



Case Study

2017 GOLD NORTH AMERICAN EFFIE AWARD WINNER

"SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY"

Small Business Saturday (SBS) has transformed the way Americans think about local, community businesses. Over the last six years, the day has grown from a social moment into a social movement in the truest sense, generating more than \$50 Billion for small businesses nationally on just 6 celebrated days¹. It has become an official national day supported by the US President.

1. Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data and doesn't reflect the actual receipts or sales, 2012- 2015.

Competition:
North American Effie Awards

Ran in:
USA

Category:
Sustained Success - Services

Brand/Client:
American Express

Lead Agency:
DigitasLBI

Contributing Company:
MBooth
Mindshare
Ogilvy & Mather
Wieden+Kennedy

Product/Service:
Financial Services

Classification:
National

Dates Effort Ran:
November 27, 2010 - Ongoing

★ GET READY FOR THE BIG DAY ★

Help maximize your business exposure and foot traffic with the free tools below.



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Free marketing materials >



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Executive Summary

The Challenge

Evolving a recession-inspired event into a sustained movement that continues to celebrate and support small businesses in a culturally relevant way.

The Idea

Claim the Saturday between Black Friday and Cyber Monday for Small Business Owners and capitalize on consumers' evolving spend mindset and behavior.

Bringing the Idea to Life

A national holiday and a movement that gives 27.9 million small businesses² one powerful voice, and the customers who love them a reason to Shop Small every year.

The Results

SBS has generated more than \$50 Billion for small businesses nationally on just 6 days³, inspired 241 million engagements in social media⁴, and increased American Express brand favorability among merchants by 92%⁵.

2. U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profiles, 2015*

3. GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll Top-line: Consumers & SBOs, 2010-2015

4. Engagements define as any proactive action taken by a social media user related to the SBS or Shop Small social media content and conversations on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or Snapchat, including but not limited to likes, shares, comments, video views, etc.

5. GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll Top-line: Consumers & SBOs, 2010-2015

State of the Marketplace & Brand's Business

In 2010, Main Street USA was still feeling the effects of the recession, and Card Member spend was down

Unlike other card companies and banks, American Express has a network of direct relationships with merchants and consumers. When both relationships are properly leveraged, it's a win-win proposition: Card Members enjoy savings for shopping with Amex merchants, and merchants enjoy the increase in sales. In 2010, Card Members were spending less, and business owners were feeling the impact.

American Express created a day to support recession-weary small businesses

For nearly three decades, the American Express OPEN business has established itself as the leading small business credit card issuer in the United States⁶. OPEN's mission is clear: to help businesses do more business.

Small businesses can often be overlooked by shoppers entrenched in a cultural habit of spending at large, national retailers first during the holiday shopping season. This was especially true in 2010. Consumer confidence in the economy was at a notable low (52.7 in June)⁷, and consumers were managing spend closely. Given the environment, we looked for ways to help small businesses do more business by creating a day dedicated solely to them during the critical holiday shopping season: Small Business Saturday, a new shopping day between Black Friday and Cyber Monday. The results were huge, with millions of shoppers turning out to support small businesses, increasing Card Member transactions for our merchants.

We were able to convince already-stretched small businesses to participate in something unproven that required work during a critical retail period and get cash-strapped customers to come out and spend at local businesses nationwide. That was the easy part.

But a single day wasn't enough, we needed a movement

The real challenge came next. We needed to take a very successful one-off event and turn it into an annual holiday tradition dedicated to supporting small businesses and their communities. More importantly, we needed to make sure that the day remained inspiring, compelling, relevant and engaging year over year.

And that is exactly what we did. As the economic environment and attitude around small businesses has changed, we've changed with it. From a call to arms in 2010 to help save Main Street, to inspiring a movement and activating consumers to support it when Main Street was regaining its stride in 2012⁸, to empowering consumers and open-sourcing celebrations of small businesses in 2015 in the heart of the Small Business renaissance, we have met consumers exactly where they are, enabling our unique holiday to grow up without getting old.

Continued success has required a consumer-centric, evolutionary strategy

This is a story of commitment, constant reinvention, shared values, and the winning and re-winning of our communities' hearts and wallets year over successful year, all while staying true to our mission: to help small businesses do more business.

6. American Express Proprietary Research – Market Share Report, June YTD 2011. Contact: Tessa Pauly

7. Conference Board – Consumer Confidence Index, 2010. Contact: Jill Mislinski

8. NFIB – Small Business Optimism Index, 1986-2012

Audience

1. Small Business Owners (SBOs) (Card-accepting merchants and prospects)

At launch: Recession-weary, growth-constrained SBOs

Risk averse and struggling to survive the recession. They were desperate for growth but without the means to invest in the marketing to do so.

Now: Optimistic, growth-oriented, SBOs

Jack of all trades and masters of many; SBOs feel they can do anything. Appreciate growth-oriented support, and turn

to valued partners to provide it to them.

2. Shoppers (Card Members and prospects)

At launch: Spend-constrained, savings-driven shoppers.

Loved their local businesses but tended to put them on the back burner during the holiday season in favor of Black Friday and Cyber Monday savings.

Now: Purpose-driven, value-driven shoppers.

The SBS shopper is looking for a different shopping experience, one that is worth sharing with others. They seek alternatives to traditional holiday shopping and ways to celebrate the small businesses that mean something to them.

The more established the day, the broader the audience

As Small Business Saturday grew, so did its audience appeal, including business associations, chambers of commerce, local organizations, and medium and large businesses.

Objectives & KPI's

Small Business Saturday's objective is simple: getting more people to do their holiday shopping at small businesses. Since year one, the most important measures of the day's success have been:

1. BUSINESS

- **Increase spend:** Show an increase in consumer dollars spent at small businesses on Small Business Saturday

2. BEHAVIORAL

- **Increase engagement:** Show an increase in social engagement, i.e. likes, tweets, posts, and shares on social media on Small Business Saturday

3. PERCEPTUAL / ATTITUDINAL

- **Increase awareness** for Small Business Saturday among the general US population and small business owners
- **Increase favorability** for American Express among merchants

In the early years, emphasis was placed on SBO and Consumer awareness. This transitioned to converting awareness into action in the middle years, and today advocacy along with action are the primary KPIs.

Insight

Business: The most significant support you can offer a business is new customers.

For small business owners, attracting a new customer is 5X – 25X more expensive than retaining one⁹. While doing so is a necessity for growth, it's a time-expensive effort for time-starved business owners, often requiring more than just financial resources. SBOs spend much of their marketing efforts boosting referral traffic from loyal and influential customers and welcome support to help secure qualified, new customers¹⁰.

Consumer: The feeling of shopping small is greater than the rush of saving big.

Shopping small is a felt experience as unique to each small business as it is to each person that shops in that store. Consumers not only covet the feel-good feeling that accompanies being known and cared for by a local shop owner but also relish the knowledge that they can positively contribute and support their community with every purchase.

Consumer quote:

"It's fun. My family used to shop on Black Friday. We'd get up early, head for sales, then meet for breakfast. No more. It's just too painful: no real bargains, crazy crowds, unpleasant employees. Now, we've made Small Business Saturday our tradition. We sleep in, meet for breakfast at a local, independent café, then go shopping in small stores. Nice!"¹¹

9. *Harvard Business Review, The Value of Keeping the Right Customers, 2014,*

10. *eMarketer, Referrals Drive Success – and Revenues – for Small Businesses, 2014*

11. *USA TODAY, 10 Reasons to Fall in Love with Shopping Local, 2014*

The Big Idea

Small Business Saturday: Claim the Saturday between Black Friday and Cyber Monday for Small Business Owners and capitalize on consumers' evolving spend mindset and behavior.

Bringing the Idea to Life

Early Years: We created a shopping day that helped save Main Street

On November 27th 2010, American Express gave 27.9 million small business owners the power of one voice during a critical retail shopping period, in the heart of a crippling recession¹². Small Business Saturday (SBS) united small businesses across the U.S. and reconnected consumers with the local businesses that make their communities home.

We built a core base of passionate small business advocates and armed them, through innovative social media, with sharing tools to spread the word. American Express educated, empowered, and enabled Card Members and other consumers with simple ways to rally friends and gush about their favorite local business, and incentivized them to shop at local, small businesses. Simultaneously, American Express gave small business owners access to sophisticated digital marketing tools, including free geo-targeted Facebook advertising to put themselves on the map.

These tactics sparked a national response that was bigger than we could have ever anticipated.

Middle Years: We made shopping small an act of neighborhood pride

In just two years, SBS transitioned from a day that didn't exist into one that both the U.S. Senate recognized as an official day and one that 63% of consumers were aware of. To keep the momentum going, we needed the active participation of business owners, consumers, and public officials.

We empowered small business owners to own SBS

Consumer confidence in the economy had grown¹³, and Main Street was back in business. With social media as the engine, we encouraged SBOs to take over the day, rallying the support of their customers and public officials with a singular message: Shop Small.

We armed SBOs with the messaging tools they needed, from printing in-store signs to creating their own ads with a YouTube video maker. Campaign messaging dialed up the distinctive character of small businesses and called on consumers to Shop Small.

We amplified local ownership and activated the movement locally at a national scale

Local meaning and relevance cannot be manufactured, but it can be spotlighted, supported, amplified, and shared. Personal stories of small businesses took center stage, making heroes of beloved local businesses and champions of the shoppers who supported them. We embraced passionate hand-raisers and launched neighborhood ambassador programs to prepare Main Streets for SBS. We even served highly localized SBS forecast messages to shoppers through the weather app on the day.

American Express listened, collected insights, packaged success stories, and shared the magic that communities were creating themselves.

2015 – We personalized SBS and celebrated with America

In 2015, a partnership with Facebook's Anthology enabled us to tap into the passions and behaviors of our audience in a hyper-targeted way. Advanced media targeting paired with passion-based creative, delivered the message of SBS to individual consumers through the specific passion points and content they already loved. We transformed the feel-good nature of shopping small into a community shopping celebration and open-sourced it, giving Neighborhood Champions, SBOs, and shoppers the inspiration and blueprints to make the day an unforgettable shopping platform that we (and they) can build on year after year. For the first year ever, American Express *did not* incentivize Card Members to Shop Small. But they did anyway, in record numbers: 95 Million strong¹⁴!

Our inspired moment had become a sustained movement that embraced consumers and helped small business do more business.

12. U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Profiles, 2015*

13. Gallup, *Economic Confidence Index, 2008-2015*

14. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), 2015.*

Communication Touch Points - All

Cinema

2010 (1%)

Interactive/Online

2010 (22%)

2012 (36%)

2015 (11%)

OOH

2010 (5%)

Print

2010 (30%)

2012 (3%)

2015 (1%)

Radio

2010 (5%)

2012 (7%)

2015 (6%)

Search Engine Marketing (SEM/SEO)

2010 (0%)

2012 (3%)

2015 (2%)

Social Media

2010 (28%)

2012 (19%)

2015 (32%)

TV

2010 (9%)

2012 (32%)

2015 (48%)

Additional Marketing Components

Amex Card Member Statement Credits

Owned Media & Sponsorship

Owned Media: ShopSmall.com, Email, AmericanExpress.com Placements, Open.com placements, In App notifications, Employee Engagement event, Press Releases

Sponsorships:

Year 2012:

a. NBC Today Show: Sponsorship of the Plaza near the date of SBS.

b. iHeart streaming radio: Sponsored Christmas music stations

c. Yelp: Created a local small business guide

d. Worked with EA on a Shop Small branded in game experience with Sim City

Year 2015:

e. NBC Today Show: "Own" the Orange Room and the Plaza on a date near SBS

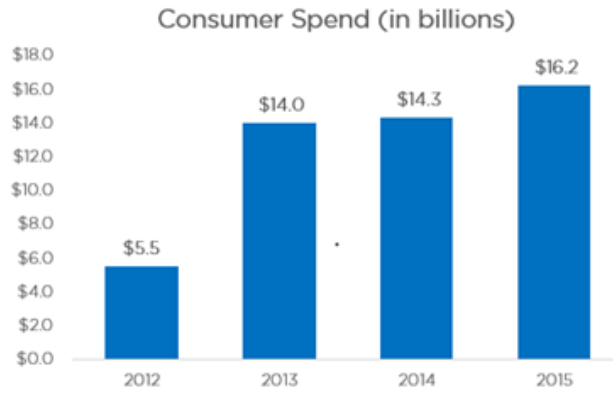
f. The Muppets: Amex partnered with the Muppets to promote SBS and give visibility to their new show.

Results

1. BUSINESS

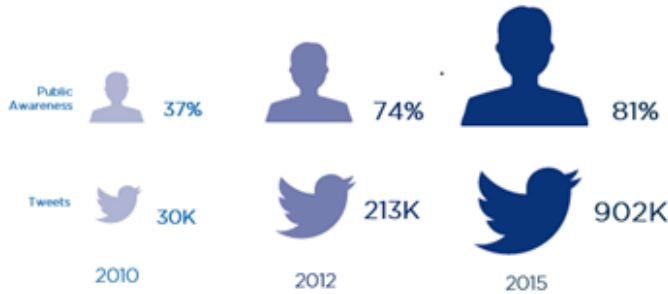
Increase spend: Show an increase in consumer dollars spent at small businesses on Small Business Saturday

Result: +195% lift in spend from 2012-2015, with overall spend totaling over \$50 Billion¹⁵



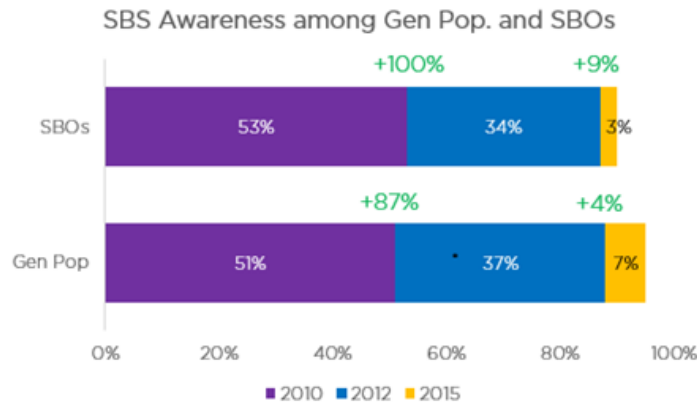
2. BEHAVIORAL

- **Increase engagement:** Show an increase in social engagement and consumer awareness on Small Business Saturday
- **Result:** +195% lift in spend from 2012-2015, with overall spend totaling over \$50 Billion^{16, 17}



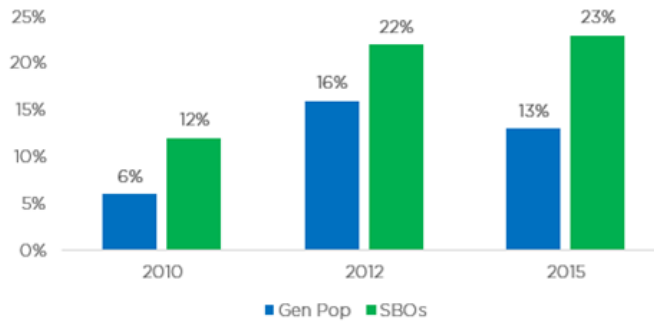
3. PERCEPTUAL / ATTITUDINAL

- **Increase awareness** for Small Business Saturday among the general US population and small business owners
- **Result:** +119% lift in SBO awareness from 2010-2015 and +95% lift in consumer awareness from 2010-2015¹⁸



- **Increase favorability** for American Express among merchants
- **Result:** +92% lift in net favorability, from 12%-23%, from 2010-2015¹⁹

AXP Net Favorability among Gen Pop. and SBOs



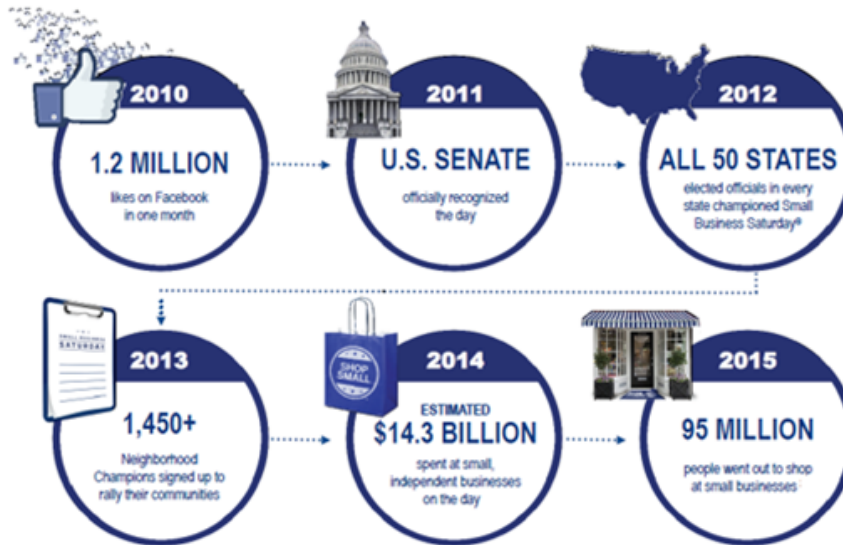
SBS Results Highlights over time^{20, 21}

Early Days

The inaugural Small Business Saturday in **2010** served as a tremendous introduction, reaching **1.2 million Facebook likes within one month²²** and beginning to build awareness.

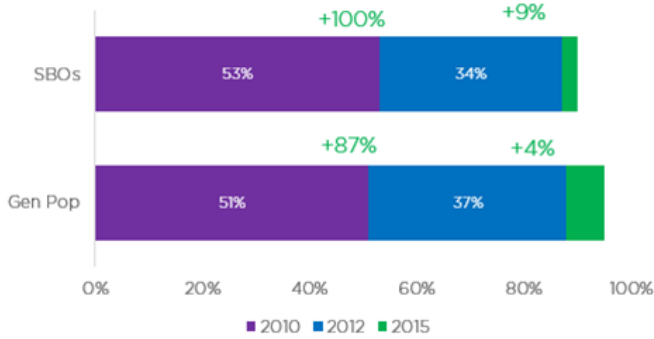
Middle Years:

In 2011, recognition grew significantly with the US Senate officially recognizing Small Business Saturday, and by 2012, elected officials from all 50 states championed the day.

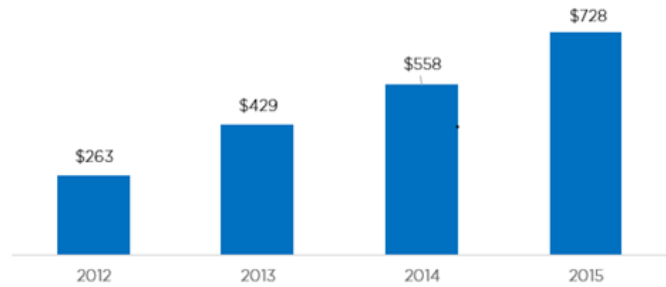


On Small Business Saturday 2014, shoppers spent an estimated \$14.3 Billion²³ at small, independent businesses across the country. Consumer spend per paid media dollar also increased by 30% from 2013 to 2014. SBS awareness among small business owners and the general populations increased by 100% and 87% respectively²⁴.

SBS Awareness among Gen Pop. and SBOs



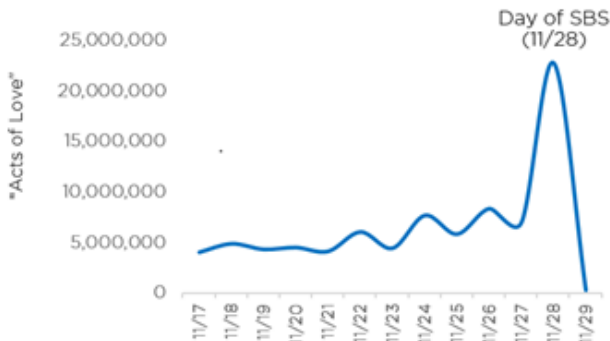
Consumer Spend per Paid Media dollar invested



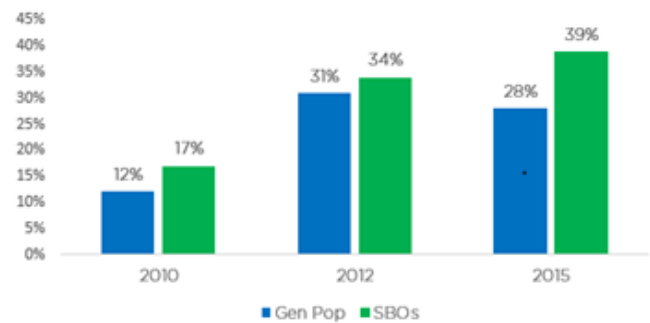
Now

The most recent campaign, in 2015, represents a new high in small business support, and huge business: **95 million²⁵ people shopping small, representing \$16.2 Billion²⁶ in spend.** The 2015 campaign invited consumers to show their love for small businesses, inspiring more than 241K posts about Small Business Saturday on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat²⁷, and 85 million social engagements or “acts of love”, improving perceptions of American Express and reaffirming our commitment to support small businesses²⁸. By 2015, attribution among small business owners for American Express’s role in SBS reached its highest point²⁹.

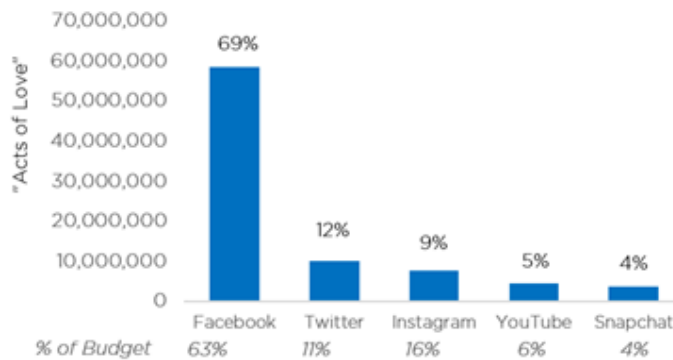
“Acts of Love” by Day 2015



AXP SBS Attribution among Gen Pop. and SBOs



“Acts of Love” by Social Platform 2015



15. Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data and doesn’t reflect the actual receipts or sales, 2015.

16. GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll Top-line: Consumers & SBOs, 2010-2015

17. Twitter engagements: GIF, video, image posts, memes, and moments & trends, 2010-2015

18. GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll 2010-2015

19. GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll, 2010-2015

20. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data and doesn't reflect the actual receipts or sales, 2015.*
21. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, nationally representative sample of consumers, 2014.*
22. *Small Business Saturday Facebook Page, 2010*
23. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, nationally representative sample of consumers, 2014.*
24. *GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll Top-line: Consumers & SBOs, 2010-2015*
25. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), 2015.*
26. *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), nationally representative sample of consumer self-reported data and doesn't reflect the actual receipts or sales, 2015.*
27. *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat posts about Small Business Saturday, 2015*
28. *DCM, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, measuring Video & GIF Views, Clicks, Snapchat Filters, Likes, Photo Views, Shares, RSVPs, Comments, Retweets, Follows, Replies, 2015*
29. *GMPI Small Business Saturday Post Poll Top-line: Consumers & SBOs, 2010-2015*



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Effie Worldwide

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