

Administration and Regional Development: The Role of Entrepreneurial Management in Revitalization of Communities in Contexts of Economic Vulnerability

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Authors: Wilson Cardoso Nunes

Adriana de Souza Lima

Graduated in Administration from the Anhanguera Faculty of Human Sciences.

Summary

Regional development in contexts of economic vulnerability depends largely on the articulation of public policies, private initiatives, and entrepreneurial management practices. Well-managed companies have demonstrated the potential to revitalize communities, generate jobs and income, and stimulate local production chains. The case of Hands of Freedom LLC illustrates how businesses guided by innovative and socially impactful strategies can transform realities in economically fragile areas. This article aims to analyze the role of strategic management in promoting sustainable development, discussing instruments such as financial planning, social marketing, social and environmental responsibility, and the creation of local production networks. Furthermore, a comparative analysis will be conducted between the United States and Brazil, highlighting differences and similarities in public policies and private initiatives aimed at strengthening local economies. The study demonstrates that entrepreneurial management, when applied strategically, can consolidate itself as a fundamental vector for social inclusion and the reduction of regional inequalities.

Keywords: Strategic administration; Regional development; Entrepreneurial management; Vulnerable communities; Sustainability.

Abstract

Regional development in economically vulnerable contexts largely depends on the articulation between public policies, private initiatives, and entrepreneurial management practices. Well-managed businesses have shown potential to revitalize communities, create jobs and income,

and stimulate local productive chains. The case of Hands of Freedom LLC illustrates how enterprises driven by innovative strategies and social impact can transform realities in fragile economic areas. This article aims to analyze the role of strategic management in promoting sustainable development, discussing instruments such as financial planning, social marketing, socio-environmental responsibility, and the creation of local production networks.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis will be carried out between the contexts of the United States and Brazil, highlighting differences and similarities in public policies and private initiatives aimed at strengthening local economies. The study shows that entrepreneurial management, when applied strategically, can be consolidated as a key vector for social inclusion and the reduction of regional inequalities.

Keywords: Strategic management; Regional development; Entrepreneurial management; Vulnerable communities; Sustainability.

1. Entrepreneurial management and community revitalization: theoretical and practical foundations

Entrepreneurial management has established itself as one of the main strategies for revitalizing communities in economically vulnerable contexts. Unlike traditional management, which often focuses on internal processes and short-term goals, entrepreneurial management is oriented toward innovation, identifying opportunities, and generating shared value. According to Drucker (1985), an entrepreneur is someone who explores change as an opportunity, creating innovative solutions capable of generating economic and social impact. This perspective is particularly relevant in fragile regions, where the lack of public and private investment limits growth opportunities. Well-managed companies, by adopting entrepreneurial practices, can become agents of social transformation, stimulating local development and productive inclusion.

In practice, entrepreneurial management applied to regional development involves the ability to coordinate different actors and resources. Porter (1998), when developing the concept of clusters, highlighted the importance of interactions between companies, institutions, and governments to promote sustainable growth. In this sense, vulnerable communities can benefit from the creation of local production networks that integrate small businesses, cooperatives, and social organizations around common goals. The role of management is, therefore, to align market strategies with social needs, transforming vulnerabilities into opportunities. This movement is observed in initiatives such as Hands of Freedom LLC, which combines business practices with social impact objectives, stimulating both economic development and improving quality of life.

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A fundamental aspect of entrepreneurial management is its orientation toward long-term results. While traditional social assistance tends to offer emergency solutions, social entrepreneurship seeks to structure sustainable models of income and employment generation. According to Yunus (2010), creator of the concept of "social business," business initiatives with social objectives are only effective when they can sustain themselves.



economically viable. This perspective shows that sustainable community development depends not only on philanthropic actions, but also on administrative practices that combine financial efficiency and positive social impact. Thus, entrepreneurial management offers practical tools to address inequalities in a structured manner.

Another key point is the ability to mobilize local human capital. In economically fragile communities, there are often underutilized human resources, such as informal workers or young people without access to the formal job market. Studies by Sen (2000) on human development emphasize that expanding people's capabilities is essential for improving their lives. In this sense, entrepreneurial management has the potential to create spaces for the development of these capabilities, offering training, education, and opportunities for productive inclusion. Well-managed companies that invest in local qualifications not only strengthen their own competitiveness but also generate multiplier effects for the community.

From a practical point of view, entrepreneurial management requires flexibility and constant innovation. In vulnerable contexts, challenges include a lack of infrastructure, credit, and adequate public policies. Overcoming these obstacles requires adopting adapted business models capable of operating in highly unstable environments. Studies by Prahalad (2005) on the "base of the pyramid" market show that innovative management solutions can transform informal markets into sustainable business opportunities while promoting social inclusion. This vision expands the role of companies, which cease to be mere economic agents and become catalysts for regional transformation.

Therefore, entrepreneurial management applied to community revitalization must be understood as a strategic process that combines theoretical foundations of administration with practices adapted to local realities. Its effectiveness depends on the ability to balance economic and social outcomes, bringing together different stakeholders around common goals.

More than a trend, it's a necessity in an increasingly unequal world, where vulnerable communities need innovative solutions to break cycles of poverty and exclusion. The study of entrepreneurial management, therefore, offers valuable insights into understanding and implementing sustainable regional development practices.

2. Management tools for sustainable development: finance, marketing and socio-environmental responsibility

Strategic management focused on regional development requires the use of management tools capable of generating economic results without neglecting social and environmental impacts. Financial planning is the first of these tools, as it allows for the structuring of the viability of long-term projects. According to Gitman (2010), efficient financial management is an indispensable condition for the sustainability of any enterprise. In vulnerable communities, adequate planning ensures the rational use of scarce resources, reduces risks, and increases the capacity to attract investment. Companies that develop participatory budgets and financial transparency, such as Hands of Freedom,

LLC, gain greater social and institutional trust, creating a solid foundation for the expansion of their activities.

Social marketing is another essential tool for aligning business interests and community needs. Kotler and Zaltman (1971) defined social marketing as the use of marketing principles to promote ideas and behaviors that benefit society. In vulnerable contexts, this tool can be used to encourage conscious consumption, the appreciation of local production, and the inclusion of small businesses in broader supply chains. Furthermore, social marketing strengthens corporate image, increasing the legitimacy of companies before the community and investors. By promoting values such as solidarity, equity, and responsibility, organizations create more lasting bonds with the territories in which they operate.

Social and environmental responsibility, in turn, goes beyond philanthropic practices and involves integrating social and environmental concerns into corporate strategy. Carroll (1999) emphasized that corporate responsibility must be understood in multiple dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. In vulnerable communities, this approach helps reduce inequalities, protect the environment, and create opportunities for productive inclusion. In the construction sector, for example, sustainability practices, such as the use of recyclable materials and the training of local workers, generate direct impacts on the community and reduce operating costs. Thus, social and environmental management becomes a competitive advantage in increasingly sustainability-oriented markets.

Another important tool is the creation of local production chains. This model strengthens the regional economy by integrating small producers, cooperatives, and businesses into networks that generate shared value. Porter and Kramer (2011), when developing the concept of "shared value," emphasized that businesses can thrive while strengthening communities. In Brazil, solidarity economy programs have shown positive results in this regard, encouraging collective organization and self-management of enterprises. In the United States, *community development corporation* initiatives

show how investing in local chains can revitalize entire neighborhoods, reducing inequalities and stimulating income generation.

From an administrative perspective, the articulation between finance, marketing, and social and environmental responsibility requires a systemic management perspective. Companies that operate in a fragmented manner tend to achieve limited results, while those that integrate different instruments create synergies capable of enhancing their impact. Financial planning ensures viability, social marketing expands acceptance, and social and environmental responsibility ensures legitimacy and sustainability. This three-pronged management approach provides a foundation for organizations to face the challenges of operating in vulnerable communities without losing competitiveness.

In summary, the management tools analyzed are fundamental to promoting sustainable development in contexts of economic vulnerability. They demonstrate that entrepreneurial management should not be limited to immediate financial goals, but rather integrate social and environmental objectives into the organizational strategy. The experience of companies

Hands of Freedom LLC demonstrates that this model is not only viable but also advantageous, as it strengthens the company's image, increases stakeholder confidence, and creates a solid foundation for expansion in complex markets. Thus, strategic management plays a central role in building more resilient and inclusive communities.

3. Comparison between public policies and private initiatives: Brazil and the USA

The role of public policies in regional development is crucial, especially in contexts of economic vulnerability. In Brazil, policies to encourage local development have focused on programs such as the *National Program to Support Micro and Small Businesses (Pronampe)* and solidarity economy initiatives.

However, the implementation of these programs faces limitations related to bureaucracy, lack of infrastructure, and scarcity of financial resources (SEBRAE, 2019). In the United States, public policies aimed at community development are often combined with tax incentives and specific lines of credit, such as *Community Development Block Grants*, which stimulate ventures in areas of low economic development (HUD, 2020). This difference highlights a greater capacity for institutional coordination in the North American context.

Private initiatives also present distinct approaches in the two countries. In Brazil, due to reduced credit availability and economic instability, small and medium-sized businesses face difficulties in implementing consistent strategic management and social and environmental responsibility practices. Even so, positive examples emerge in sectors such as family farming and cooperatives, which strengthen local production chains and expand social inclusion (GAIGER, 2013). In the United States, private companies with an entrepreneurial profile, such as Hands of Freedom LLC, stand out for their ability to combine innovative management practices with social impact objectives, creating financially sustainable and socially transformative business models. This reality demonstrates how the institutional environment directly influences the possibilities for business activity.

An important factor in comparing Brazil and the US is the relationship between the private sector and the government. In Brazil, many initiatives rely heavily on the government, whether for subsidies, access to credit lines, or certifications. This model creates vulnerability in periods of political or economic instability, compromising the continuity of projects. In the United States, the tradition of public-private partnerships is more established, allowing companies to lead community transformation processes with greater autonomy. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), this coordination between different sectors is essential for creating shared value, as it allows for the alignment of business and social interests in the long term.

Another relevant comparative aspect is the role of community organizations. In the US, entities such as *Community Development Corporations (CDCs)* act as mediators between businesses, government, and the community, expanding the impact of economic revitalization projects (SMITH, 2012). In Brazil, despite the existence of associations and cooperatives, these organizations often lack the technical and financial resources to play a structuring role in regional development policies. This creates a gap that could be filled.

filled with greater government support and the dissemination of entrepreneurial management practices at the local level. The comparison shows that, although similar initiatives exist, the capacity for implementation is uneven.

From a results perspective, public policies in the US are more consistent in terms of economic impact, as they rely on clear evaluation metrics and social oversight mechanisms. In Brazil, many programs lack monitoring and ultimately fail to achieve the expected results. This difference reinforces the importance of strategic management not only at the business level but also in the formulation and implementation of public policies. According to Evans (2014), the effectiveness of development policies depends both on the technical capacity of the State and on the active participation of private and community actors.

This alignment is essential to generate real and sustainable transformations.

Therefore, the comparison between Brazil and the United States highlights that the articulation between public policies and private initiatives is crucial for regional development in vulnerable contexts. While the North American institutional environment favors the integration of efforts and business autonomy, Brazil still faces challenges related to bureaucracy, instability, and a lack of resources. Overcoming these barriers requires greater investment in training, strengthening local institutions, and encouraging management innovation. Only then will it be possible to sustainably align economic and social objectives.

4. Strategic management and strengthening of local economies through small and medium-sized businesses

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play a central role in strengthening local economies, especially in economically vulnerable communities. According to the World Bank (2018), SMEs account for more than 50% of formal employment in the world and constitute an important driver of innovation and social inclusion. In vulnerable contexts, the strategic management of these companies can promote sustainable development by generating employment, stimulating local production chains, and increasing income circulation. However, the effectiveness of this process depends on administrative capacity and access to management tools that enable them to address structural challenges, such as lack of credit and adequate infrastructure.

Strategic management applied to SMEs must include long-term financial planning, business model innovation, and efficient use of resources. According to Mintzberg (2005), strategy cannot be understood solely as formal planning, but as a dynamic process of adapting to environmental changes. Therefore, SMEs located in vulnerable regions need to adopt flexible management practices capable of responding quickly to economic instability. Companies that develop financial reserves, diversify revenue sources, and adopt accessible technologies are more likely to remain competitive even in adverse scenarios.

Another essential element is the integration of SMEs into local production networks and chains. Porter (1998) showed that the creation of clusters strengthens competitiveness by integrating companies into cooperative systems, promoting collective efficiency. In Brazil, experiences with local production arrangements (LPAs) in sectors such as ceramics, footwear, and family farming have demonstrated that cooperation between small businesses can generate economies of scale, access to larger markets, and strengthen regional identity (LASTRES; CASSIOLATO, 2003). In the US, the logic of *business incubators* and *small business administrations* provides technical and financial support to SMEs, expanding their role in regional development.

Social marketing is another strategic tool for SMEs operating in vulnerable communities. By linking their brands to values such as inclusion, sustainability, and social impact, these companies gain greater legitimacy and expand their market reach. Studies by Kotler and Lee (2005) show that consumers tend to value socially responsible companies, which creates competitive opportunities even in resource-limited environments. In economically fragile regions, social marketing can be used to strengthen local consumption and encourage appreciation for products and services originating in the community itself.

Innovation is equally crucial for strengthening local economies. SMEs that invest in creative solutions adapted to local conditions can differentiate themselves and attract new markets. Prahalad (2005) argues that innovation focused on the base of the pyramid can transform poor communities into dynamic markets capable of generating sustainable development. In the flooring installation sector, for example, small businesses that adopt more efficient and sustainable techniques not only reduce costs but also train local workers, creating a virtuous cycle of development. This logic can be applied to several strategic sectors.

Thus, the strategic management of small and medium-sized businesses is key to strengthening local economies in vulnerable contexts. By combining financial planning, production networks, social marketing, and innovation, SMEs can overcome structural barriers and contribute to community revitalization. The challenge, however, is to expand access to resources and management training, especially in developing countries. Coordination between the public and private sectors and civil society will be essential to consolidate this strategic role of SMEs in sustainable regional development.

5. Social and environmental responsibility as a vector for productive inclusion

Social and environmental responsibility has gone from being a secondary or merely philanthropic practice to a strategic element of modern management, especially in vulnerable communities. Carroll (1999) already emphasized that corporate responsibility must integrate economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions, guiding companies to align their profit objectives with social and environmental demands. In vulnerable regions, this integration proves essential, as it allows corporate management to be transformed into a tool for productive inclusion, generating benefits not only for the business but also for the community and the environment. Companies that adopt social and environmental practices

consistent practices create employment opportunities, reduce environmental impacts, and strengthen social bonds.

Productive inclusion, understood as the process of inserting individuals into formal and sustainable economic activities, depends on strategies that value local resources and promote training. According to Sachs (2002), sustainable development requires a connection between social, economic, and environmental dimensions, so that income generation is associated with environmental preservation and the strengthening of human capabilities. In this context, corporate socio-environmental responsibility can be seen as a vector for transforming social and environmental liabilities into growth opportunities. For example, recycling and waste reuse projects not only reduce environmental impacts but also create local production chains and opportunities for the inclusion of vulnerable workers.

Another important point is the relationship between social and environmental responsibility and innovation. Studies by Hart and Milstein (2003) indicate that sustainable innovation can generate competitive advantage while meeting social and environmental needs. In economically fragile areas, the adoption of innovative practices, such as the use of renewable energy, urban agriculture, or sustainable construction, not only improves productive efficiency but also expands local employment. This relationship highlights that social and environmental responsibility should not be understood as an additional cost, but as a strategic investment that strengthens both business competitiveness and community development.

Hands of Freedom LLC's experience illustrates how social and environmental responsibility can be practically integrated into management. Operating in economically vulnerable communities, the company invests in training programs and prioritizes hiring local workers and adopts sustainability policies in its processes. These practices reinforce the organization's legitimacy within the community and create a virtuous cycle of development: while the company strengthens its position in the market, it contributes to the revitalization of the region in which it operates. This type of model confirms Porter and Kramer's (2011) theses on shared value creation, in which business success is directly linked to community well-being.

Furthermore, social and environmental responsibility strengthens institutional image and expands access to new markets. Research by Kotler and Lee (2005) indicates that consumers and investors value companies committed to sustainability, which increases the attractiveness of businesses that operate ethically and responsibly. In vulnerable contexts, this means that local companies can gain new competitive space by demonstrating a commitment to inclusion and sustainability. Social and environmental responsibility, therefore, becomes a strategic tool not only for survival but also for growth in demanding, globalized markets.

Therefore, socio-environmental responsibility must be understood as a driver of productive inclusion, not a peripheral obligation. In vulnerable communities, it translates into job creation, strengthening local supply chains, innovation, and sustainability. By aligning



By aligning business and community interests, organizations create an environment of shared prosperity, capable of reducing inequalities and stimulating regional development. The future of entrepreneurial management will largely depend on the ability to consolidate this paradigm, in which socio-environmental responsibility and productive inclusion go hand in hand as drivers of sustainable development.

6. Case Studies: Successful Community Revitalization Experiences

Analyzing case studies is essential to understanding how entrepreneurial management can materialize into practices that revitalize communities in vulnerable contexts. Internationally, *Community Development Corporations* (CDCs) in the United States stand out. These are private, non-profit organizations that work in partnership with governments and businesses to promote housing, training, and job creation in disadvantaged areas (SMITH, 2012). These models demonstrate how collaboration among local stakeholders can create sustainable development ecosystems, integrating strategic planning, social and environmental responsibility, and management innovation.

The impact translates into greater economic dynamism and strengthening of community capacities.

In Brazil, solidarity economy experiences represent examples of how entrepreneurial management can transform communities. According to Gaiger (2013), initiatives such as recycling cooperatives and agricultural production associations not only generate income but also promote social inclusion and community empowerment. In economically fragile regions, collective self-management constitutes a viable alternative in the absence of structural public policies. These practices, although facing financial sustainability challenges, demonstrate the capacity of organized communities to create innovative solutions to their own problems, reinforcing the importance of entrepreneurial management at the local level.

An emblematic example of community revitalization is Hands of Freedom LLC. The company stands out for its adoption of entrepreneurial management practices focused on social impact. Operating in vulnerable areas of the US, the organization combines solid financial planning, social marketing, and social and environmental responsibility to generate sustainable development. Its work demonstrates that private companies, when well-managed, can lead processes of social transformation, stimulating the creation of local production chains and increasing employment. This example reinforces Porter and Kramer's (2011) thesis on shared value and highlights the strategic role of companies in strengthening communities.

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Another relevant example is that of community credit cooperatives in Brazil, such as those linked to the Cresol System. These community-based financial institutions offer access to credit and banking services to populations historically excluded from the formal financial system.

According to Singer (2002), financial inclusion is an essential element for sustainable development, as it expands investment opportunities and strengthens the autonomy of

communities. The credit union model demonstrates that entrepreneurial management practices adapted to the local context can generate structural and lasting impacts, stimulating the circulation of income and building more resilient regional economies.

In the construction sector, vocational training initiatives in low-income communities have also shown positive results. Technical training programs aimed at vulnerable youth and adults create opportunities for entry into the formal job market while meeting the demand for skilled labor (ANDRADE; TOLFO, 2019). These programs illustrate how entrepreneurial management can act strategically, connecting social and economic needs. By aligning training, social responsibility, and employability, these projects reinforce the important role of companies in regional development.

Thus, the case studies presented demonstrate that entrepreneurial management can promote community revitalization in various contexts. Whether through CDCs in the US, solidarity economy cooperatives in Brazil, private companies like Hands of Freedom LLC, or professional training programs, strategic management has the potential to transform local realities. Analysis of these experiences confirms that successful regional development is linked to the ability to align economic and social objectives, consolidating a model of shared prosperity in vulnerable communities.

7. Challenges and future perspectives of entrepreneurial management in regional development

The application of entrepreneurial management in contexts of economic vulnerability, while yielding numerous positive results, faces significant challenges. Among the main obstacles is the scarcity of financing for small and medium-sized businesses, which often lack accessible credit lines and consistent incentive policies. According to Evans (2014), the lack of capital impedes the expansion of innovative practices and limits the ability of local companies to compete in broader markets. This scenario is particularly challenging in emerging countries like Brazil, where bureaucracy and political instability exacerbate the difficulty of accessing resources. The future outlook involves the need for greater integration between the State, private sector, and civil society to expand financing mechanisms and democratize investment opportunities.

Another significant challenge concerns human resource training. Vulnerable communities often suffer from a lack of adequate professional qualifications, which compromises the sustainability of regional development projects. According to Sen (2000), true development only occurs when human capabilities are expanded, and this requires constant investment in education and training. Therefore, entrepreneurial management must be accompanied by professional training programs, ensuring that the local population is able to actively participate in production chains. Creating partnerships with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations emerges as a promising alternative to overcome this obstacle.

Furthermore, the global context of technological transformations poses new challenges for entrepreneurial management. The digitalization of production processes, automation, and the use of artificial intelligence demand constant updating of business models and administrative strategies. As Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) point out, the so-called "second machine age" can widen inequalities if vulnerable communities are not included in this process. On the other hand, it also offers opportunities for small businesses to innovate and connect with broader markets through digital platforms. Entrepreneurial management of the future must integrate technology and innovation in an accessible manner, ensuring that advances are not restricted to privileged contexts.

Environmental sustainability constitutes another central axis of future prospects. Economic growth disconnected from responsible practices can exacerbate existing environmental problems in vulnerable communities. Sachs (2002) emphasizes that there is no development without sustainability, and entrepreneurial management must incorporate this logic across the board. Projects that prioritize renewable energy, recycling, and conscious consumption not only reduce environmental damage but also create new opportunities for productive inclusion. The trend is for consumers and investors to increasingly demand sustainable practices, making social and environmental responsibility a strategic imperative for companies that wish to remain competitive.

International collaboration also emerges as a relevant perspective. The exchange of experiences between countries with different levels of development can enrich management practices and expand alternatives for community revitalization. The comparison between Brazil and the United States, discussed previously, shows that the integration of public policies and private initiatives is fundamental to the success of regional development projects.

Expanding these dialogues through international organizations and cooperation networks can strengthen the ability of vulnerable communities to access knowledge, resources, and best practices. Entrepreneurial management in the future, therefore, will be increasingly transnational and collaborative.

Finally, it is important to highlight the challenge of measuring results. Many community development initiatives still lack clear metrics to assess economic, social, and environmental impacts. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), the creation of

Shared value indicators are essential to legitimize companies' actions and ensure project sustainability. Thus, the future of entrepreneurial management will depend on the ability to integrate monitoring and evaluation tools that enable strategy adjustments and maximize impact. This will allow the revitalization of communities in vulnerable contexts to cease being episodic and become a continuous and structured process.

Conclusion

The analysis developed throughout this article demonstrated that entrepreneurial management plays a fundamental role in the revitalization of communities in contexts of



economic vulnerability. Through theoretical foundations, management tools, and practical experiences, it became clear that well-managed companies can act as agents of social transformation, articulating economic, social, and environmental interests for the collective benefit. The case of Hands of Freedom LLC and other examples analyzed confirm that private initiatives, when guided by principles of responsibility and innovation, are capable of generating lasting and sustainable impacts in vulnerable communities.

The results indicate that strengthening local economies depends on multiple factors, including financial planning, social marketing, socio-environmental responsibility, and the creation of local production chains. The comparison between Brazil and the United States showed that the institutional environment directly influences the effectiveness of initiatives, but also highlighted that strategic management can overcome structural limitations and generate opportunities even in adverse scenarios. Small and medium-sized businesses, when well-managed, are an important driver of regional development and productive inclusion.

At the same time, challenges were identified that must be addressed to consolidate entrepreneurial management as an instrument of sustainable development. The lack of funding, the need for human resource training, technological transformations, and environmental sustainability requirements represent significant obstacles, but also opportunities for innovation. Future prospects point to the need for greater integration between public and private actors, the adoption of more innovative management practices, and the strengthening of international cooperation.

In short, entrepreneurial management offers a promising path to revitalizing economically vulnerable communities. More than just an administrative tool, it represents a strategic approach that places innovation, social and environmental responsibility, and productive inclusion at the center of regional development.

It is up to managers, researchers, and public policymakers to deepen this debate and expand the conditions for entrepreneurial practices to flourish, consolidating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable development model.

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