers see effort; reps see absence
- AI promises transformation, but trust remains firmly human.
- Experience still equals neglect — the longer you've been selling, the less coaching you get.

The data that follows tells a story of **intent without execution** – and highlights the growing cost of that gap.

Because the teams that are getting coaching right aren't just improving skills; **they're changing outcomes.**



Kevin Beales

Founder & CEO, MySalesCoach

Top Themes From The State of Sales Coaching 2026

“Regular coaching leads to higher performance. Those being coached on at least a weekly basis have a much stronger chance of hitting quota.”

“The majority of Sales Leaders believe they’re coaching more than last year, but their reps aren’t feeling it.”

“Tenured reps are the most underserved when it comes to coaching, yet are some of the most hungriest for more support.”

“Lots of managers say they’re coaching more and rate the quality of their coaching, yet very few are getting coached themselves.”

“Despite the rapid rise of AI coaching technology, the majority of reps are skeptical of its impact, and their preference still lies in human coaching.”



Kevin Beales
Founder & CEO, MySalesCoach

WHO TOOK **PART** **IN THE SURVEY?**

The State of Sales Coaching 2026 is produced by MySalesCoach, based on survey responses from hundreds of sales professionals worldwide. It explores coaching frequency, quality, impact, and evolving attitudes toward AI, external coaching, and performance culture.

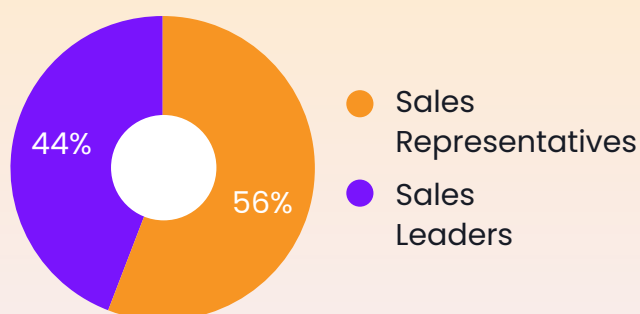
Survey participants work at companies including...



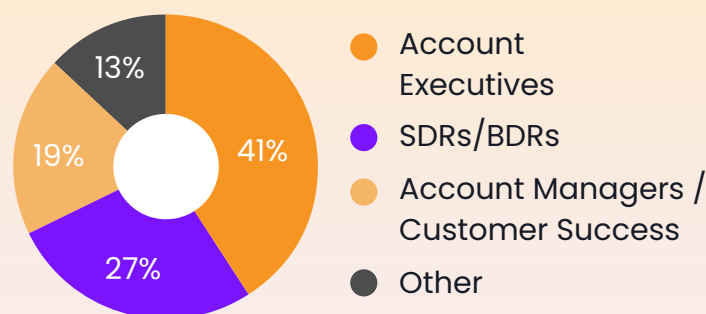
+ many more

Respondent Overview

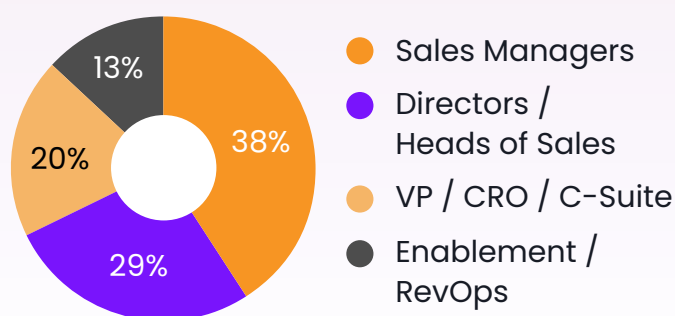
Respondent Type



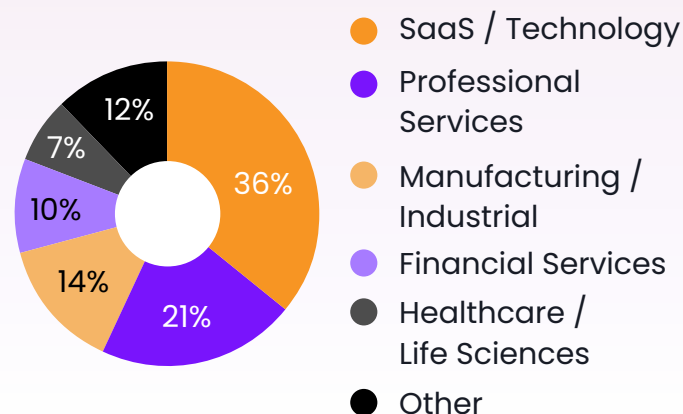
Breakdown of Sales Reps by Role



Breakdown of Sales Leaders by Role



Industry Breakdown



Chapter 1



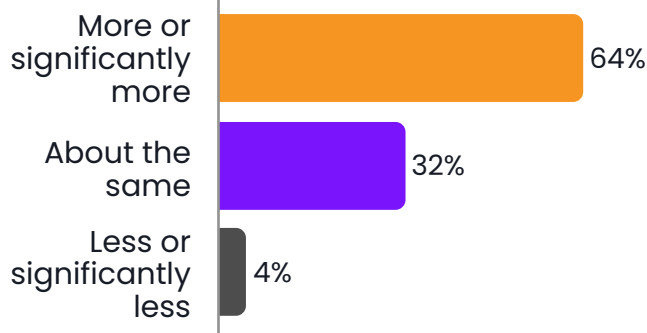
What's Changed Since 2025?

Tracking Progress, Perception, and Persistence.

Progress has been slow. Awareness of coaching's importance has grown, but the gap between perception and reality remains stubbornly wide.

The 2026 findings show awareness has improved, but execution hasn't. Most leaders believe they're coaching more – but reps aren't noticing the difference.

How much time do you dedicate to coaching compared to 12 months ago?



Sales Leaders – Self-Reported Change in Coaching Time (vs 2025)

2025 vs 2026

29%

of sales reps rated the coaching they get as below average

45%

of sales reps rated the coaching they get as below average

70%

of Sales Leaders would recommend their coaching approach to others

67%

of Sales Leaders would recommend their coaching approach to other



Worryingly, there is a 55% increase in the number of sales reps who say the coaching they receive is below standard. This trend is going in the wrong direction and mirrors the industry's performance struggles – reinforcing just how critical structured, expert-led coaching has become, and why so many organisations are now turning to external coaching partners like MySalesCoach.

Mark Ackers Head of Sales, MySalesCoach



Chapter 2

Coaching Frequency and Barriers to Coaching

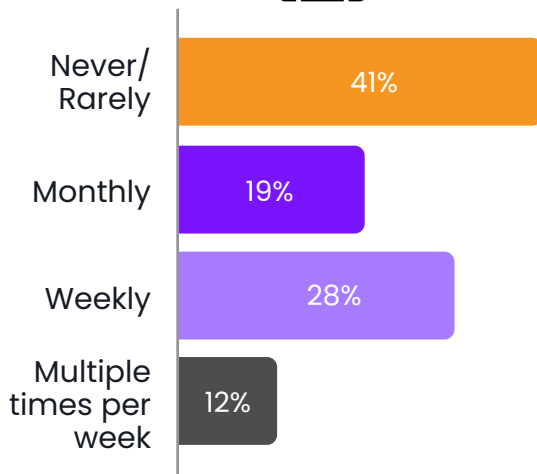
The Foundation of Performance Still isn't Solid.

Nearly **60% of leaders** know their teams need more coaching — even those who coach weekly. Yet reps tell a different story: **41% say they are never** or rarely coached, and fewer than a third receive weekly support. But what are leaders saying is getting in the way of them coaching more?

Many assume lack of time is the overwhelming barrier. While it's the top answer at **32.6%**, it's far from the whole picture. Leaders also struggle to measure coaching impact (22.65%), and many lack the skills or confidence to coach effectively. In reality, capability issues sit almost as high as time constraints.

Coaching still happens too infrequently — and when it does, it's often shallow. Frequency and quality remain the industry's twin blind spots, and the gap between what reps need and what leaders can deliver continues to widen.

How often are you coached?



Sales Leader's biggest barriers to coaching

- 32.60%** Lack of time/bandwidth
- 22.65%** Difficult to assess the impact of coaching
- 15.47%** Require more support on how to coach effectively
- 14.92%** Lacking the experience to coach different roles/individuals
- 14.36%** Unmotivated team



Chapter 3

Coaching Drives Performance

Proof That Consistency Converts.

The link between coaching frequency and sales performance is unmistakable. When reps are coached weekly, their results rise. When coaching slips into an ad-hoc or quarterly rhythm, performance drops off sharply.

In today's environment - with overall attainment at historic lows - consistent coaching isn't a **"nice to have."**

It's one of the few levers that reliably moves performance.

Regular Coaching = Higher Performance

Reps who receive **weekly or more frequent coaching** are dramatically more likely to land in the higher-performing quota bands. Those coached only quarterly or less fall behind quickly.

Coaching Frequency – Quota Attainment

Weekly or More
76% are hitting
quota

Monthly
56% are hitting
quota

Quarterly or Less
47% are hitting
quota

- In teams **coached weekly, 3/4 make quota**. In teams that **rarely do, it's less than half**.
- The drop-off from regular to irregular coaching is immediate and measurable.
- Consistency creates momentum: reps coached weekly gain clarity, accountability, and confidence — leading to improved execution.
- When coaching becomes irregular, performance declines predictably.

This isn't just about motivation — it's about rhythm. Frequent, structured coaching helps reps course-correct faster, stay aligned, and build repeatable habits that compound over time.

If sales teams want predictable results, they need predictable coaching.

Chapter 4



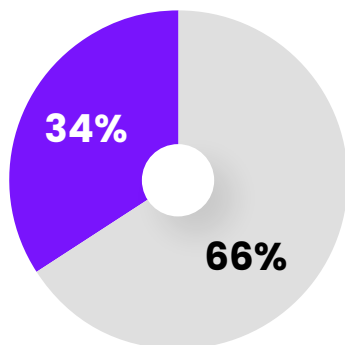
Who Coaches the Coaches?

Managers Need Mentorship Too.

Despite the expectation, few sales managers have received formal training on how to coach effectively. Only a minority say they've ever been coached as leaders themselves — or trained to deliver coaching conversations.

This creates a ripple effect: managers coach based on instinct and fire fighting. Their reps do not feel like they are being coached effectively. Hence why so many sales reps are giving a thumbs down to the quality of coaching they are receiving.

Leaders who have received some support to make themselves more effective coaches



34% have had support, 66% have had no support

34%

Only 34% have ever received any level of training or support to become a more effective coach

Only 1 in 5

Leaders say they have a coach



Most Sales Leaders have found themselves in that role due to being top performing sales people. What's concerning is how many continue to be promoted without any level of development in the critical skills they need to coach and develop a team. It's why we see an increasing number of Sales Leaders taking ownership of their growth here at MySalesCoach.

John Richardson Head of Coaching, MySalesCoach



Chapter 5

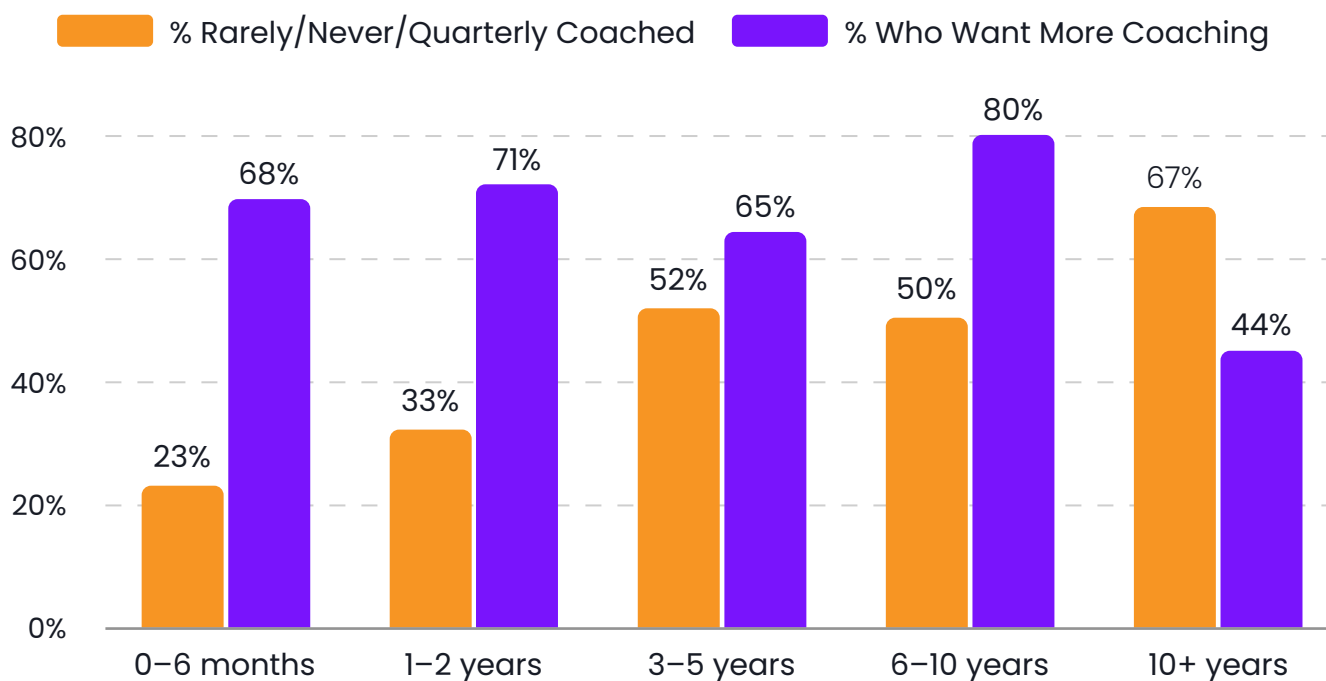


Tenure: Experience Still Equals Neglect

Coaching shouldn't fade as experience grows — yet it does. For the second consecutive year, we found that **experienced reps are the most neglected when it comes to coaching.**

Coaching is strongest early, fades in mid-career, and almost disappears for veterans. The result: mid-tenure reps (6–10 years) are both **under-coached and hungriest for help** — the single biggest missed opportunity in sales development.

Coaching Frequency and Desire by Tenure



There's a popular myth in sales that tenured reps just want to be left alone to get on with it. This data busts that myth, by showing that sales people who have been around longer, are those most neglected yet most demanding of more support. Companies need to stop thinking that coaching is just for newbies.

Richard Smith Head of Growth, MySalesCoach



Chapter 6

Who Reps Want to Be Coached By

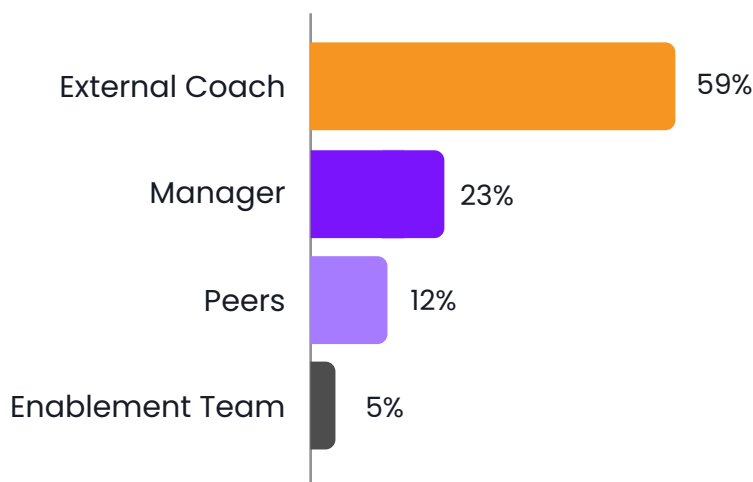
Trust and Independence Matter More Than Hierarchy.

Reps overwhelmingly prefer **external coaches (59%)**, and the reason is consistent with earlier findings: many simply aren't satisfied with the **frequency or quality** of coaching they receive from their managers. When coaching is irregular, ineffective, and wide of the mark, trust naturally shifts elsewhere.

Only **23%** of reps prefer coaching from their manager — a number that reflects the reality, not necessarily a lack of loyalty. Reps are signalling that internal coaching often isn't meeting their needs, and they turn to external experts for objectivity, consistency, and real development.

Peer and enablement-led coaching (**12% and 5%**) remain supplementary, reinforcing the pattern: **reps want credible, unbiased, high-quality coaching — and they're not getting enough of it internally.**

Preferred Coaching Source



Chapter 7

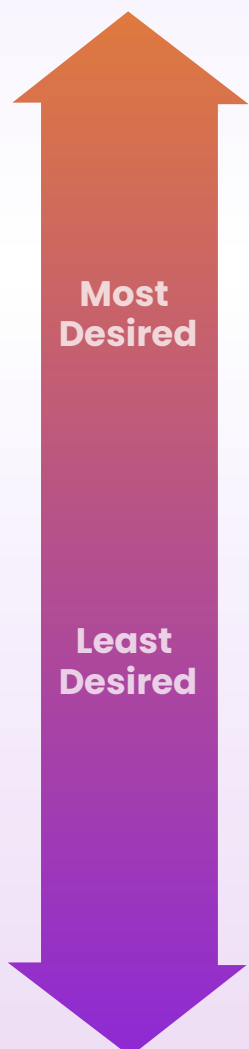
Coaching in The Age of AI

AI Can Enhance Coaching — But Humans Still Win.

AI tools are entering the coaching space, but trust hasn't caught up. For most salespeople, **human connection still matters** far more than automation.

Leaders of top performing teams are also all agreed that **AI wouldn't diminish the needs for coaching** in the future, with the significant majority expecting it to increase.

We asked which method sales people would most like **to be developed by**, and their answers were revealing.



Coaching Type	Preference
Human Coaching	Human-led coaching remains the clear leader, accounting for nearly half of all top effectiveness ratings.
Human + AI Coaching	Human + AI hybrid models are emerging fast — nearly a third of respondents now see blended coaching as the most effective approach.
Workshops / Group Training	Workshops and online learning remain relevant for skill refreshers but are not viewed as impactful ongoing development methods.
Online Learning / Self-Directed Modules	Online Learning is great for the patient self-guided learner, but similar to workshops – does not give sales people the personalised behaviour change that they crave.
AI-Only Coaching	AI-only coaching is still in early adopter territory — awareness is growing, but belief in its standalone value remains very low.

Chapter 8

The Rise of AI in Sales Coaching

Investment Momentum: AI Enters the Coaching Mainstream

Earlier in the report, we saw that reps still rate human and hybrid coaching far more useful than AI-only alternatives — and that trust in AI as a standalone coach remains low.

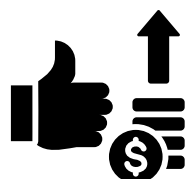
Yet despite this skepticism, **AI coaching investment is accelerating fast.**

The momentum we now see reflects a shift from experimenting with AI to embedding it into the coaching ecosystem.



35–40%
Already investing

35–40% of respondents are already investing in AI coaching technology and plan to continue or increase their spend in 2026.



40–45%
Likely to invest

A further 40–45% say they don't invest yet but expect to within the year.



15%
Unlikely to invest

Only around 15% are unlikely to invest at all.

Of those companies who have invested in AI coaching technology, **60%** of their reps believe it is at least somewhat useful, while **40%** say it's not useful at all. This highlights AI's uneven impact: some reps are gaining value, but many feel the tools haven't yet translated into meaningful impact.

Overall, adoption is outpacing effectiveness. For many teams, AI coaching still lacks consistent integration into daily workflows, resulting in mixed experiences and variable trust.

How Reps Value AI Coaching



AI is Growing But Human Coaching Remains The Gold Standard

As AI tools rapidly reshape the sales landscape, reps are becoming clearer about what truly helps them improve. When asked which development methods are “Extremely Useful,” one theme stands out: **human coaching still leads by a wide margin.**

Favoured Coaching Medium

48%

Human Coaching

Human-led coaching remains the gold standard for sales development. Nearly **half of all reps** rate it as extremely useful — making it **almost four times more valued** than AI-only coaching. Despite the rise of automation, reps continue to place the highest trust in human judgment, lived experience, and personalised feedback.

39%

Human + AI Coaching

Hybrid coaching is gaining momentum. Although current adoption is under **15%**, its appeal is already strong: nearly **4 in 10 reps** say this blended approach is extremely useful. Reps see AI as a way to enhance human coaching — not replace it — by making coaching more on-demand, more consistent, and in the flow of work..

13%

AI-Only Coaching

AI-only coaching remains the least trusted and least valued development method. Only **13%** of reps consider it extremely useful, and **6 in 10** are openly skeptical. Compared with fewer than **2 in 10** who doubt the usefulness of human coaching, the trust gap is stark. Reps want AI to support their development — not to be their sole source of guidance.

The Bigger Picture

Despite fears that AI will reduce the need for human involvement, the data shows the opposite: **75% of all Sales Reps and Leaders believe the need for coaching has increased due to the rise of AI tools.**

As AI accelerates complexity and raises expectations, reps are looking for more expert guidance — not less. Human coaching remains central, and AI’s role is increasingly seen as a force multiplier rather than a substitute.



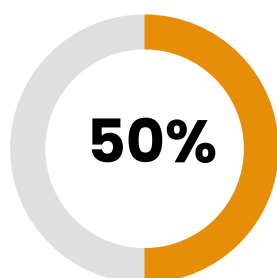
Looking Forward

This year's findings deliver a clear message: sales organisations are still falling short on the one thing that moves performance more than anything else — consistent, high-quality coaching. Leaders believe they're coaching more, yet reps report the opposite. Tenured reps remain neglected. And despite the explosion of AI tools, overall coaching quality has declined.

In a market where so many reps aren't hitting quota, the cost of inconsistent coaching can no longer be ignored

A Wake-Up Call for Leaders

Coaching gaps aren't minor weaknesses; they're systemic risks. The data shows:



Half of reps

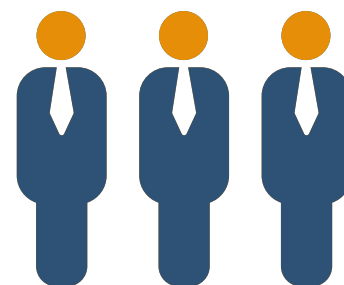
say their coaching is below average — double last year.

Maybe the AI coaching effect? Experienced reps are the most underserved, despite being the group that most wants more support.



Experienced reps

are the most underserved, despite being the group that most wants more support.



34% of managers

have ever been trained to coach, and only 1 in 5 have a coach themselves

This isn't an attitude problem — it's an execution problem. And it's costing teams performance every single week.

AI Alone Won't Fix It — But AI + Human Will

Investment in AI coaching tools is accelerating, with up to **40% already investing** and **45% planning** to

Reps make it clear

- **Human coaching is still the gold standard**, rated almost four times more useful than AI-only models
- **AI-only is the least trusted**, with widespread skepticism.
- **75% say AI increases the need for coaching**, not reduces it

The next era of coaching won't choose between humans or AI — it will blend them. AI will surface insights, remove admin, and ensure consistency. Humans will drive judgement, confidence, and behaviour change.

Where Teams Must Go Next

To close the coaching gap, organisations need to:



Make regular and consistent coaching non-negotiable



Invest in developing managers as coaches



Adopt hybrid Human + AI coaching models that scale without losing impact

How MySalesCoach Fits Into This Future

The industry is demanding coaching that is consistent, expert-led, personalised, and measurable — exactly the model that MySalesCoach delivers. Not a replacement for managers, but the system that finally makes great coaching achievable for every rep, every week.

The future of sales development is clear:

AI-Powered, Human-Led, and Relentlessly Consistent.

The teams that embrace this now will define the next decade of sales performance.

Scan the QR Code to Book a Meeting

Want to learn more about how MySalesCoach can help impact themes from the report?



Dive deeper into world-class sales coaching content

Explore our latest insights, frameworks, and thought leadership.



Want to know exactly where a rep can improve?

Get a personalised performance evaluation and uncover high-impact coaching opportunities.



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