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**Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Planned
Parenthood Federation of America:
A Framework for Non-profits Beginning and Ending a
Relationship with Another Organization**

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**Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Planned Parenthood
Federation of America:
A Framework for Non-profits Beginning and Ending a
Relationship with Another Organization**

by

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Report

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Dedication

To my sister, Melanie, my favorite sibling, extra parent, and partner in crime. You have supported me so much my entire life and I would not be the same person without you. You taught me to keep moving forward and I am forever grateful.

And to my parents, Arthur and Robin, who encouraged me to never stop learning or questioning.

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You are all stars that make my universe far brighter.

Abstract

Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America: A Framework for Non-profits Beginning and Ending a Relationship with Another Organization

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

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This Professional Report explores the history of the relationship between Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and ways in which this can inform other non-profits attempting to enter into a relationship. The report starts with an analysis of the history of both organizations, their relationship, as well as the environment for non-profits at the time. The report then outlines the details of the Public Relations crisis faced by Susan G. Komen for the Cure when they attempted to end their relationship with Planned Parenthood on January 31, 2012. The report concludes with recommendations for steps to follow for any organization attempting to commence or terminate a relationship with another organization.

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Chapter 1: Background

"While Komen Affiliates provide funds to pay for screening, education and treatment programs in dozens of communities, in some areas, the only place that poor, uninsured or under-insured women can receive these services are through programs run by Planned Parenthood, These facilities serve rural women, poor women, Native American women, women of color, and the un- and under-insured. As part of our financial arrangements, we monitor our grantees twice a year to be sure they are spending the money in line with our agreements, and we are assured that Planned Parenthood uses these funds only for breast health education, screening and treatment programs. **As long as there is a need for health care for these women, Komen Affiliates will continue to fund the facilities that meet that need.**"

-March 2011 Statement from Susan G. Komen for the Cure, since removed from their website.

INTRODUCTION

On January 31, 2012, the non-profit breast cancer foundation Susan G. Komen for the Cure announced the end to their longstanding relationship with Planned Parenthood. The response was unbelievably epic, drawing parties from all side of the issue into a debate, which spanned multiple issues such as Komen's political allegiance, abortions, and Komen's dedication to their cause. The debate had a variety of effects for Komen and Planned Parenthood but the most notable consequence for both organizations was that their non-publics, people who had never and were likely to never donate money, use services, or buy a product to support either organization expressed their strong opinions across multiple forums, though the situation was likely to never impact their lives in any way, nor were their opinions going to have any great affect on how Susan G. Komen for the

Cure or Planned Parenthood run their organizations. The intense, emotional and polarized responses to the situation, in combination with Komen's various communication missteps, caused a crisis that is now "a case for the marketing textbooks."

BACKGROUND

Non-Profits

Non-profits: Definition

A non-profit organization or NPO is commonly known as an organization that uses the funds it receives to achieve a goal, such as disaster relief functions, providing educational services to impoverished students, or even distributing safe sex information to a variety of audiences.

Legally speaking, in the United States a nonprofit organization is “a special type of corporation that has been organized to meet specific tax-exempt purposes. To qualify for non-profit status, your corporation must be formed to benefit: (1) the public, (2) a specific group of individuals, or (3) the membership of the Nonprofit.” (“Definition of a Nonprofit Corporation,” n.d.)

These organizations must fall under the United States Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3 to be considered a nonprofit, legally. This code governs certain tax exemptions that non-profit organizations are allowed and also outlines strict rules for what non-profits can and cannot do. There are many different types of tax-exempt organizations including: 501(c)3 Religious, charitable and similar organizations, which make up the largest percentage of registered tax-exempt organizations, 501(c)4 Social Welfare organizations, 501(c)5 Labor and agriculture organizations, 501(c)6 Business Leagues, and

501(c)7 Social and recreation clubs (National Center for Charitable Statistics, n.d.).

According to Gary M. Grobman, author of *The Nonprofit Handbook*, a common reference for nonprofit companies, nonprofits are organizations that use their surplus revenues--meaning the money they earn in addition to what is required to pay bills and employees--to achieve organizational goals, such as extending their reach into a particular audience or expanding their services.

For the purposes of this paper the following definition of a non-profit will be used: A non-profit organization is a collection of people who have come together to achieve a common goal or goals. These goals must directly benefit the public, or members of their organization. They qualify for 501(c) status with the IRS and use any money they gain beyond their operating costs to achieve organizational goals.

Non-profits: Environment

According to the Internal Revenue Service Data Book for 2011 there were 1,494, 882 registered 501(c) organizations in the United States and the number of tax-exempt organizations filing tax returns grew by 3.1 percent. However, non-profit organizations were also hit hard by the recession and the total number of non-profits dropped 18 percent and the number of organizations filing for tax exempt status dropped 7 percent (Hrywna, 2012). As recently as 2012, there were 1,551,705 tax-exempt organizations, 963,255 of which are public charities (National Center for Charitable Statistics, n.d.)

With the recent rise in popularity of action-based corporate social responsibility there have been many limited partnerships between for-profit

corporations and non-profit organizations. Some scholars argue that these partnerships are not only beneficial to both sides but have become necessary to for- and non-profits alike. Partnerships between non-profit organizations and corporations, for example, are a way of sharing resources in a mutually beneficial relationship (Kramer, 2009).

Relationships between two non-profits are rarer than relationships between non-profit and for-profit businesses but can present both parties with a variety of benefits such as cost sharing, fundraising or solidifying organizational structure.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America

History and Mission

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a subsidiary of International Planned Parenthood Federation. The PPFA (commonly abbreviated to Planned Parenthood) began as a birth control clinic opened in Brooklyn, New York by Margaret Sanger in 1916. Cecile Richards has served as the president of the organization since February 2006.

Planned Parenthood is also related to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Inc. (PPAF). In their own words The Action Fund is the “nonpartisan advocacy and political arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America” The PPAF works on the legislative side of issues that could affect Planned Parenthood and the services they provide. PPAF lobbies for issues such as pro-choice legislation and access to health care, especially for lower income individuals and families. PPAF engages and educates the community at large as well as various political forums through “legislative advocacy, voter education, and grassroots

organizing to promote the Planned Parenthood mission.” (Planned Parenthood, n.d.)

Current Services and Finances

The American Birth Control League was opened by Sanger to provide birth control services but since then PPFA has expanded their offerings. Beyond birth control services such as medication, prophylactics, and abortions, PPFA now provides a variety of other health services such as breast cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, health education services and health care issue advocacy in the court system.

According to their website, Planned Parenthood promotes “a commonsense approach to women’s health and well-being based on respect for each individual’s right to make informed, independent decisions about health, sex, and family planning.”

Planned Parenthood receives most of their funds from grants and donations, including Title X of the Public Health Service Act. Forty seven percent of their revenue in the 2011-2012 fiscal year came from Government Health Services Grants and Reimbursements while another fifty two percent was divided equally between Non-government Health Services Revenue and Private Contributions and Bequests.

67 percent of Planned Parenthood’s expenditures are for the medical services they provide. Another 15 percent are used for Non-medical Domestic Program Services. A mere 12 percent is for Management and General Support and the remaining 6 percent is spent on Fundraising and International Family Planning.

According to their annual report in 2011, Planned Parenthood was supported by 25,000 staff members and volunteers to provide eleven million medical services to nearly three million people. Currently Planned Parenthood provides their educational, health and advocacy services in 73 independent affiliates across the United States.

73 percent of Planned Parenthood's services in 2010-2011 were providing Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections (STDs/STIs) Testing and Treatment as well as Contraception. Another twelve percent of services were Cancer Screening and Prevention. The remaining fifteen percent of services were other Women's Health Services including Abortion Services, which annually make up about three percent of Planned Parenthood's services.

In addition to these medical services Planned Parenthood also provides sexual education in a variety of settings including schools, prisons and religious institutions. In 2011, their staff and volunteers provided educational programming to more than one million people.

Nearly 80 percent of Planned Parenthood's clients have incomes at or below one hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level and in many states healthcare programs such as Medicaid, cover services for impoverished women.

On the social media front, as of February 3, 2012 Planned Parenthood had 235,796 "likes" on Facebook and 41,295 followers on Twitter.

Environment

Although many of the services that Planned Parenthood offers are available at a variety of medical clinics and offices, Planned Parenthood is the largest U.S. provider of reproductive services. In addition, their services are often

sponsored or subsidized which allows them to offer care at a discounted price or for free to disadvantaged women and families. Families and individuals that cannot afford reproductive health support at common medical establishments have nowhere else to turn, making Planned Parenthood one of the most important healthcare establishments for the impoverished, under-insured and uninsured.

Most of the controversy surrounding Planned Parenthood, as a result of their role in the abortion debate, is centered around anti-abortion activists and organizations. As Planned Parenthood offers aid to women with unwanted pregnancies, including abortion services, they have been a focal point in anti-abortion debates. Planned Parenthood, and their affiliate The Action Fund, want to ensure that affordable reproductive healthcare and education is available to all, and as a result have lobbied hard on matters like abortion. Many members of the Republican Party and anti-abortion organizations, including Mitt Romney during his unsuccessful campaign for presidency, have attempted to defund the organization.

Planned Parenthood receives a large amount of money each year from government sources and many people who are anti-abortion feel that, despite many safeguards put in place to ensure no federal money is being used to fund abortion services, receiving money for the other services Planned Parenthood offers frees up funds for abortions.

Planned Parenthood is a prominent target for anti abortion opponents and as a result they have repeatedly attempted to prove that Planned Parenthood subsidiaries do not comply with the laws regarding parental notification and the reporting of child abuse, child molestation, sexual abuse, rape or incest. These

anti-abortion organizations such as Life Dynamics or Live Action, an American pro-life non-profit organization founded by Lila Rose, have attempted to record videos of their non-compliance. They sent actors posing as various under aged, abused or racist characters and edited the videos before they released them to show Planned Parenthood's deception.

Planned Parenthood and their supporters have thus far been able to prove the video and audio files were edited or faked to cast Planned Parenthood in a negative light. In addition, a 2005 federal inspection conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services produced no evidence of wrongdoing on Planned Parenthood's part.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure

History and Mission

Susan G. Komen for the Cure was founded in 1982 by Nancy Goodman Brinker. Susan G. Komen for the Cure was originally called the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The foundation was named after Nancy Brinker's sister who died as a result of breast cancer in 1980, after Brinker promised her that she would do everything she could to end cancer and improve the life of those suffering from the disease. The foundation was founded on those very ideas and they call themselves "the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the [cure]." (Komen, 2012) On their 25th anniversary in 2007 the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was renamed to Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Current Services and Finances

Komen has around 100,000 volunteers working in 124 affiliates all over the world, currently in fifty different countries, preferring to have local organizations that manage Komen's presence, events and programs in that particular area while the national organization oversees the brand image and decisions that will affect the entire organization such as ending a relationship with a particular company or organization. Komen has been ranked by some studies as the second most trusted nonprofit and the first in brand equity (Joslyn, 2010).

Susan G. Komen for the Cure spends most of their budget annually on public health education and breast cancer research. A significant part of the local affiliates organize their local Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure each year, the fees from which make up a significant portion of the funds raised for the nonprofit.

A whopping 76 percent of Susan G. Komen's income, as of March 2011, was from contributions, sponsorships and race entry fees. That fiscal year Susan G. Komen for the cure earned 438,965,760 dollars in total. Just over 80 percent of Susan G. Komen's total expenses were for program expenses like screening, research and education, 12 percent were fundraising expenses and the last 7 percent was made up of administrative expenses. This left them with just under 7 percent of their earnings, 29,987,936 dollars, in excess of their expenses.

Thanks to their events such as the Komen Race for the Cure and corporate partnerships with companies such as Yoplait and M&M, Susan G. Komen for the Cure has invested nearly 2 billion dollars in the fight against breast cancer, making them the largest source of nonprofit funds in this category. Each year

Komen provides grants for breast cancer research, public health education and breast cancer screening services. In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, Komen dedicated 13 percent of their budget (46.9 million dollars) to health screening services. That same year Planned Parenthood received 580,000 dollars in grants from Komen for breast cancer screening and referral services. They received 680,000 dollars in grants the following year.

As of February 2012 Susan G. Komen for the Cure had 545,365 “likes” and 39,086 followers on Twitter.

Environment

Beyond Susan G. Komen there are many other leaders in the breast cancer movement. The National Breast Cancer Coalition was founded in 1991. They are most famous for the launching of a Breast Cancer Deadline in 2010. They have made it their mission to eliminate Breast Cancer by January 1, 2020. NBCC, as they are commonly known, are determined to achieve this goal through sponsoring research with applicable results, ensuring access to breast cancer care and screening as well as educating and advocating breast cancer related issues.

A second organization, and one of Susan G. Komen’s vocal opponents, is Breast Cancer Action (BCAction). BCAction was founded in 1990 by a group of women with metastatic breast cancer; the organization was encouraged by Elenore Pred. BCAction was founded when many women were frustrated by the inadequacies of government agencies and existing organizations. BCAction is dedicated to empowering women living with breast cancer and producing real results relating to breast cancer issues. Breast Cancer Action does not accept any

funds from corporate sources and is dedicated to “changing the conversation around breast cancer”.

Both of these organizations are a potential threat to Susan G. Komen, despite not being as influential, because they offer similar services and both emphasize direct action related to breast cancer, whereas Komen’s focus is mainly on education and awareness.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure has been under fire before for quite a few issues before. They raise over \$55 million a year through corporate. These corporate partnerships have been with companies ranging from 3M to Ford to the Dallas Cowboys. While cause marketing is certainly nothing new, many argue that Komen's 216 corporate partners show a lack of discretion and that Komen is willing to partner with “just about anyone”. Komen has been accused of “pink-washing” or aligning themselves with corporate partners who, though they can donate large sums of money, profit from products that are harmful or possibly even cause cancer themselves.

In 2002, San Francisco based activist group Breast Cancer Action launched “Think Before You Pink” a campaign, which calls for more accountability and transparency among corporations who raise funds for breast cancer. Breast Cancer Action launched “Think Before You Pink” reportedly because they are “the only national breast cancer organization that does not accept funding from entities that profit from or contribute to cancer.” (Think Before You Pink, 2012) They have launched several campaigns directly The organization has repeatedly criticized Komen for “pink-washing” as well as commercializing the issue of breast cancer and distracting from the real goal, ending it.

Komen's partnership with KFC, notably, came under fire when they began offering pink “Buckets for the Cure” with grilled or original recipe chicken, donating fifty cents to Komen for every bucket of chicken sold. Meanwhile a study found that there was a correlation between body fat and cancer, namely that high body fat at the time of diagnosis in can lower chances of survival. Brinker's argument was that the “Buckets for the Cure” allowed Komen to reach many thousands of women they would not have normally. Komen eventually ended the relationship, reportedly for unrelated reasons, but they are still criticized for their partnerships with KFC and other companies such as M&M.

Komen has also come under fire for their own products, including a perfume they released in 2011 called “Promise Me” which contained harmful carcinogens which many believed to be connected to cancer. While Komen argued that the chemicals in their perfume were not harmful, they did agree to modify their formula because, as the Komen spokesperson Leslie Aun said, they “want to be responsive to concerns”(Weiss, 2011).

Komen has also been criticized for their treatment of other charities. When Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation rebranded to Susan G. Komen for the Cure in 2007 they trademarked their name as well as their new “running ribbon” logo. Komen has since begun suing any organization who has violated their trademark by using “for the Cure” or “Cure” in their name. Komen has filed legal trademark oppositions against a list includes charities like Kites for a Cure and Cupcakes for a Cure, charities which raise money for other causes. These legal proceedings not only use up a portion of the donations that Susan G. Komen for the Cure receives each year, but also use up precious resources for the smaller charities.

Chapter 2: Susan G. Komen and Planned Parenthood

PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP

Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Planned Parenthood began their relationship in 2005 and the amount Komen grants to Planned Parenthood, used for various breast screening services and educational programs, has steadily increased since then. The programs Planned Parenthood offers serve people of low or no income, especially those without regular healthcare.

Each year nineteen Planned Parenthood affiliates has received thousands of dollars from Susan G. Komen for breast screening exams and related breast health services. This grant has allowed them to serve 170,000 women in the last 5 years. While the grant only represents around 1% of Planned Parenthood's total revenue and is only distributed to 19 of their 79 affiliates, to Planned Parenthood it represented a mutually beneficial relationship ending as a result of political pressure. This motivated the company president and various employees to speak to media outlets in order to urge Komen to rethink and reverse their decision. The programs through Planned Parenthood have served around 170,000 women in the past five years directly funded by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure grants.

ENDING THE RELATIONSHIP

On January 31, 2012 Susan G. Komen For the Cure officials announced to the Associated Press that they had decided to enact a new policy that would make sixteen of the nineteen Planned Parenthood affiliates they have funded in the past ineligible to apply for grant renewal in the future. The remaining three, serving communities in Northern Colorado, Waco, Texas and Southern California, retained their funding because they were the only provider of breast

health services in the areas they serve. They released this information in a brief statement directly to the Associated Press, which then reported the information to the masses that stated that the new policy within the company prevented them from funding any organization currently under official government investigation.

A day later, Nancy Brinker, CEO of Susan G. Komen for the Cure as well as President Elizabeth Thompson announced in an interview with a Washington Post journalist that the reason for ending their relationship with Planned Parenthood was not purely motivated by the government investigation. In fact, Thompson admitted that the decision “[didn't] really have anything to do with that” (Kliff, 2012). Instead, Brinker stated that Planned Parenthood wasn't actually providing any mammograms and was referring women elsewhere and, after a careful audit of all of the organizations who receive their grants, Komen had “decided not to fund, wherever possible, pass-through grants” and that they “would like to have are clinics where we can directly fund mammograms” (Kliff, 2012). Though Brinker and Thompson were quick to insist that instead of funding Planned Parenthood organizations in those areas they would fund local clinics that provided direct services. Later that same day, a board member came forward and again cited the new policy against giving funding to any organization under federal investigation.

After these communication missteps made Komen's motivation for ending their relationship even less clear, CEO Nancy Brinker spoke directly to the public through a YouTube video, ensuring that Susan G. Komen for the Cure was and is committed to doing what is best for their constituents by ensuring that the best care reached the widest range of people. She further enforced the idea that Komen was ending their relationship with Planned Parenthood because of their

desire to only fund organizations to provide direct services. However, Brinker's statement only served to alienate her further from her publics, as it made her seem less like the woman who had lost her sister to breast cancer and was dedicated to the fight against it and instead more like the stern CEO of a big business company. The response was almost immediate, with people commenting on the video, creating their own video and even editing the original footage to things like "Susan G. Komen for the Tea Party." (See Appendix A)

Another issue raised by the media was that the pressure on Komen to end their relationship with Planned Parenthood was now coming from within and without. In 2010, shortly after her run for the Georgian gubernatorial position failed, Susan G. Komen hired Karen Handel as their vice president of public policy. During her campaign Handel stated on her blog that she was staunchly pro-life and therefore did not agree Planned Parenthood. In addition, Nancy Brinker, the founder and CEO of Komen worked as an ambassador to Hungary during the Bush administration and had repeatedly spent money supporting the Republican Party. Outside of Komen, they had been receiving pressure to cease their grants to Planned Parenthood from organizations such as the Catholic Church and LifeWay Christian Bookstores that pulled a pink bible from their shelves, which was one of many products to donate some of the proceeds to Komen.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Given the constant political battle surrounding abortion and other sexual health regulations that Planned Parenthood is involved in, ending the relationship with Planned Parenthood could relieve some pressure on Susan G.

Komen for the Cure. With so much opposition, Planned Parenthood's actions are constantly under scrutiny. Many parties are petitioning for the defunding of Planned Parenthood and require proof if Komen's policies truly frown upon having a relationship with an organization under federal investigation. If the decision to end the relationship was politically motivated the relationship with Planned Parenthood provides a valuable lesson to Susan G. Komen. Susan G. Komen's intentions may have been to remain politically bipartisan on any issues not affecting the breast cancer movement, or to demonstrate their desire to move towards more conservative choices as a whole.

Many people in low or no income households rely on Planned Parenthood for their various healthcare and insurance needs. Without the grant to Planned Parenthood, they could still offer breast cancer screening services, however, they would be able to serve fewer women in those 16 areas served by affected affiliates or their available services might be diminished. Many people who are or know people who are served by Planned Parenthood were also outraged by Komen's decision and spoke out, including one Stacey Tillman, an Ohio native who instead of donating to Komen, as she did regularly, donated \$250 instead to Planned Parenthood because they have served her family members when they were in "financial difficulty."(Bassett, 2012)

PUBLIC REACTION

One of Komen's major mistakes was not gauging what the possible public reaction could be to their Planned Parenthood decision and what risks that could pose to their organization. Though there was some support for the decision, most of the reactions to the decision were negative in nature and resulted in a major

backlash against Komen among both their internal and external publics. Their active external publics during this crisis included their donors, corporate partners, Planned Parenthood, beneficiaries of Susan G. Komen for the Cure funded Planned Parenthood services, law makers, and anti-planned parenthood activists. Internally, they had their employees at a national and local levels as well as their local affiliate establishments.

As a non-profit, Susan G. Komen for the Cure's budget comes mostly from private donors and corporate partnerships. Of the private donors who supported the decision many donated more money to Susan G. Komen for the Cure and CEO Nancy Brinker reported that their donations were “up by 100 percent” (Kliff, 2012) over the two days following the decision to cease funding Planned Parenthood. Many of them were quick to leap to the defense in the comment sections of newspapers and on Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets. (See Appendices for examples) Some even wrote editorials and blog posts commending Komen for their decision.

Of the donors who were outraged by the decision to cease funding Planned Parent some decided that they would no longer donate to Susan G. Komen and others have decided to donate to Planned Parenthood directly. After the announcement, Planned Parenthood received \$400,000 in donations as well as pledges of \$250,000 from people like the Mayor of New York in the event that Susan G. Komen did not reverse their decision. Many of them also took to social media, expressing their outrage across the various platforms and comment sections. Some targeted the entire Komen organization and some spoke directly to their local affiliates, holding them directly responsible for the decision.

It is these people that various law makers, most notably Senator Barbara Boxer and Representative Jackie Speier, began to speak out for. Both legislators expressed their outrage toward Komen for making Planned Parenthood ineligible for grants through the same mediums as Komen used to communicate their messages. Speier tweeted "Komen's decision hurts women - it puts politics before women's health. @komenforthecure should be ashamed." (Casserly, 2012) while Boxer released a statement saying that she "was perplexed and troubled to see the decision by Susan G. Komen for the Cure to cut off funding for life-saving breast cancer screenings through Planned Parenthood because of a political witch hunt by House Republicans." (Bassett, 2012) Boxer and Speier both began a petition and appeared together in an MSNBC calling for Komen to reverse their decision.

Surprisingly, Susan G. Komen for the Cure's corporate partners, who contribute the bulk of Komen's operating budget, remained silent and while private donors and individuals expressed their opinions on the matter, most of Komen's corporate partners chose to remain removed from the situation and waited for it's resolution to express their opinion.

Despite the overwhelmingly negative response, this issue also brought out opinions in favor of Komen's decision. Various organizations had been putting pressure on Komen to cease funding Planned Parenthood because of their abortion services, as well as funding for embryonic stem cell research. Many organizations and news outlets, including the Alliance Defense Fund, congratulated Komen "for seeing the contradiction between its lifesaving work and its relationship with an abortionist that has ended millions of lives."(Jackson, 2012) Multiple news outlets and blogs who have typically favored an anti-abortion/pro-life stance were also quick to defend Komen against the media and

public backlash stating that Planned Parenthood left Komen with “no choice” in the matter when faced with Planned Parenthood's “media and public relations blitz.” (Hurley, 2012)

Internally, at the national level, many of Komen's own top-level officials were outraged at the decision as well. While the Board of Directors and CEO and Founder Nancy G. Brinker approved of the new policy, Mollie Williams, Komen's top public-health official resigned in protest. She was responsible for directing the distribution of Komen's annual grants to their various community health programs. She refused to disclose very much about her resignation or anything about the situation between Susan G. Komen. However, when the crisis was just beginning Williams did express that while she has a “deep admiration for Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the millions of women who benefit from Komen's work” she believes that “it would be a mistake for any organization to bow to political pressure and compromise its mission.” (Goldberg, 2012) Williams was simply one of many to resign or promise to resign if the situation was not handled quickly.

In addition to their top level officials, some of Susan G. Komen's own affiliates were outraged at the decision and assured their constituents and planned parenthood affiliates that they were just as surprised as they were and had enjoyed “enriching” relationships with Planned Parenthood. One affiliate, the Connecticut chapter of Susan G. Komen for the Cure stated on their Facebook Wall that “The decision regarding the funding of Planned Parenthood was made by Susan G. Komen for the Cure National Headquarters...Susan G. Komen for the Cure Connecticut enjoys a great partnership with Planned Parenthood, and is currently funding Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. We

understand, and share, in the frustration around this situation. We hope that any investigation prohibiting Planned Parenthood from receiving Komen grants is promptly resolved.” (Bassett, 2012)

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Susan G. Komen's Communications department is lead by Leslie Aun, the Vice President of Marketing and Communications. She oversees the strategic communications and integrated marketing activities for Komen as well as directing the organizations public relations, branding and advertising efforts. While she is ostensibly in charge of all communications within and without Komen, most of the messages designed for the outside public come through Nancy Brinker, President Elizabeth Thompson and/or the Board of Directors.

However, during the course of this crisis it became clear that there is a disconnect between those in charge of managing communications and the communications that are actually conducted within and without the organization. Regardless of what motivated their decision, Komen responded to the negative reactions by immediately going on the defensive, blaming the negative impressions on a mischaracterization by the press and the public of their organization. They also repeatedly referred to their mission of eliminating breast cancer, whitewashing the situation by pushing their sympathetic work forward instead of focusing on the issue at hand. It is also obvious that, judging by the way they handled this crisis, there is no one with any significant power within the Komen organization that practices excellent public relations.

Each Susan G. Komen Affiliate as well as the national headquarters faced comments of all kinds on their various social media outlets (See Appendices) as

well as letters and emails. The affiliates were left to respond to all of the comments on their own with no real direction from the national organization. They were also accused of censoring comments, though they claimed they only removed comments that contained profanity.

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

Susan G. Komen for the Cure

As a result of this being a rather recent crisis there is yet to be any indication on how long it will take for Susan G. Komen for the Cure to rebuild the trust that they lost among their various publics. Mollie Williams, the health official within Komen who quit her job in protest decided not to return to her former position. Williams was not the only one, however, and was joined by a variety of her co-workers including Chris McDonald, the CEO of the Oregon Komen affiliate, and three executives from Komen's Dallas Affiliate.

Most notable of these resignations, however, was Karen Handel's. Four days after Susan G. Komen for the Cure issued their official apology Karen Handel resigned her position as well, stating that she “really felt [she] had a responsibility to step aside so that [Komen] could refocus on their mission,” Handel, who was the focal point of a lot of accusations of political favoritism within the Komen organization stated that “[t]he only group that has made this issue political has been Planned Parenthood.”(Khan, 2012) She was also quick to come to her own defense, stating that while she was looking into removing Komen from the politically charged situation and the pressure that came with giving money to an organization such as Planned Parenthood, her personal

politics had nothing to do with the decision and she did not pressure Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

Komen retained all of their corporate partnerships but some of their partners have stated that they wish to review their relationship with Komen going forward. A significant percentage of Komen's corporate partners seem to have doubts about whether this relationship will be mutually beneficial in the future

Regardless of what they do moving forward, Susan G. Komen for the Cure has lost a good deal of trust among their various publics—including two of their most important, donors and beneficiaries—and their focus must be on rebuilding that trust.

Immediately after this crisis, many began to question what it is exactly that Susan G. Komen does. This sparked several journalistic investigations into the finances and program offerings of Susan G. Komen, including one by J. Bryan Lowder of Slate magazine. In the past one of the major issues within the breast cancer movement has been the lack of awareness among various publics, however, with educational programs, large organizations like Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the heightened presence of breast cancer in the media, the focus is no longer on awareness. Lowder, among others, questioned whether Komen's focus on healthcare educational programs was still necessary and if those funds would be better directed towards breast cancer research.

In addition to questioning what Komen does with their annual budget, many people chose to distance themselves from any Komen related events. Race for the Cure enrollment dropped to a record low immediately after, even in cities with a usually high turnout, like St. Louis. As the local St. Louis CBS affiliate stated: “Even though the decision was quickly reversed, it was clear damage had

been done to Komen's reputation as many former supporters remained angry about the whole ordeal." (Blume, 2012).

There is very little chance that Komen will be able to continue on successfully if their internal and external publics believe that their decision making process is flawed and that their dedication to their mission is irrelevant in the face of politics. Komen must focus on their publics in the future and how to best maintain the strength of the relationship and not compromise it in the future.

Planned Parenthood

Although Planned Parenthood was able to gain support among the general public and raise extra funds in early 2012, they were also affected negatively by this large media attention.

Many lawmakers were outraged that Planned Parenthood and Susan G. Komen continued their relationship and lobbied to defund Planned Parenthood, quite successfully in some cases. In addition, many lawmakers who upheld anti-abortion stances attempted to put laws in place to make it more difficult for Planned Parenthood to operate in their states.

In the past few years, especially in Texas, these government representatives have attempted to take away many of the major sources of funding for Planned Parenthood including passing up on 30 million dollars of Medicaid in an attempt to pressure Planned Parenthood to close their doors statewide. In addition, new laws were passed to make it more difficult for Planned Parenthood to operate statewide.

Instead of caving to the pressure, in April 2012 Planned Parenthood merged the Austin, North Texas and Waco clinics into one clinic: Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas. It is yet to be seen whether anti-abortion activists within the state and national government will be successful at taking away any foothold Planned Parenthood currently has.

CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS CONFLICT

As this conflict had negative and positive affects for both sides of the debate despite the rather quick turnaround, there is a lot to be learned about entering into and exiting relationships with other organizations.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Planned Parenthood entered into this relationship in an effort to improve the public healthcare status of many residents of the United States. The ideal goal, of course, was that Susan G. Komen could provide funds to an organization that regularly provides breast cancer screening services to an underserved public, namely the lower income women living near any of their facilities. Planned Parenthood, in turn, could serve more women and lower their operating costs in general, reallocating much-needed funds to where they belong.

Unfortunately neither side came out unscathed at the possibility of ending their relationship, as Planned Parenthood would lose an expected 700,000 dollars a year earmarked for breast cancer screenings and healthcare services and Susan G. Komen seemed to be acquiescing to political pressures that existed well before they entered into a relationship.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FRAMEWORK

The key to understanding this conflict is to view it with a solid Public Relations framework. The Mutual Gains Approach, developed by Professor Lawrence Susskind and his company the Consensus Building Institute, provides a well-established framework for negotiating and navigating relationships between two parties.

In situations such as the one facing Susan G. Komen, where multiple publics, even non-publics, are angered by the same issue, though for different reasons, it is important to know how to best address each public. According to the Mutual-Gains approach to Public Relations crisis management Komen must acknowledge the concerns of the other side, encourage joint fact finding, offer contingent commitments to minimize the impacts if they do occur, promise to compensate knowable but unintended impacts, accept responsibility, admit mistakes and share power, act in a trustworthy fashion at all times, and focus on building long term relationships.

In attempting to see the Planned Parenthood issue from the standpoint of others, Susan G. Komen should have first begun by understanding why the issue so outraged their various publics and how that affects them. For example, those individuals who have used, are using, or might use the Susan G. Komen funded Planned Parenthood programs would be concerned that they would no longer continue to receive treatment or care if their programs no longer had funding, especially if they had a low or no income and could not afford care elsewhere.

A donor could be concerned that Susan G. Komen is not truly as dedicated to the fight against breast cancer and is instead focused on furthering political goals. Or, alternatively, a donor might be concerned that they are so blinded by

their desire to eradicate breast cancer that they do not care where their money is going.

For publics such as Komen's own affiliates, the fear might be that they would lose trust in the communities they have worked so hard to build and maintain. The fear may also be that they would not be able to service these communities as fully as they had before.

Ideally, Susan G. Komen for the Cure would address these concerns for each public involved and eventually the contingencies that would keep the issues from affecting said publics. What is most important is that Komen's publics feel heard and acknowledged and that Komen is doing something significant to address their concerns. Because there was a variety of debates and issues raised by this one decision it would be difficult for Komen to address the concerns of all of their publics in one informational message. Therefore, to make sure each concern is addressed properly it would be necessary for Komen to speak directly to their publics either through social media or another form of direct communication such as letters. What could have also helped the situation is if Komen located the particularly vocal members of various publics, such as Barbara Boxer and Jackie Speier, and communicated directly with them.

This situation also presented Komen with a perfect opportunity to encourage a public investigation into services offered by many of the organizations that receive their grants, without the taint of any political overtones. Many people in the public who were outraged at the decision to end the funding may have been intrigued by knowing more about Planned Parenthood's programs, what sorts of programs are more effective against breast cancer and possibly even Komen's proposed new criteria for evaluating potential

grantees. Brinker expressed that all of this information came about by way of her own company's audit of their various grand receivers, which could serve a variety of purposes if it was fair and open to the public. Perhaps if the public felt that they were directly contributing to Komen's grant program they would be less resistant. At the very least it would be mutually beneficial if Komen revealed their auditing process and their new criteria for any foundation that receives their grants and opened themselves up to feedback from their various publics. This would not only help their publics feel better but the organizations themselves would be more likely to try to match this criteria.

If Komen considered the needs and concerns of their various publics, they would be able to come up with simple contingencies for dealing with each problem raised by this situation. For someone who can only afford to get breast health services from Planned Parenthood, Susan G. Komen should have offered a list of clinics that they intend to fund instead of Planned Parenthood that serve the same low income people in the same communities. For donors who were concerned about Komen's political motivations or that Komen was blinded enough to support a controversial organization through their grant process, Komen might consider releasing information from their programs audit which pertains to the Planned Parenthood case. These results could assure donors that Susan G. Komen for the Cure is not a politically motivated organization and is entirely devoted to offering the best care to the widest range of people affected by breast cancer.

In ending this conflict Komen should have accepted responsibility for their mistakes including miscommunication and not consulting any of their publics both internally and externally. Even if Komen did not want to admit to making

their own mistakes they should take responsibility for allowing it to seem as though they were being influenced by political parties. Any apologies should have included an acknowledgment of their misstep and what they would do in the future to avoid this sort of conflict again. In order to share power Komen should have invited the public to consult on criteria to help them make decisions that would affect such a wide array of people in the future, even if the national headquarters simply consults their internal publics such as their affiliates and their employees. By consulting these two groups they could gauge what the possible external public reaction will be and how to avoid any conflict with their key publics such as donors or recipients of their care.

Most often for non-profits there is an inherent trust that must exist for them to survive. Over the years Komen has grown into such a large and successful organization due to the strong relationship they have with their beneficiaries and supporters both internally and externally. To act in a trustworthy fashion at all times for Komen, therefore, means that there must be transparency in all aspects of their organization and that they must nurture their relationship with the public by having an open sharing process.

In recovering from this crisis Komen should focus on building, or rather rebuilding their long-term relationships with their publics. If they fulfill their end of the bargain in their apologies and amend their criteria for grants as well as review the situation and determine how to best move forward, it could go a long way into rebuilding the relationships they damaged during this crisis.

Unfortunately, most of Susan G. Komen for the Cure's actions differed greatly from the Mutual-Gains plan of action. At the beginning of the Planned Parenthood crisis Komen was quick to assure their publics that they were

dedicated to their only mission, eliminating death from breast cancer. They also insisted that every decision made within the organization was based on furthering that goal. In terms of their affiliates, Komen did not even alert them to the situation until the media were given the story and gave them no time to adjust or prepare for the situation and many affiliates were left to fend for themselves on their websites and social media pages. Most of their communications were defensive in nature, and instead of focusing on addressing the anxieties facing their publics they continuously focused on Komen's needs and desires.

The problem for Komen is two-fold; Internally, they seem to have no one who regulates communication and makes sure that everyone is “on the same page.” This means that there is no unified communication coming from the organization as a whole. Externally, there is no one actively engaging with their outside publics, using various methods including social media and surveys, to determine their target publics, deciding criteria for and segmenting them, nor is there someone attempting to gauge their reaction to key issues.

Chapter 3: Framework for Beginning and Ending a Relationship with Another Organization

Fortunately, there are many lessons to be learned from Susan G. Komen’s mistakes. The crisis that Susan G. Komen faced, along with some suggestions from corporate partnership experts, translates into a framework for organizations wishing to enter into or terminate a relationship with another organization.

BEGINNING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER ORGANIZATION

Expert Suggestions

The key to preventing a crisis like this for any organization is being certain what the parameters of the relationship are and will be.

Mission Measurement, a social impact consulting firm, has developed four key criteria for evaluating whether a relationship or partnership between two organizations will be mutually beneficial; Funding/Duration, Shared Value, Co-Branding and Engagement.

Funding/Duration:

Mission Measurement suggests that having a strict budget or donation plan, as well as a set timeline for how the relationship will progress, can help prevent any confusion over how the relationship will progress. These guidelines can also help prevent over or under committing to the end goal of the relationship.

Shared Value:

What value does this relationship have for either party? Are the values or goals of both organizations along the same line? These are questions that must be answered before any relationship begins. Both parties must have goals they wish to accomplish with this partnership. Beyond that, these goals must be ones that cannot be accomplished by one organization alone. If, as is the case with Planned Parenthood and Susan G. Komen, one organization has services in place to serve a specific community but not the funding, they must make sure that the other organization can fulfill those needs so the partnership may be successful.

Equally important is that both members of the relationship have similar values. If one has values that contradict the goals of the other organization in the

relationship it could produce disastrous results. The relationship cannot be mutually beneficial if both parties are working against each other.

Co-Branding and Engagement:

Mission Measurement's Co-Branding and Engagement criteria refer to how the two brand identities and organizations will work together. Can the brands be blended in such a way that any products, services or events you offer or sponsor together can support both brands? Will both brands be engaged in the decision making process?

More Detailed Criteria for Beginning a Relationship with Another Organization

Although Mission Measurement's criteria are very helpful in a broad sense, more detailed criteria are needed.

To ensure that there is value in this relationship, and also determine a strict timeline for the relationship, an organization must also consider how long the relationship will be mutually beneficial. Obviously it is difficult to determine whether an unforeseen issue will crop up in the future, but it is important to consider what issues might arise for both organizations in the future. With such a politically charged issue as abortion, for example, it would be unlikely to be resolved sometime in the near future and it is important to consider how that might affect the relationship. Political issues, in particular, can change quickly within the space of a year, and may affect any organization. If the risks are too great the relationship may not hold enough value. Alternatively, coming up with contingency plans in the event that one of these issues or crises do arise can ease tensions in a potential new relationship.

In addition to considering possible future issues, both organizations should develop an idea of what to do if the relationship is not as effective as originally intended. Having a clear idea of what steps to take if one or both organizations wish to end the relationship can prevent potential crises, like the one affecting Susan G. Komen.

The type of relationship may also affect what you consider when entering into a new relationship. For example, if you are simply co-sponsoring an event the focus should be on the financial and time commitments involved in the event. If the relationship involves pooling resources to achieve two separate goals, however, the emphasis should be put on value.

Steps to Begin a Relationship with Another Organization

To determine whether or not to enter into a relationship with another organization the following steps should be taken:

Step 1: Identify the goals both organizations wish to achieve with a relationship. Determine what skills, resources or potential each organization could bring to the relationship.

Step 2: Determine what type of relationship would be best for both organizations to achieve their goals. Some suggestions are: Collaboration, Integration, Cost-Sharing, Sponsorship, and Fundraising.

Step 3: What affect will this relationship have on both organizations? On their volunteers and staff? On their investors and donators? On their beneficiaries? What steps can be taken to ensure that this relationship will not negatively affect either organization's publics?

Step 4: Assess the political, economical, and social position of both organizations. What risks are involved with entering into this relationship? What potential issues could arise in the future? How can you best prevent or react to these issues? What crisis management plans do both organizations have in place? How will they, if put to use, affect the other organization?

Step 5: Determine what each organization will be giving to this relationship. Is it time? Resources? Staff? Money? How much of every item will or can each organization give? What sort of constraints does this put on your relationship?

Step 6: Determine how long you want this relationship to last? Is it for one event? Several years? Can the relationship be renewed if it continues to be beneficial? Is there a trial period before it becomes permanent?

Step 7: Outline criteria to evaluate this relationship on and when to evaluate the relationship. Is it meeting everyone's expectations? Are there issues that need to be resolved? How often will you evaluate the relationship?

ENDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER ORGANIZATION

There are many possibilities to consider when coming up with a plan to end a relationship with another organization that should be discussed prior to entering into the relationship. What are acceptable circumstances where the relationship can be terminated? What effect will this have on both organizations? If there are negative effects how can these effects be minimized? How fast should or can the relationship be terminated? What obligations will each organization have to fulfill to end the relationship?

Steps to End a Relationship with Another Organization

If these questions are answered before the relationship begins a plan should begin to form for terminating the relationship. However if no agreement is reached prior to the relationship, rather like Planned Parenthood and Susan G. Komen, there are some steps to take.

Step 1: Contact the other organization and inform them that your organization is considering terminating your relationship

Step 2: Have a discussion with key members of both organizations about why the relationship is no longer beneficial. This step can not only make both organizations feel heard but may also bring up possible solutions to problems that you were unaware of before.

Step 3: Come up with a plan for ending the relationship while considering what effect it will have on both organizations, how long or short you want the process to be and what potential future your organizations might have.

Step 4: Determine the best method for announcing the end of your relationship. Will you inform your volunteers and/or employees first? Or is it mutually beneficial to simply release the information to the public?

Step 5: Keep in contact. While your official relationship is over, it may be that later on both organizations could partner up again to achieve a separate goal, or that you may need assistance with an issue even after the relationship is over.

Chapter 4: Final Conclusion

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Planned Parenthood relationship presented both organizations with a unique situation to make a difference. The relationship was intended to ensure that the publics Planned Parenthood serves—

namely underserved women across the United States—had access to affordable or free healthcare. For a while the organization was mutually beneficial; Susan G. Komen got to ensure that women from all different backgrounds across the United States were receiving the breast cancer healthcare and prevention services they so desperately needed. After a while, however, the political pressures and investigations became too much for Susan G. Komen and the relationship ceased to be valuable.

The Susan G. Komen/Planned Parenthood crisis provided a necessary case study to examine the relationship between two organizations and how it can be damaging. The lesson in the end is to be careful when entering into relationships and even more careful when exiting them.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Top Comments

No matter how she spins it, she has allowed SGK to become a PAC. She most certainly HAS turned her back on the women who need her the most. Brinker and Handel need to both step down. Unfortunately, even that may not be enough.

[EriksGarden](#) 2 months ago 13 👍

Planned Parenthood certainly does help people plan parenthood. Your screen name reveals your bias; it's associated with the ultimate in unplanned, take-your-chances, accept-what-happens parenthood. How dare you say Planned Parenthood does not help people make conscious decisions, and actually PLAN???!

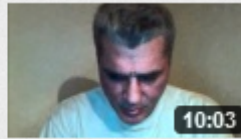
[MrMockingbird2011](#) in reply to [CatholicFaithInfo](#) (Show the comment) 2 months ago
11 👍

Video Responses

[see all](#)



Susan G. Komen vs. Planned Parenthood: The
by [SparksterInc](#)
788 views




7TH SEAL PART 470
by [IAMJESUSmovie](#)
9 views


APPENDIX B




Carrie Orlando
Anything that supports abortion directly or indirectly is not alright in my book. Disappointed in the reversal of the decision.
Like · Comment · February 6 at 10:08pm · 🌐




Teddy Joe Saye
WTF does planned parenthood have to do with breast cancer?
Like · Comment · February 7 at 9:19am · 🌐



Elayne Robertson Demby Planned Parenthood provides breast cancer screenings to low income women and referrals to mammograms if needed.
February 7 at 9:54am · Like · 👍 3



Denise Taggart
Time for Handel to get the boot!
Like · Comment · February 6 at 9:25am · 🌐



Ingrid Bock likes this.

47

APPENDIX C



Victoria Kubiak

You are really screwing up a really good thing, and have lost my support. I am a breast cancer survivor of one year.

Like · Comment · February 3 at 3:26pm · 🌐



Ed Ekendu

Thank you. I like to believe that your people here in Connecticut had something to do with reversing this error in judgement.

Like · Comment · February 3 at 4:42pm · 🌐

👍 Debra Goodman likes this.

Write a comment...



Fiona Hamilton

An organization such as the Susan G. Komen for the Cure should not be making judgements on women's pro-choices. Planned Parenthood is a worthy organization that helps women - full stop.

Like · Comment · February 3 at 11:50am · 🌐

👍 9 people like this.

APPENDIX D



Lina McClintock

Komen organization: You can never restore the confidence that American women had in your organization before your decision to cut Planned Parenthood, even though you have now beat a hasty retreat and restored the funding. Now we know that you are subject to Tea Party influence, how can any woman contribute to your group without fearing her money will be diverted to a political cause at the whim of one of your vice presidents? My advice to American women is to shift their contributions from Komen to Planned Parenthood. Then we will know that our money will not be used to promote a political agenda.

Like · Comment · February 3 at 1:40pm · 🌐

👍 9 people like this.



Jeff Markus The faith of people in Komen's desire to help the cause of womens health has been shaken. These actions and the duplicitous comments of the management of the fund demonstrate a greivous politicizing of a humanitarian cause. I recently lost a friend to breast cancer and I am sure her work for a cure thru the Komen orgaization would have shaken her faith in the good things Komen was doing...

February 3 at 5:14pm · Like · 🌐 2



Blaire Borthayre Linda, I love your post but to quote another poster: "To be clear, Komen's apology is not a promise to renew Planned Parenthood grants. It's a promise to "continue to fund existing grants" to the organization -- which it was already planning on doing -- and to make it eligible for future grants. At no point in the press release does Brinker promise that Komen will renew grants to Planned Parenthood."

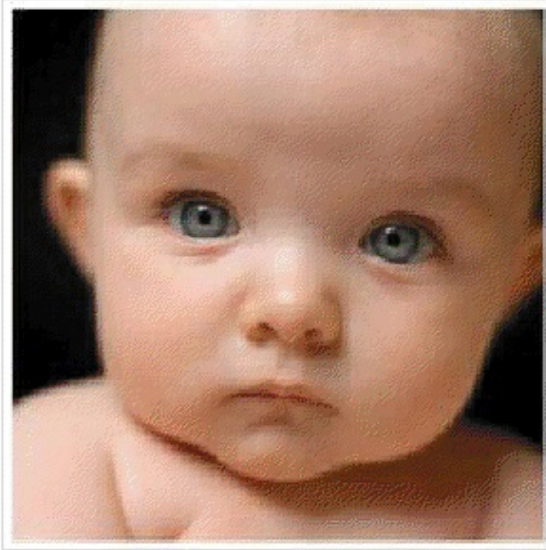
February 4 at 5:37am · Like

APPENDIX E



Patty Holtke

Congratulations! Your reversal decision regarding funding Planned Parenthood can help more and more mothers choose to get rid of their unwanted babies. What a victory for you!!!!



[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · February 3 at 11:02pm · 

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