

Get Talking
About
Productivity



Put the power of language training into
getting the job done

Research, surveys, and actual examples from the business community prove
a direct link between productivity and workforce language proficiency.



Business

Executive summary

Language barriers separate employees from their co-workers, customers, and others. That makes it hard to get any job done well, on time, or on budget.

When a company stakes out a greater global presence, its employees' language skills must be up to the task. Language training has emerged as a priority in today's multilingual economy. Businesses without it risk missing out on sales opportunities, future growth, and recruiting tomorrow's workforce.

Language skills are a key driver of success in every department in every business, especially when it comes to productivity. Human resources managers and chief learning officers seek effective solutions for their businesses to prosper with a workforce that lacks proficient language skills.





Top takeaways

- Poor communication skills can result in missed forecasts and unmet expectations.
- Productivity downturns and inefficiencies occur when employees who lack necessary language skills find it hard to work collaboratively and efficiently with colleagues and customers.
- A recent report co-written by Forbes found that German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese are preferred after English in the global business community.
- 71 percent of millennials want to work overseas and seek out companies that can give them the opportunity to sharpen their language skills.
- Communicating clearly with customers can save time and money burnishing the company reputation. A drop in customer defections can boost profits 25 to 85 percent.
- Businesses that want to stay competitive, deliver sterling customer satisfaction, and add to their market share need a workforce with language proficiency.



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Recognizing the language landscape

“ Communications is the No. 1 skills gap across . . . the United States,”
according to LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner.¹

Companies in many industries have already discovered the competitive advantages that a proficient English-speaking workforce can deliver.

But that's only half the story.

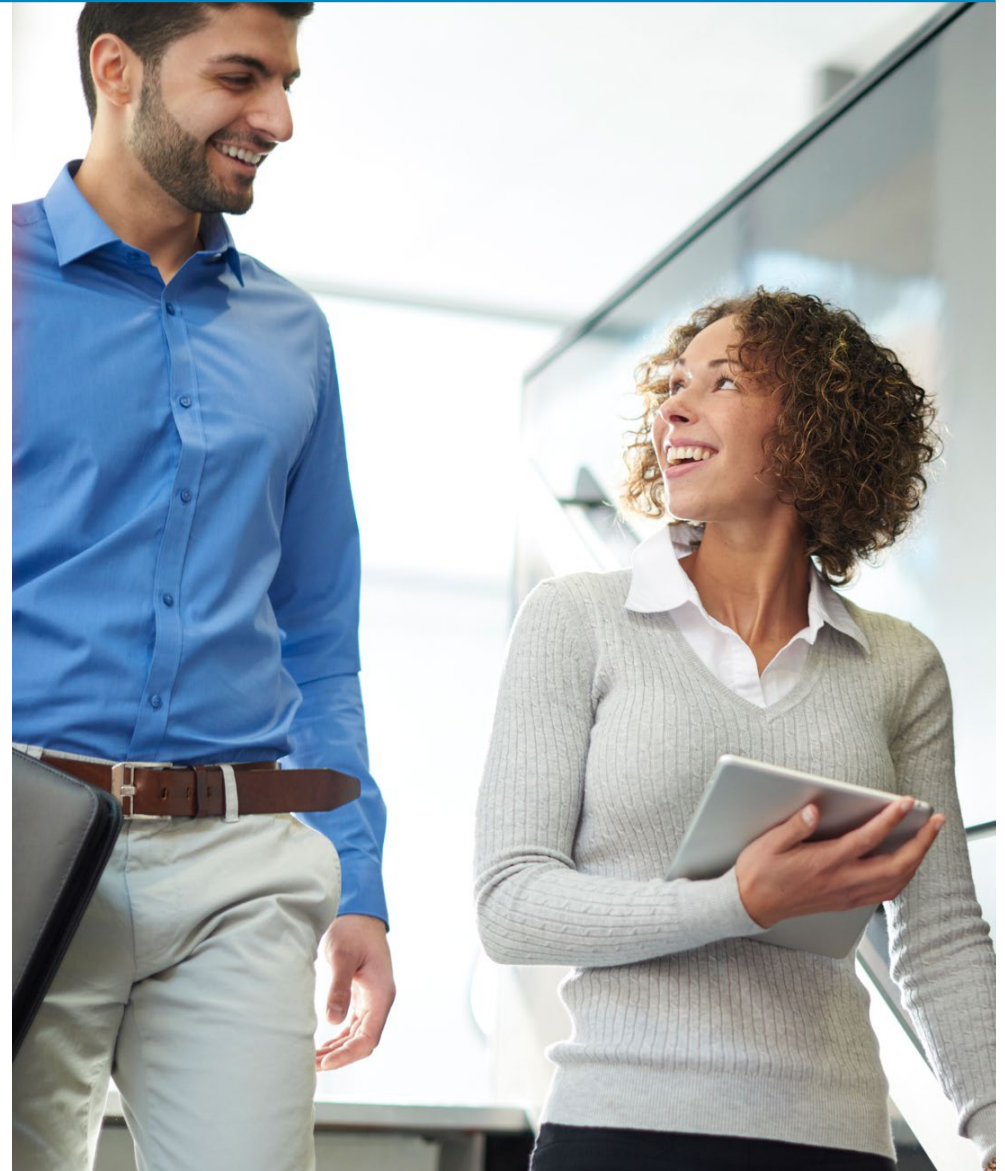
Companies also need employees to communicate in many languages. A recent report co-written by Forbes found that German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese are preferred after English in the global business community.²

A business that doesn't recognize language learning as a training priority risks missing out on sales opportunities, future growth, and recruiting tomorrow's workforce.

Indeed, 71 percent of millennials want to work overseas and seek out companies with training to sharpen their language skills, according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers report.³



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Impact of language skills on productivity

Language skills are a key driver of success in every department in every business, but they are most keenly important when it comes to productivity. A lack of proficiency ripples across a business, with adverse effects:

Employees left out. Workers who can't speak and understand with those around them feel isolated from their fellow workers and the mission of the company. According to a study by McLean & Company, the performance level of disengaged employees falls by 55 percent.⁴

Less collaboration. Employees without needed language skills find it harder to work closely with their fellow workers, reducing productivity and efficiency.

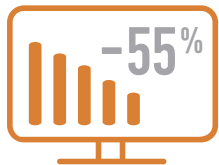
More mistakes. Poor communication skills can lead to more mishaps on the job, potentially exposing a business to costly liabilities and lawsuits.

Missed opportunities. Employees lacking language skills are less likely to share their ideas in meetings and within teams.

Higher turnover. Poor language skills lead to higher turnover rates and lower retention rates, causing companies to constantly replace and train new workers, taking another bite out of overall productivity and budgets. One study from Cornell University estimates that it costs one-third of an employee's salary to find their replacement.⁵

Skyrocketing costs. A lack of language skills can result in projects over budget, delivered late, and not up to expectations. Perhaps a Forbes study of 100 American companies with \$500 million in revenue summed it up best: **"67 percent of participants said that miscommunication contributed to inefficiency, 46 percent said that miscommunication reduced collaboration among employees, and 42 percent said that it reduced productivity."**⁶

It's clear that workers without strong language skills can stand in the way of reaching business goals. The obvious answer is employee language training. But as we'll see next, the path to that solution is not so clear cut.



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Barriers to offsite language training

Speaking with confidence to co-workers, customers, and partners is essential to the prosperity of any global business. Workers need such language skills to thrive, secure good jobs, and build their careers.

Today's reality makes it hard for employees to build or improve language skills on their own. Here are some common barriers they face:

Lack of time. The stress of modern life leaves little time for employees to develop skills on their own, especially language. As a survey of HR leaders by Workplace Management magazine reports: "The most frequently cited barrier to success with language learning was employee workload . . . Employees were simply too busy to complete training, even when the need was clear."⁷

Class schedules. Language classes, such as adult education, often conflicted with workers' schedules, according to a Brookings Institution report.⁸

Family obligations. Outside and personal responsibilities severely hamper employees who want to pursue language learning on their own time.

Limited training options. Adult education offers language learning, but classes can have long waiting lists. A limited supply of qualified instructors also makes outside education less of an option.

Unreliable training. Though well-meaning, adult education classes are often underfunded, with limited resources such as class materials and teachers.

As has been proved, language training leads to the high productivity that companies need. But even employees who want to improve their skills and become assets to their companies face real challenges learning on their own.

Some may ask whether it even pays to train workers. Is it really worth it to the bottom line to provide company-sponsored language training? Let's see.



Responsibilities outside of work stand in the way of employees who want to learn a language on their own time.



Advantages of a language proficient workforce

The best-run companies make their funding decisions based on the return of investment (ROI). They want the best value for the time, money, and effort spent—and rightly so.

At first glance, some might ask if investing in language training for employees is worth it. Is it really so critical to business success? Can't a company simply "make do" with the workforce they already have?

Perhaps the best way to address that is to assess how language training can bolster a company's fortunes across the board.

In a recent report co-written by Forbes on language-learning programs, researchers concluded: "The areas of the business that see tangible and significant benefits from the increased ability of employees to communicate are sales, marketing, and customer service, as well as the business as a whole."¹⁰



Language proficiency is a key driver behind overall productivity throughout a business.



Advantages of a language proficient workforce

Companies come out ahead in several ways:

Fewer mistakes and safety issues. Workers who are clear about their company's policies, procedures, and expectations make fewer mistakes and minimize potential liabilities and lawsuits. An OSHA study "found that one out of every four accidents is language barrier-related."¹¹

Lower turnover. When a company invests in training and shows a real commitment to their advancement, workers stay on the job. The increased retention rates and greater loyalty reduce recruitment costs of new employees. According to research from Forbes on the impact of employee language training, "Those who do the work and make significant progress or achieve their target level of proficiency are rewarded with better career tracks and assignments."¹²

Stronger employee harmony. Language can be the bridge that helps workers feel part of a team—more cohesive and more integrated into the work culture. Having workers with this sense of integration and collaboration results in higher morale and greater efficiencies in the workplace.

Faster problem resolution. The ability to deal with customer complaints by communicating clearly can save time and money, burnishing the company reputation among customers. "Reducing customer defections can boost profits by 25 percent to 85 percent," according to CSM: The Magazine for Customer Service Managers & Professionals.¹³

Higher employee value. Employees trained to use language effectively communicate with greater skill and confidence. This enables them to contribute fully in all areas of the company, turning them into more valuable assets over time.

Language skills have an impact on productivity, as this real world example demonstrates:

"At Huron Paper, a small, Chicago-based recycling company, the vice president recognized the need for improved communication. He invested in Spanish language training for management.

"My employees have noticed a huge difference in my communication, and we have improved productivity by 15 percent."

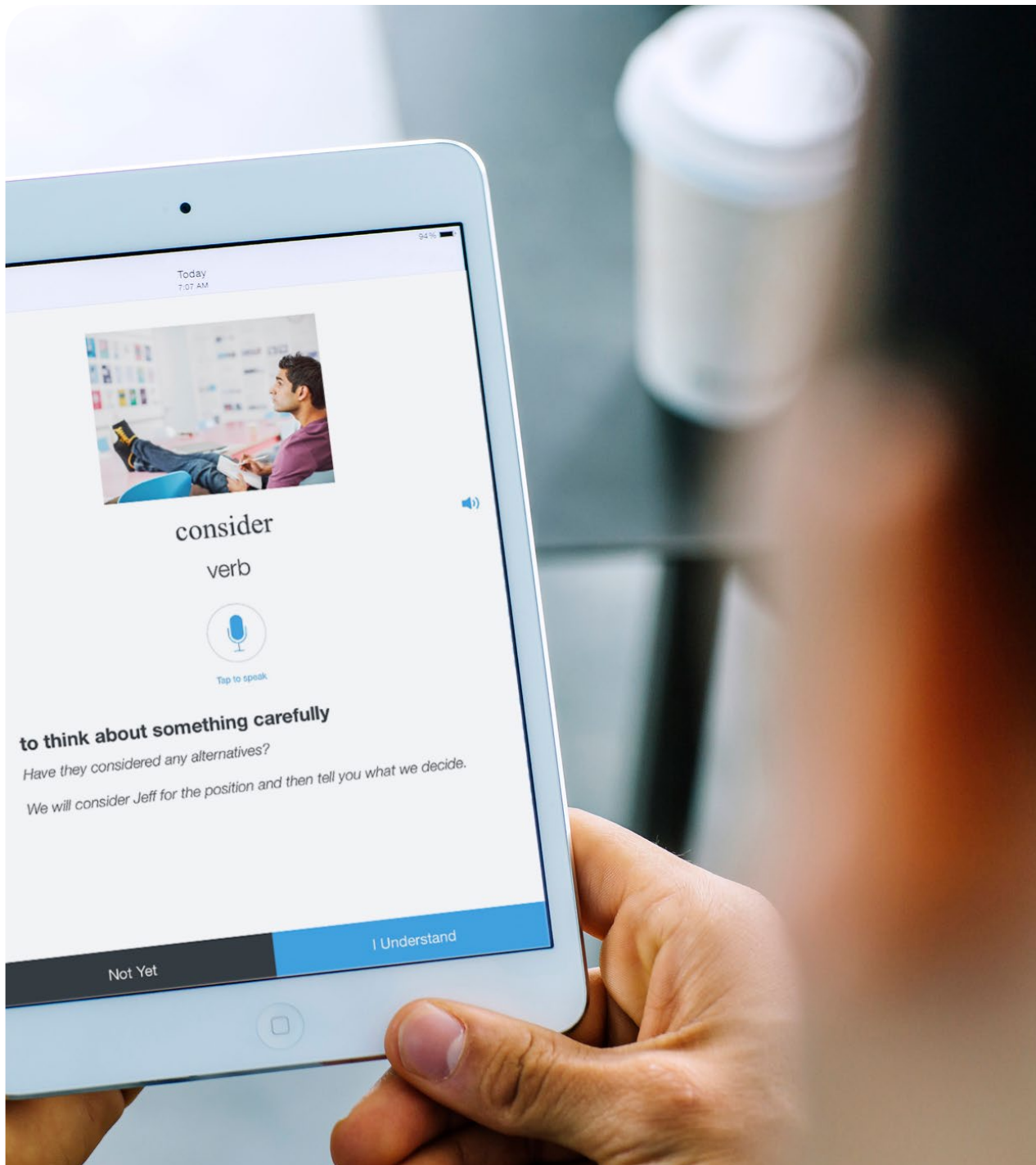
As we've seen, companies that commit to language training for employees can produce extensive benefits that will accrue to every department for many years to come.

And the best way to ensure competent training on a regular basis is to implement a company-sponsored language training program. But what kind?



"... one out of every four accidents is language barrier related."





Solutions for training your workforce

A company-sponsored employee language training program is the most practical solution. Such an effort will not only ensure greater productivity, but also will make it easier for any company to compete in today's global business environment.

Speaking the same language as co-workers is more than a nice to have. It enables employees to state their ideas clearly, listen and understand directions, and consider other points of view.

When employees learn a new language they are more likely to:



Save time



Reduce mistakes



Stay with the company



Advance their careers



Be more inclusive



Solutions for training your workforce

Rosetta Stone works with all types of companies to provide cost-effective solutions to align with their needs and deliver measurable results—giving any business valuable control and insight.

Among the advantages that a program from Rosetta Stone offers:

Employees learn to speak for themselves. Learners develop the skills to adapt to conversation by experiencing immersion in their new language. Employee pronunciation improves with the help of instant speech feedback. And Live Tutoring by native speakers prepares learners to speak confidently in real situations.

Scalability. Leveraging its many cloud-based options, Rosetta Stone can help any business scale up a program to meet employee demand and requirements.

Flexible solutions. Rosetta Stone can customize its language training program to meet practically any circumstances for businesses, ensuring the best use of company resources.



Employees can get training
anywhere/anytime, accelerating
their progress and commitment.

Anytime/anywhere training. Employees can get training almost anywhere and at any time, thereby accelerating their progress and commitment.

Unlimited accessibility. Employees can access their training on any device they want—desktop, laptop, portable tablet, mobile device, or practically any digital aid—so that they're only a finger swipe or key stroke away from enhancing their language skills.

Customized learning. Rosetta Stone can provide tailored language programs in the form of eLearning, virtual tutors, or instructor-led training—whatever works best for a particular business.

So how does a language training program look in the real world? Let's find out.



Case study: Attracting and retaining star talent

Hitachi Data Systems had employees all over the world, each of whom needed to communicate clearly with a wide array of customers and cultures. Because of their global presence, employees worked under different circumstances and on different schedules.

Hitachi needed a flexible solution that enabled employees to train and practice language skills whenever and wherever they wanted to and on devices of their choice.

Rosetta Stone put together a solution that provided anytime/anywhere asynchronous study that worked on multiple technology platforms.

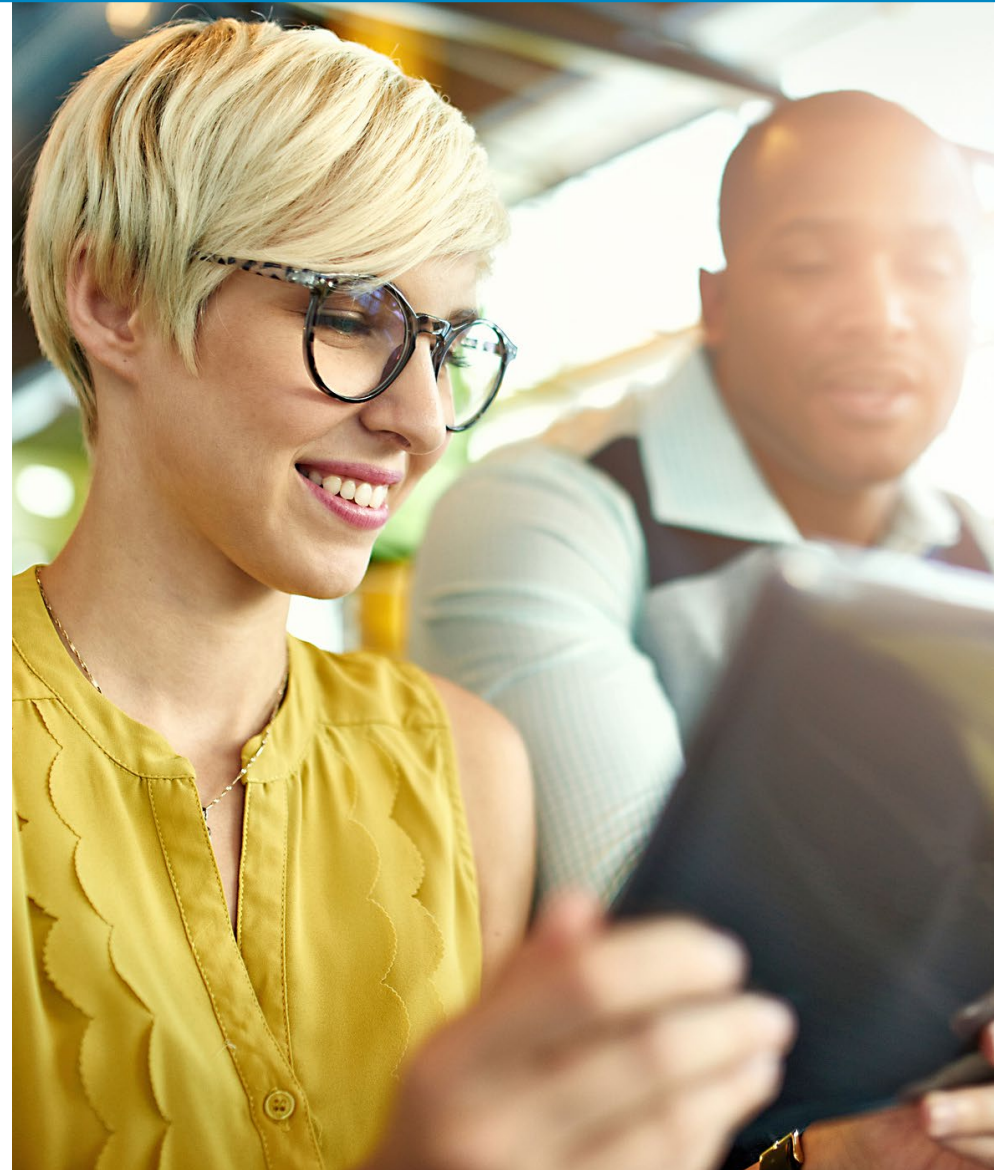
After implementing the strategy, Hitachi reported:

- An increased ability to attract and retain talent
- Enhanced job-learning plans for participants
- A 75 percent return on investment in tuition savings from a decrease in classroom-instruction costs

Nick Howe, vice president of learning and collaboration for Hitachi Data Systems, summed up the experience:

“In a highly decentralized global workforce like Hitachi Data Systems, the need to communicate clearly across the world is paramount. Rosetta Stone helps us break down barriers and drive employee engagement.”¹⁵

As we’ve seen, companies that support their workers with career-changing initiatives like language training will see their productivity levels increase—and so much more.



Language training improves workforce productivity

As research, surveys, and actual examples from the business community prove, there is a direct link between productivity and a workforce trained to be language proficient.

Companies that have workers who can communicate in given languages will ultimately prevail in the global community over competitors that don't invest in this vital skill.

Rosetta Stone is ready to help you leap ahead.

Contact Rosetta Stone now to request a consultation about setting up a language training program for your employees.





Getting started checklist

Envision success. Is global market expansion a goal? How about overcoming internal language barriers? Be sure what success means within the organization (increased productivity, lowered safety risks, better colleague engagement, improved customer service).

- ✓ **Specify direction.** Every business unit has the opportunity to meet individual, team, and corporate metrics. Tailor learning paths for employees to ensure that language training aligns with those goals.
- ✓ **Target results.** Determine up front which administrator(s) will lay the foundation for testing and measuring employee learning progress. Continuity is important if learners are to stay on track.
- ✓ **Sharpen pencils.** What costs can be reduced or eliminated by investing in language-learning technology? For example, switching from decentralized programs to a single platform can be a cost-efficient move.

For more information on how to get started, [get in touch with one of our solution experts.](#)





Resources:

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Business

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone Inc. (NYSE: RST) is dedicated to changing people's lives through the power of language and literacy education. The company's innovative digital solutions drive positive learning outcomes for the inspired learner at home or in schools and workplaces around the world. Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 educational institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

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