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## Experts Weigh In: I'm an Entrepreneur in My 40s

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From teen entrepreneurs to twentysomethings and entrepreneurs in their 30s, our MyCorp blog has arrived at the fabulous 40 something entrepreneur! Meet our panel of 40 experts from all walks of life in small business as they tell us what diamonds in your pocket syndrome is and how entrepreneurship means moving forward, not sideways.

1) "I have quit the hectic and stressful life of investment banking in London three years ago in order to move down south and start again in a healthier life more in line with my ethics and personal needs. I am currently starting a business in desktop publishing which I have done on contracts in London since 1998, and which I have always enjoyed. Only now, I want to do it in my own terms and I am enjoying the feeling of independence and satisfaction that comes with doing what I love. It is very exciting but also scary. For the purpose of earning money while I get the business up and running, I am working part-time at B&Q as a customer advisor."

- Isabelle Sene, 45, Desktop Publisher/Designer, [Artabelle Designs](#)

2) "As an author, speaker, professional coach, and consultant, I feel like I am at the peak of my performance not only as an individual but also an entrepreneur. I have crossed all genres on the

corporate circuit and even reached senior VP status. However, it was not until my 40's that I truly found my passion and purpose in life at The Believe Coach. Now, at 46 years old, I believe my life experiences and the opportunity I have been given to impact the lives of literally millions is so incredible. I am not living The Believe Lifestyle and it feels great."

- [Nicholas Dillon](#), MS, MAED, 46, Motivational Speaker | Author | Educator, *THE BELIEVE Coach*

3) "While there are lots of great things about being an entrepreneur (freedom, flexibility, calling the shots), for me the best part is the additional control I have over my retirement plan (and that's getting even more important as I approach middle age). Working for someone else always meant that I was limited in how much I could save and what investment choices I had. But with my own business, the investment choices are much broader—from pension plans to 401(k) plans. My investment choices aren't limited to ten mutual funds selected by the Vice President of Human Resources. And, I have control over not just how much of my own salary I save, but I can increase the company match well beyond 3-5% you see at the typical big company. It's not the only benefit of running your own business, but it's a big one."

- Rob Marsh, 46, Owner, [Logomaker.com](#)

4) "I started Fisher Designs last year. Fisher Designs consults on Medical Device Engineering, Software Engineering, and Software Quality Assurance. I was starting to realize that I was working on engineering projects and others were profiting greatly from all my hard work. I incorporated myself and now seek to capture some of those profits for myself and my family. I really wish I had done this sooner. There is such a steep learning curve to owning a business. I joke with my wife about being able to design medical devices that save lives, but I struggle with accounting and tax laws.

Things do get easier as time goes on, but it is a never ending battle to learn. Age brings wisdom and experience which I hope will help me on this journey.

- Christopher Fisher, 41, CEO, [Fisher Designs Inc.](#)

5) "I was never that kid that absolutely knew what they wanted to be when they grew up. A few years ago I started a dating blog as a sort of self-therapy. I was flooded for guest writing and advice requests. People really responded to what I had to say. What started out as a blogging hobby has turned into a coaching business and expert dating advice writing career. I now write for two major dating sites and have established myself as an expert in my field."

- Lisa Schmidt, 41, CEO and Founder, [Detroit Date Coach](#)

6) "My business specializes in generating widespread media exposure for innovative products, services and experts all over North America. The best part of my job is helping to turn an unknown (or under-known) business, product, service or expert into a better known commodity. I love helping entrepreneurs and companies overcome what I call the diamonds in your pocket syndrome. It's great that you have beautiful diamonds (your biz/product/expertise), but if you keep them in your pocket no one knows you have those beautiful diamonds. I love how my business can help these folks get featured in the ever-expanding and far-reaching U.S. & Canadian media market to spread the news about their venture to the masses to increase exposure, awareness and sales."

- Todd Brabender, 48, President/Owner, [Spread The News Public Relations, Inc](#)

7) "I love being an entrepreneur because it gives me flexibility in everything I do, mostly when. As a single mom I can go to a school activity in the day and get work done at night. I can travel and as long as I have my laptop, I am in business. I get to do what I want when I want, with whoever I wish.

Maybe I love it more than most because I combined my hobby (entering sweepstakes) with my extensive marketing background) allowing me to participate in the promotions industry from both sides of the table. I teach others how to find, organize, enter and win sweepstakes, contests and giveaways. I work with companies creating winning viral marketing campaigns. All day I am writing, connecting and playing online. Doesn't get better than that!

- Carolyn Wilman, 47, Sweepstakes Specialist and Digital Marketing Strategist, [Contest Queen & IdeaMajesty.com](#)

8) "I'm a NYC based architect turned entrepreneur, Founder and CEO of Cheekd.com – the reverse engineered dating site coined by The New York Times as the next generation of online dating. After working in architecture, furniture and design for 15 years for companies such as Christian Dior, Vitra & Karkula, I came up with an idea that lead me into the NYC world of tech and am now solving missed connections one card at a time. I completely threw away my design career and I'm no longer building structures, I'm now building relationships and it's a lot more fun. Cheek'd has been the most powerful thing that's ever happened to me. Building this business has been an incredible learning experience. I've taken a major risk (both financially & mentally) and surrendered my career in architecture & design, but my heart and mind are in this project every waking moment. I've never been more dedicated to anything. Despite the occasional overwhelming stress, it's been loads of fun. I feel like I'm living the American Dream—I've given birth to an invention. I'm an architect turned entrepreneur and I'm no longer building structures. I'm now building relationships. I've built a brand and a company and thousands of people are using the service all over the world. It's the most rewarding feeling."

- Lori Cheek, 41, Founder/ CEO, [Cheek'd](#)

9) "The best part of being an entrepreneur in my 40s is I have had time to learn. I started my business at the age of 28. Over the last 17 years I have gained real world experience of what not to do. I feel like I have a much better handle on what it is going to take to continue to grow my company and provide solid jobs to people who can really make a difference in our clients' lives."

- Tom Malesic, 45 years old, President, [EZSolution](#)

10) "I am 49 and though I've always been entrepreneurial, I have officially been an entrepreneur since 2011. My impetus was backhand – a layoff from a law firm. It ended up being a stroke of grace. I have had the opportunity, with a supportive family, to pursue again the intersection of communications and technology, where I began my career in the late 1980s. While not without its challenges (worrying not only about the bottom line, but about every single aspect of the business), being my own boss is liberating in ways that I could not have foreseen. I love helping my clients to succeed online and I get to learn something new every day. I've never felt more invigorated about work. For those thinking about making a career change... Go for it!"

- Cliff Rohde, 49, Owner and Chief Executive Goat, [GoatCloud Communications LLC](#)

11) "The best thing about being and entrepreneur in you 40s is that I have some experience now, but I am still open to new creative ideas."

- Paul Hagen, 44, CEO, [VacuPractor](#)

12) "As an entrepreneur in my 40s, I love what I do. I was a member of a start up in my 20s and had so much fun in the start-up environment that I was ready to participate in a start-up again. I had been looking for a solution to help me manage my home for approximately 10 years with no success in finding the solution. With the idea, an execution plan and two cofounders also in their 40s, we built HomeZada. HomeZada allows homeowners the ability to track everything about their homes in one place like home inventory, home maintenance, home improvement projects, home finances, and documents. Building a company, watching it grow and doing what you love is key to persevering in your entrepreneurial endeavors. Being an entrepreneur can be challenging and exciting, so having the ability to learn, adapt and yet stay focused is key to growth of your company."

- Elizabeth Dodson, 44, Co-Founder, [HomeZada](#)

13) "Being an entrepreneur in your 40s is amazing! I have the energy to really work on growing these companies, I have strong mentors in their 60s who are helping me grow smart, and I have children ages 20 and 16 I can spend time with because of my flexibility. It is a wonderful time to own a business in our market since we are in an emerging, growing city. Opportunities are there if you know how to look for them. I like the 'be near and appear' approach where I am often seen and engage at work, but have strong COO's who are running the companies and handling the everyday details. It's a great time to own a business!!"

- Jennifer Abshire, 40s, Owner, [Abshire Public Relations](#)

14) "I'm in love with being an entrepreneur. WHY I became an entrepreneur is so special to me that I have written a book about it, Faithpreneur. I love being an entrepreneur because I am able to be an asset to my family, church, friends, community, and society. Every individual is an asset or liability to those around them. Being an entrepreneur allows me to use my talents and passion to generate revenue. That revenue is like water that will touch so many people! Revenue is spent on wages which allows employees to have cash flow. Revenue is spent with various individuals for rent, insurance, telephone, supplies, marketing, charitable contributions and etc. I am in control of who I am going to help, except for Uncle Sam, of course. Being a Faithpreneur keeps me aware that my WHY and HOW are the foundation of my business. I have a responsibility to operate a business with integrity, use sound business principles, be an inspiration to help others and release my faith to reach for bigger goals. Every day is a Friday as an entrepreneur!"

- Marquita Miller, 40, Founder & Owner, [Five Star Tax & Business Solutions](#)

15) "I am the founder/owner of Teach My, award winning learning kits for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. I started my entrepreneurial journey just a few months before I turned 40. I am now 46 and very pleased with my path! Having wisdom and confidence is the best part of being an entrepreneur in your 40s. It takes years to build up business skills, so 10-20 years in the corporate world prior to becoming an entrepreneur can be very beneficial. Entrepreneurs also need thick skins, so adding layers in your 20s and 30s will add to success in your 40s. In general, the combination of wisdom, confidence and a thick skin can set a 40+ entrepreneur up to meet the daily challenges and tribulations of entrepreneurship."

- Christy Cook, 46, Founder/Owner, [Teach My](#)

16) "The best part of being an entrepreneur in my 40s is the ability to provide for my family and know that my kids will have enough money to go to college and go to good schools. You can do that without being an entrepreneur but it sure helps (when business is good) and it makes the long nights and stress worth it."

- Jeffrey Tinsley, 41, CEO, [MyLife.com](#)

17) "Being an entrepreneur does not mean going it alone! Starting a company after having worked in larger corporations, it's exciting to tackle problems I never had the opportunity to face. Top of the list are positioning, marketing, and selling; each are challenging, together they can sometimes feel overwhelming. I've come to realize that it's not necessary to tackle these problems alone. The network of friends and colleagues built over the years have been very generous with their time, guidance, and candidness. By increasing contact and directly solving my problems, I've have also been able to hear others' challenges and provide the same in return."

- Lee Feinberg, 48, President, [DecisionViz](#)

18) "I thought I was retiring at 44 when I sold my retail store but a freak injury led me to start CastMedic Designs, which offers accessories to make awful medical devices fashionable and allow the injured a more positive recovery. I had so much media success handling my own PR (over 50 media outlets in less than a year) that I launched PR for Anyone®, as a resource for small business owners to handle their own PR. The best part of being an entrepreneur in your 40s is that your resilient. Things can knock you down but by now, you've had hard knocks in life and it's pretty easy to pick up the pieces and keep going."

- Christina Daves, 47, Founder and CEO, [CastMedic Designs](#) and [PR for Anyone®](#)

19) "I launched uwannadu, as in what do 'you want to do' at 48 because I saw so many people in careers they didn't like and companies suffering from employees who were not in the right jobs. When my son entered college the problem became very personal. The biggest shift for me came when I realized I didn't mind doing menial tasks for MY company. One day I was carrying a video camera and lights after conducting another revealing career interview for our site. A former colleague of mine from a global consulting firm looked at me like I was taking out the garbage. Right then and there I knew the difference between an entrepreneur and an employee. My partners and I are not too good for anything that makes our business grow. 'Would you like some cream in that coffee?'"

- Chris Hodges, 40s, Owner, [uwannadu](#)

20) "In your 40s, you truly understand the meaning of good those come to those who wait. Patience will take you places you never dreamed. For myself and fellow entrepreneur friends over 40, we completely and wholeheartedly understand that most businesses don't come out of the gates with customers lined up around your imaginary corner of success. In your 40s you enter into the dream of owning your own company with your eyes wide open to the realities of the success story we are chasing. Time is still on our side and we are willing to put the clock aside and just let it happen through our hard work, day after day, week after week.

As for the best part: showing our children that dedication and patience truly are a virtue of success. My children are always asking me lots of wonderful inquisitive questions as to what and why I am doing things in relation to my business. I always stop and explain. A free mini education in business is truly a priceless gift I can share with them at this point."

- Sharon Hasa, 40s, Owner, [Rock-A-Pocket](#)

21) "I am an entrepreneur and created a product out of pure necessity as my son was a constant drooler as a baby. The search began in finding the perfect fabric that would dry quickly, absorb liquids and keep

clothing dry. Mission complete! I would like to introduce the latest in baby bibs that we call Dribble Bibble, where our tagline is One Bib a Day Keeps the Moisture Away. This multi-purpose bib solves the problem for parents/caretakers who change bibs all day long and have children sitting in wet clothing. It is a 3 in 1 design for drooling, formula and solid food. It's fast drying, reversible, great for traveling, cuts down on laundry and is eco-friendly.

The best part about being an entrepreneur is showing my children that an idea came from a problem and you can use your mind to find a solution. But most importantly, finding your passion in life is key."

- Deborah Rothschild, 43, CEO, [Dribble Bibble](#)

22) "The best part about being an entrepreneur in my 40s is the ability to not take anything personally. If someone thinks my business is kooky, it doesn't bother me. In my 20s or 30s, other people's opinions may have stopped me from pursuing my dream. I launched my business right before my 40th birthday. Plenty of people told me it wouldn't work and that it was a silly concept. I was sure it would work, and maybe more importantly, sure of myself, so I ignored them. And I was right."

- Suzanne Casamento, 42, Founder, [Fantasy Dating, LLC](#)

23) "I became an entrepreneur because of an opportunity to purchase a company came about in my mid-40s that I simply couldn't pass. I think years of working in various capacities at large and small companies and in different industries have given me deeper perspective on what matters in building a successful company. The value of hiring the exactly right people, making every dollar count, the importance of delegating right jobs to right people and what to keep for yourself are second nature and so running a company is easier. From personal strengths perspective I feel you have more developed decision making skills, stronger negotiation ability and ability to form a clear vision for execution. I think these things are only learned with experience and you have to put in your time to get them pat down. With these things not hammering you down, you can actually focus on people, product and process and working is actually more fun. Every hour is productive and you are moving forward and not sideways."

- Ajay V. Gupte, Ph.D., 47, President & CEO, [CLCD](#)

24) "Being an entrepreneur in your 40s gives you the experience, inner calm and maturity needed to drive a business forward on a different level. I'm on my second business (my first, an e-commerce company, was launched in my late 20s) and while being young provides you with boundless energy and the ability to work in long stretches surviving on energy drinks and trail mix, I've found the level of experience achieved over 20+ years brings with it a sense of confidence and ability not yet developed earlier in my career. In my current business as a market strategist, I'm able to leverage my career successes and failures and assist other businesses with their efforts in moving their organizations forward through creating exceptional customer experiences. It's a different type of energy and one I'm thoroughly enjoying."

- Valerie Reddemann, 46, Principal, [Hero CMO Market Strategy](#)

25) "I completely love having more life experiences before jumping into BITS OF LOVE Jewelry. Small business moments definitely have their own time schedules. BITS OF LOVE Jewelry required a detour through Lyme disease that led to screenwriting which triggered the memory of a LOVE ring that would be the first reminder ring we created. A completely unexpected journey that was worth the wait."

- Cheryl Laughlin, 42, Owner & Designer, [BITS OF LOVE Jewelry](#)

26) "I created the idea for myTab in 2005 and weeks after my 40th birthday (3 years ago), we launched the company. myTab's a way to save travel cash and shout 'put it on myTab' so friends & family contribute towards your celebrations or dream trips i.e. birthday, graduation, study abroad, or an anniversary. Then you can use all or any funds towards travel, all within myTab choosing from thousands of flights and hotels. The more myTabbers funding trips, the more we can negotiate exclusive deals with airlines and hotels, game changing the power of crowdfunding. The generate revenue at slow/long lead times at a fraction of traditional marketing costs to a cash-rich demographic, ready to globe trot which ultimately stabilizes the economy."

- Heddi Cundle, 43, Founder, [myTab](#)

27) "My favorite part of my job is the support we receive from other woman entrepreneurs. Women supporting women is an incredible feeling and sense of belonging."

- Rachel Teyssier, 45, Co-Founder, [RAINRAPs](#)

28) "I started my business 10 years ago when I was 36. At the time, I was not confident that I could make it, and frankly there have been some very challenging (in the red) years. My business is a non-profit educational organization. We create curricula and train teachers. There are two things I love about this business: I'm able (forced) to tap into every creative muscle, not just in creating our products, but in all of the business matters. I also love that I am working for myself; that means that as a 40-something, I can spend extra time with the family when needed and it also means that I'm young enough to look at my mistakes as learning opportunities and not catastrophes."

- Alexander Seinfeld, 46, JSL, Inc.

29) "I'm 48 and my consulting business just celebrated its fourth anniversary. As a 40-something entrepreneur, I learned from experience when I didn't want to do. Twenty years ago I opened a small marketing agency. When it closed, I went into the corporate world working as a marketing executive for large companies like UPS and tiny tech startups. Being mid-career now, I have a stronger sense of my personal passion (helping business owners grow) and where my skills (turning chaos into clarity) are best utilized. As a result, I'm much happier and fulfilled at home and work."

- Joellyn 'Joey' Sargent, 48, President, [Claravon Consulting Group](#)

30) "The best part about being an entrepreneur in my 40s is the ability to incorporate all the life lessons I've learned over the years, and to make decisions that help me live a fulfilled life, contribute to society in a positive way, and still have time for my family. I am a filmmaker and while producing video for clients such as AOL, Allstate, YP and hundreds of small businesses, I've learned that all these businesses, although different, have common denominators that make them go and make them grow. With that I decided to produce a documentary on entrepreneurship called A Billion Entrepreneurs to help shed light on how invigorating it is to be an entrepreneur. While doing so, I have found my purpose which is allowing me to find more freedom, security, and success in my life."

- Jimmy Newson, 44, Director/Co-Founder, [A Billion Entrepreneurs, LLC](#)

31) "We bought my husband's family farm seven years ago and moved back to North Dakota. We are 40 miles 'to town'. (Okay – to a town with jobs.... our nearest town has 37 residents and no services.) At first I tried working in town to help offset farm income and get a little ahead. After that became tedious, I



decided to use the great skills I learned as a child to create my own income. I formed Buffalo Gals Mercantile and went to work making Biscotti using my Grammy's century old recipe. After a while I added in my sewing skills. I now enjoy a small wholesale trade for the biscotti and my sewn items are beginning to attract plenty of attention. Has it been easy? NO. Working from the farm and coordinating deliveries and getting supplies can be a challenge sometimes, not to mention the marketing, but the rewards of having my own business are incredible!"

- Katy Kassian, 48, Owner, [Buffalo Gals Mercantile](#)

32) "As a former model, I must say that besides turning 40 something, I grew bored of just looking into a camera and being known in the media for how I look rather than what I had to say. That said, I call my own shots, do as I please, create my own magic, and do it to fatten my own pockets, not someone else's. I follow both longtime and whimsical passions and am fortunate enough to have turned them into profit, particular in the form of a well established publication, a rising skincare company, and a million dollar medical practice. I get to use a combination of my sheer business sense and playful creative side. Plus, owning more than one business like I do brings about my enjoyment and keen ability to multitask, as I wear different pants for different products and services. People can finally realize that I am more than just a Playboy model who looks pretty but actually has so much more to say, do, and accomplish."

- Stephanie Adams-Nicolaj, 40s, Founder and CEO of [GODDESSY & GODDESSY Organics](#), Partner & CFO of [Wall Street Chiropractic](#)

33) "I started my company three years ago when I was wondering whether you return to work (or not) after being a stay-at-home mom. Radiant Health Institute is a consortium of passionate luminaries with a deep desire to help people discover a conscious life of complete authenticity. Our diverse group of holistic practitioners and educators is dedicated to raising the banner of mindful living through Holistic Life Coach Training and meaningful publishing. The primary purpose of Radiant Health Institute is to facilitate human growth. The focus is all about quality of life, holistic pursuits, personal and spiritual growth and so much more."

- Dez Stephens, 48, Founder, [Radiant Health Institute](#)

34) "The best thing about being an entrepreneur in my 40s is the freedom and flexibility that comes with creating a business that suits my total life and the total lives of those who work for me. I create the rules and I create the culture. As an executive recruiter, I find that the many of the executives who are my clients and executives that are my candidates would love to trade places with me as they are burned out on following someone else's rules and living with someone else's culture but given their high income demands they are stuck. Having started this business in my mid 20s I have always had the freedom and flexibility, but in my forties I appreciate it much more and so do my people."

- Paul Millard, 45, Managing Partner, [The Millard Group](#)

35) "The best part about being an entrepreneur in my 40s is the autonomy of creating my own destiny, and supporting charities I care about. The spirited outlook of GreatBlue Research is deeply rooted in the experiences of my past. Personal and professional interactions serve as the foundation of the innovative culture, industry understanding and technological advancements GreatBlue brings to each client relationship. I lead GreatBlue with a commitment to community, serving as a board member of the Programs for Social Change anti-bullying initiative, providing scholarships to students in the Southern Connecticut Conference, supporting LiveKind and Special Olympics Connecticut and 'granting wishes' (like the one I received when I was a child battling cancer) through the Make-A-Wish Foundation.. The success



of GreatBlue gives me the ability to give back to charitable partners I am passionate about—and you can't put a price on that."

- *Michael Vigeant, 40, President and Founder, [GreatBlue Research](#)*

36) "I'm a second generation financial planner helping educators around the country achieve their financial dreams. I was fortunate to have my mentor my father who was in the financial business for over 40 years teach me the ropes.

My firm [my403bcoach.com](#) presently is partnered with nearly 500 hundred educators and their families. The goal is to provide sound financial advice and help them retire with dignity. We currently provide income tax preparation services and investment advice. One of the many benefits of being an entrepreneur at this stage in my life is the freedom to spend quality time with my 3 children. I firmly believe I can always make more money; however I can never replace the time with my kids. There will be time in my future to make more. You really can't put a price on lost time and memories that will last a life time."

- *John D. Bustrum, 45, CEO & Founder, [My403bCoach.com](#)*

37) "For me it's three things: 1) Family —I have the flexibility to spend more and better quality time with my family. 2) I have more control of my own destiny —the freedom to pursue my purpose and passion of helping organizations that are doing meaningful work tell their story in a meaningful way so they can have a larger impact on the people they serve. 3) The rules that are set are mine— they stem from my values, beliefs and character, not someone else's. As a result of my focus on these three things, I'm able to have a larger influence and impact on my family and those I work with."

- *Joel Kessel, 44, President and Owner, [Kessel Communications](#)*

38) "I started my career at 18 years old working on the docks for Southeastern Freight Lines and worked my way up through operations management. At 20, I was running an outbound facility, and at 22, I was working in sales. By 28, I was running specialized sales in Florida and Puerto Rico for Yellow Transportation. In 2009, I saw a unique opportunity in the industry and decided to create my own concept. At age 40, I now have four corporate offices and have been awarded 50 Franchises. The best thing out being an entrepreneur is enriching people's lives, providing the market with innovative practices and business technology."

- *Bobby Harris, 40, President and CEO, [BlueGrace Logistics](#)*

39) "One of the best parts of being an entrepreneur in my 40s is that I have already built a strong support network. My clients are people that I have known for many years. I have a number of contacts who shared with me their experiences in starting their own business so that I was aware of some of the pitfalls and challenges. I had access to resources through them as well which made things much easier at the beginning. In addition, having 18 years of business experience means that, while I hardly know everything, I know much more than a younger person about what works and what doesn't. This allows me to deliver results faster and more efficiently than someone who may claim that they are younger and more nimble. Due to my previous experiences, I am less afraid to take risks and make mistakes as I have learned that almost everything is surmountable and often even rectifiable."

- *Jenifer Kramer, 42, Principal, [Jenrosity Marketing](#)*

40) “The best part about being an entrepreneur in my 40s is that every day is an exciting adventure filled with valleys and peaks and man that’s awesome. I personally felt that I needed to continue working for a company until I had at least 20 years of professional experience under my belt before breaking away and starting my own consulting firm. This mindset came as a result of seeing so many consultants, with little experience, starting firms and not being able to provide professional experience, common knowledge and appropriate customer service. By this time, I had built up a promising network of colleagues, catapulting our firm’s growth. Once our firm reached \$1M, I joined the Entrepreneurs’ Organization and have been able to grow, both professionally and personally, as a result. I look forward to getting into the office everyday and seeing the direction that our firm can go.”

- Timothy Wells, 47, President/CEO, [STS Solutions, Inc.](#)

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