

**GBA** GEOPROFESSIONAL  
BUSINESS  
ASSOCIATION

**2021 SPRING CONFERENCE**  
A VIRTUAL EVENT

# SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING EMERGING RISKS

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# Strategic Client Management: The Key to Driving Growth & Competitive Advantage



Presenter:

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# What Are We Trying To Achieve?

**A business development strategy that answers fundamental questions such as:**

- How to grow the business
- How to satisfy clients
- How to outcompete rivals
- How to respond to changing market conditions
- How to achieve financial objectives

“

The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday's logic.

- Peter Drucker (1980)



# AGENDA

- 1 The Premise
- 2 The Right Strategy
- 3 The Right Clients
- 4 The Right People
- 5 The Right Collaboration

# The Business Landscape

- Procurement has gotten smarter...and will continue to do so
- Commoditization posture threatens even specialized deliverables
- Short-termism threatens long-term, strategic view
- Clients manage suppliers better than suppliers manage clients
- **I SAID THIS IN A KEYNOTE 20 YEARS AGO...IT'S STILL TRUE**

# Translation: Both Opportunity & Challenge

- Manage your clients or they will manage you
- View clients as assets and manage as a portfolio
- Relationship with clients doesn't just help you sell your competitive advantage it IS your competitive advantage
- Chasing today's wallet (fulfilling demand) has limitations - shaping tomorrow's wallet (creating demand) drives long-term growth
- Creating value for clients requires strategy, not selling
- Adopting a more strategic posture = competitive advantage
- Optimizing all client activity is paramount: efficiency, speed, profitability

# COVID Reality: Pressures & Opportunities

- Remarkable times call for remarkable collaboration
- Uncertainty >> urgency >> openness to new dialogue
- Must reposition role & relevance now, proactively
- Understanding client posture is paramount now...client strategy affects buying behavior
- Potential to enhance relationship capital is high
- Need to be surgical about your investment (time, \$\$\$)
- Share of mind grab – help shape the client's thinking

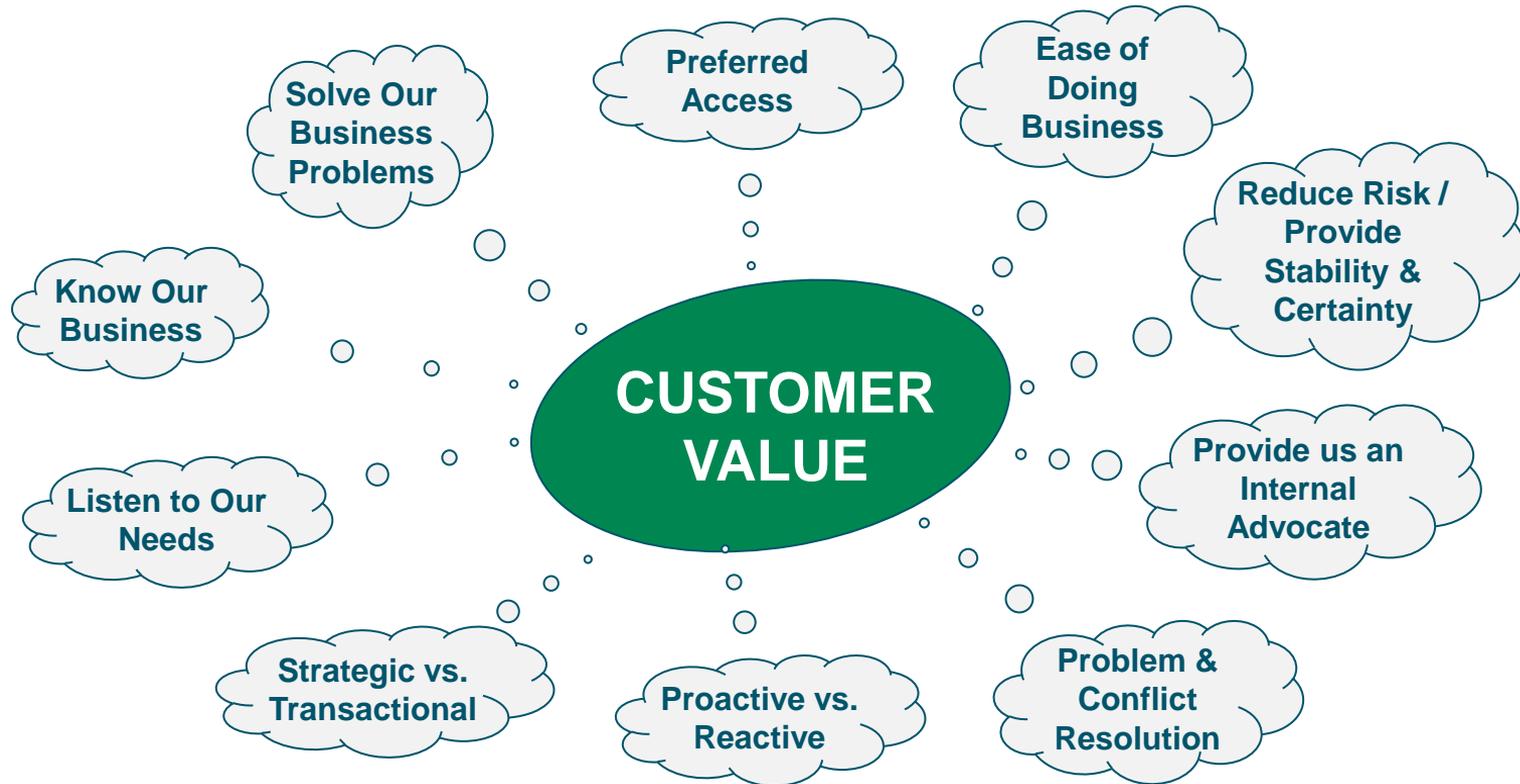
“

The greatest economic value the sales function can add is institutionalization of a company's ability to **create demand** and not just fulfill it. This occurs when a supplier begins to **shape the client's thinking** rather than simply responding to the client's needs.

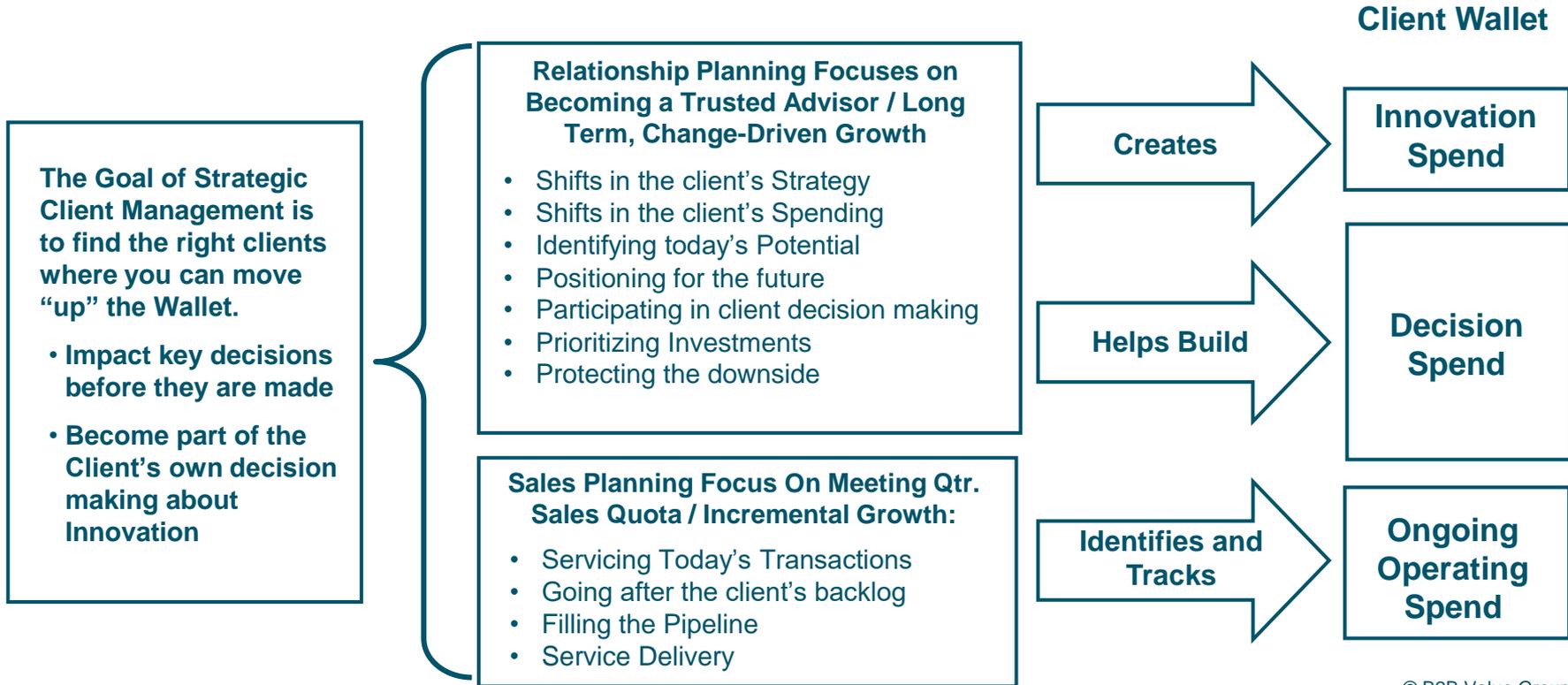
- Peter Mathias, SAMA Board Chair



# Focus: Delivering Greater Value



# Focus: Adding Relationship Planning to Pursue the Decision & Innovation Wallet



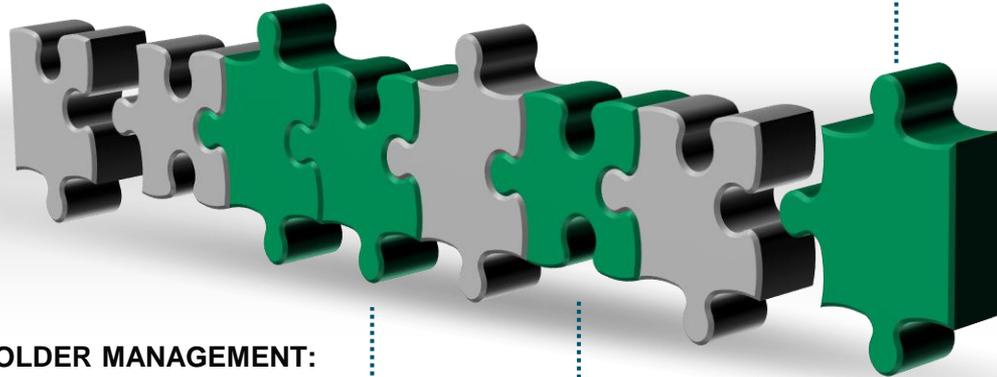
# Strategic Client Mgmt. Is Your Value Engine

## 1. BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE:

Building a foundation of knowledge about the industry, the market, the client, the competition, and your firm

## 4. INTERNAL COORDINATION:

Driving innovation and execution through superior collaboration



## 2. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT:

Developing relationships in a deliberate, strategic way to build trust, gain access and drive value

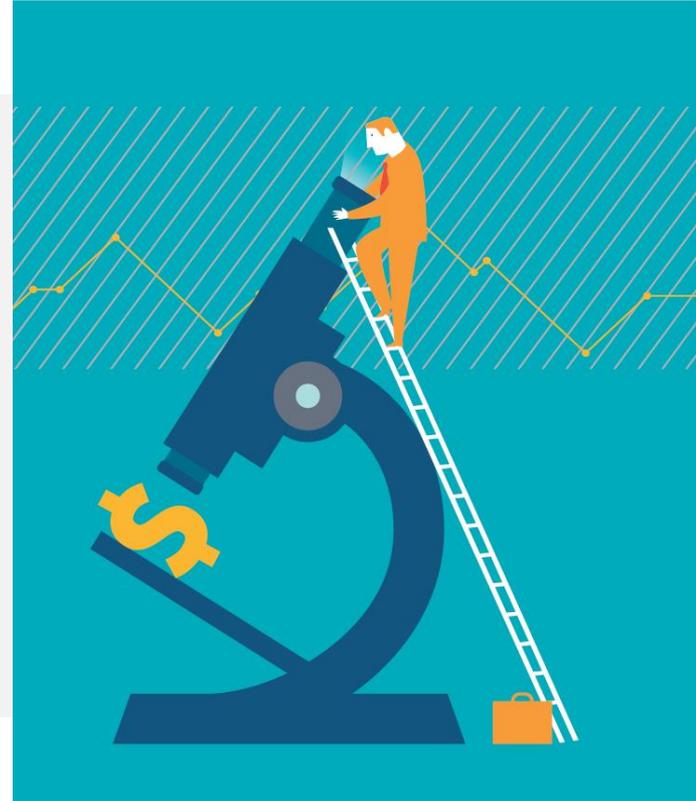
## 3. VALUE PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT:

Obtaining deep insights into client strategies and business drivers and translating them into value creation and risk reduction measures

“

There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.

- Peter Drucker (again :-)



# Strategic Portfolio Management

## What is It?

- Managing and growing the portfolio of assets (clients & opportunities) by investing where the return will be greatest and protecting the right existing business

## Why is it so critical?

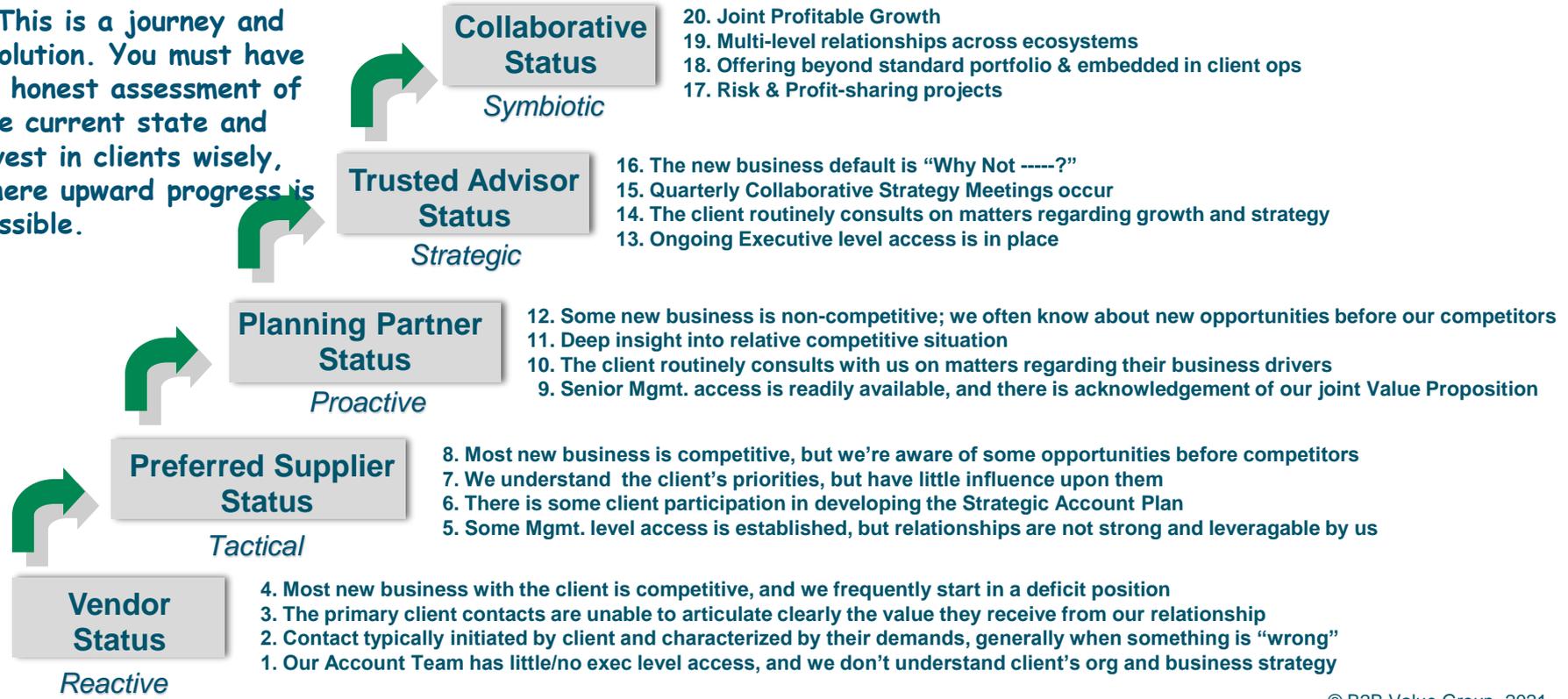
- All clients / potential clients / deals are not equal
- It's up to both Management and Client Managers to optimize resources, manage risks
- Must take a wholistic view of the business to make good bets and trade-offs

## What's required to do it well?

- Narrow focus and concentrate resources in a smart way based on factual analysis and business intent, not gut feel or comfort zone
- Avoid the pitfalls of the “low hanging fruit” or “spray and pray” approach
- Apply multiple criteria to determine the value of a target

# Reality Check on Client Relationship Status

\* This is a journey and evolution. You must have an honest assessment of the current state and invest in clients wisely, where upward progress is possible.



# More Robust Opportunity Assessment

## Is There An Opportunity?

- Client's project, business profile, financial condition, access to funds, compelling event

## Can We Compete?

- Decision Criteria, solution fit, sales resource requirements, current relationship, unique business value

## Can We Win?

- Inside support, executive credibility, cultural compatibility, informal decision criteria, political alignment

## Is It Worth Winning?

- Short-term revenue, future revenue, profitability, risk, strategic value

“

If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.

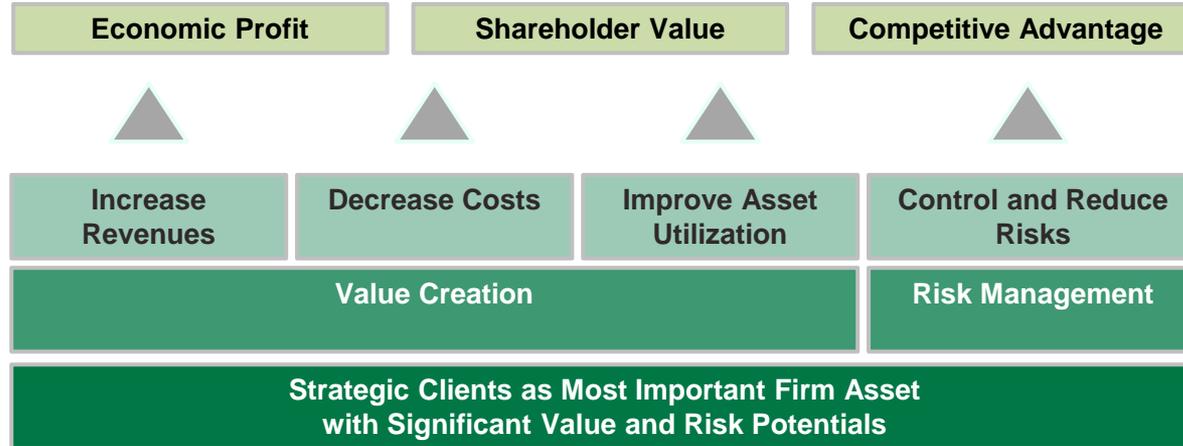
- Henry Ford



# Turning Sellers Into Business Advisors

TOO MUCH OF THIS: SELLER	NEED MORE OF THIS: BUSINESS ADVISOR
Reactive...lagging indicators	Proactive...shaping decisions
Understanding technical product/solution features	Understanding the client's business and value drivers
Being tactical and operational	Being strategic and visionary
Selling to the client's expressed or supposed needs	Developing solutions that make the client more competitive
Being a "lone wolf" sales champion	Driving collaborative discussions around client opportunities
Networking primarily with counterparts on same level, within comfort zone	Multilevel networking, finding decision influencers
Focus on sales data, static account plans	Focus on intelligence, "living" account strategy

# “General Manager” View of Client Business



**1** Establishing a set of collaborative relationships that open the door for strategic dialogue and action

**2** Possessing a profound understanding of the clients’ value and risk drivers

# Intelligence Gathering: The Dilemma

Clients and other key stakeholders hold a wealth of information critical to identifying ways to create value...



...however, gaining access to this information often requires a foundation of trust and track record of bringing useful insights to the table.

## Stakeholder Insight

- Comprehensive Network
- What's-In-It-For-Them
- Influence Hierarchy

## Business Insight

- Operational Insight
- Financial Insight
- Value Chain Insight

# Value Orientation for Client Managers

## Value Capture Check:

- Did we deliver value during a project that we are forgetting to document and share with the client?

## Value Messaging Check:

- Are we addressing all possible value elements when we put together proposals or discuss our capabilities with clients?

## Value Capability Check:

- What is my firm capable of bringing to a client that I am not well versed in or even aware of?

## Value Creation Check:

- What can we deliver that we are not bringing forth to the client now? What does the client care about that we can create value around?

# Is Our Value Proposition Good Enough?

## *What It Typically Is...*

A broad, macro articulation of your corporate vision and value system



A marketing message about the features and benefits of your products / services



Predominantly focused on the superiority of your products / services and their performance



Developed in a vacuum (sales & marketing, internally focused)



## *What It Needs to Be...*

A business case for supplier/client working together

A quantifiable demonstration of how you impact the client's business objectives, both narrow (the deal) and broad (larger corporate business drivers)

Proper emphasis on superiority of your organization's **ABILITY TO ACT**: with speed, flexibility, intellect, resources

Developed with broad internal input and active client engagement

“

In life and in business, if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

- Bill Gates



# Why Strong Collaboration Matters

## BOTH INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY

- Get the work done (necessity, efficiency / speed, quality)
- $1 + 1 = 3$  (better strategy, solutions, value creation, decision-making)
- Drive stronger relationships (access to info, problem-solving, understanding, co-creation of value)
- Change client conversations (gain influence not just access)

# Collaboration Obstacles

- Silo mentality
- Fear...of asking questions, appearing to lack knowledge, etc.
- Time...taking the seemingly shorter, easier route
- Overcommunication instead of smarter communication
- Not doing your homework – smart dialogue needs thoughtful planning
- Not seeing your role as facilitator, network manager, connector, broker
- Team mentality (or lack thereof)

Thank You.

# B2BVALUEGROUP

Smart Collaboration for Value Creation

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# Questions?