

USING STORYTELLING TO UNDERSTAND A COMPANY'S LEAN JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

20 years ago...

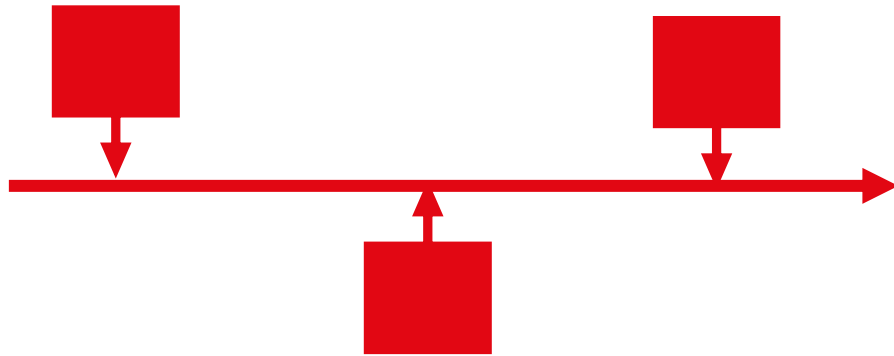
“Thinking ahead is asking too much from individuals that spent most of their young lives in poverty and grew up not knowing what they would have for breakfast the next morning. Getting them to contribute above and beyond their job description is a hard task when they are not even sure if they will still be employed when the project is over.”

- Construction Foreman

- Short-term thinking was a major constraint to workforce commitment and effective lookahead planning
- Lack of predictability and stability were problems that needed to be tackled

OBJECTIVES

Tell the company's story depicting relevant events and lean implementation stages



Overview of implementation steps and strategic choices along the timeline

- What were the strategic choices that fostered its successful lean journey?
- What was the common rationale behind structural and infrastructural decisions made during the journey?

LEAN IMPLEMENTATION IN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Research efforts often focus on isolated tools

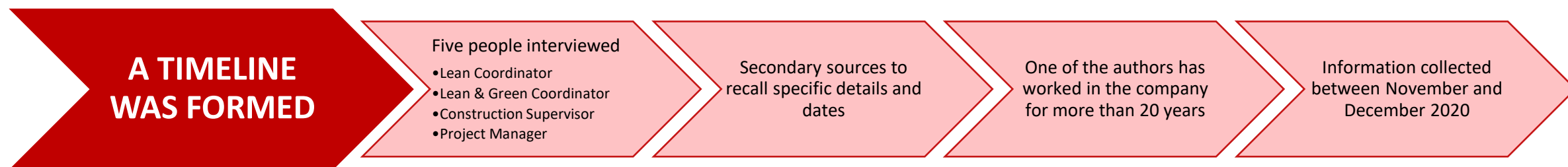
Academics proposed implementation strategies, audit tools and maturity models; however, despite the importance of these methods, they are sometimes too prescriptive

Increasing realization that true “best practices” emerge from the combination of contextual factors and **infrastructural decisions** affecting organizational culture, quality control, workforce management, and other “soft factors”

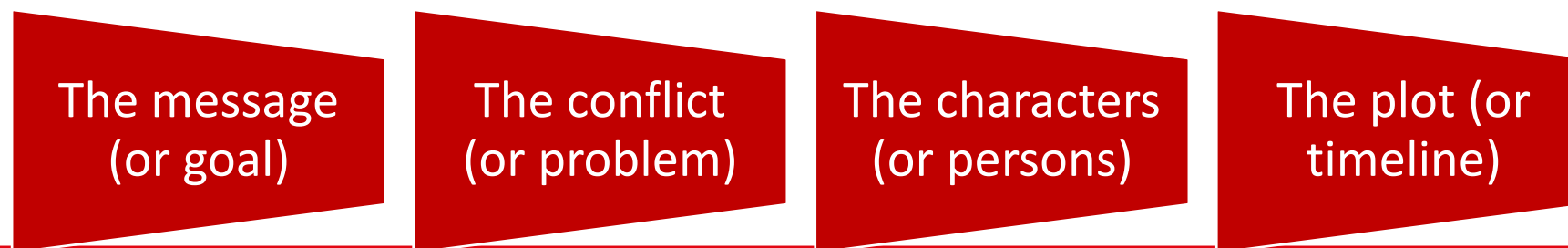
Acknowledging **infrastructural decisions** within production strategy helps in understanding the multiple ways organizations can achieve environmental and internal fit to compete within a particular industry. It also helps in understanding the importance of an **organizational approach** to the coherent adjustments needed at various levels on a lean journey.

METHODOLOGY

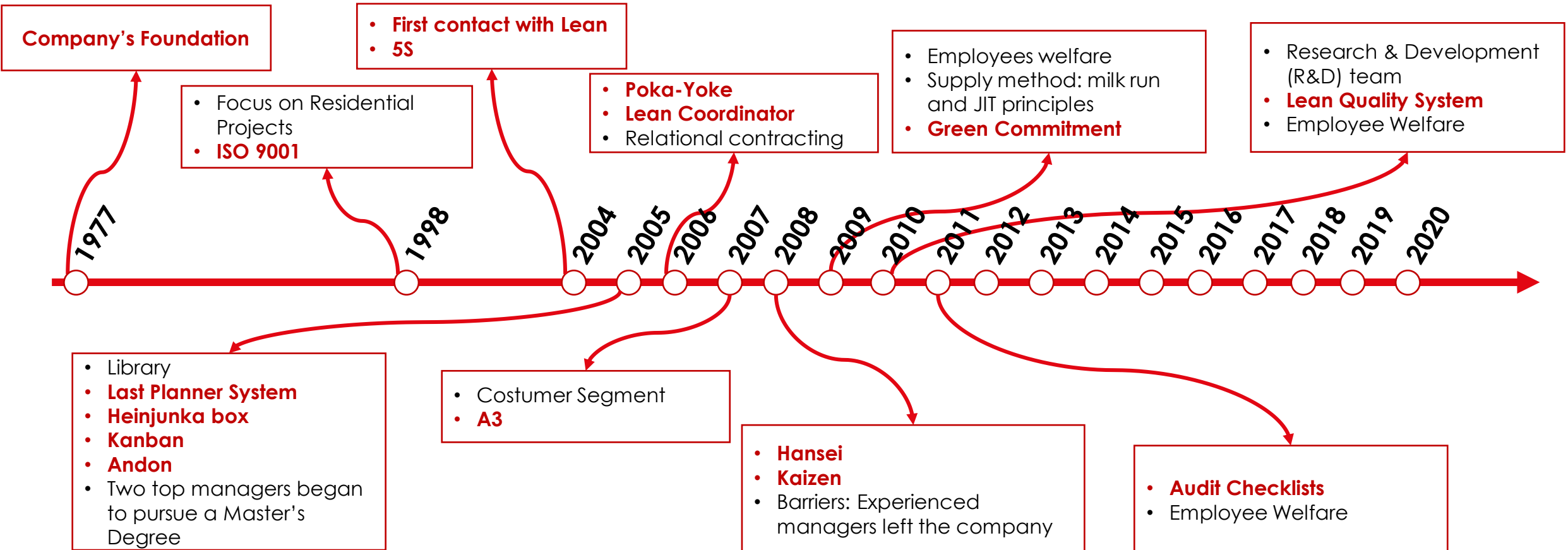
This study presents a **exploratory research** to draw lessons from a top lean construction company's experience. It uses a **qualitative approach** involving open-ended interviews.



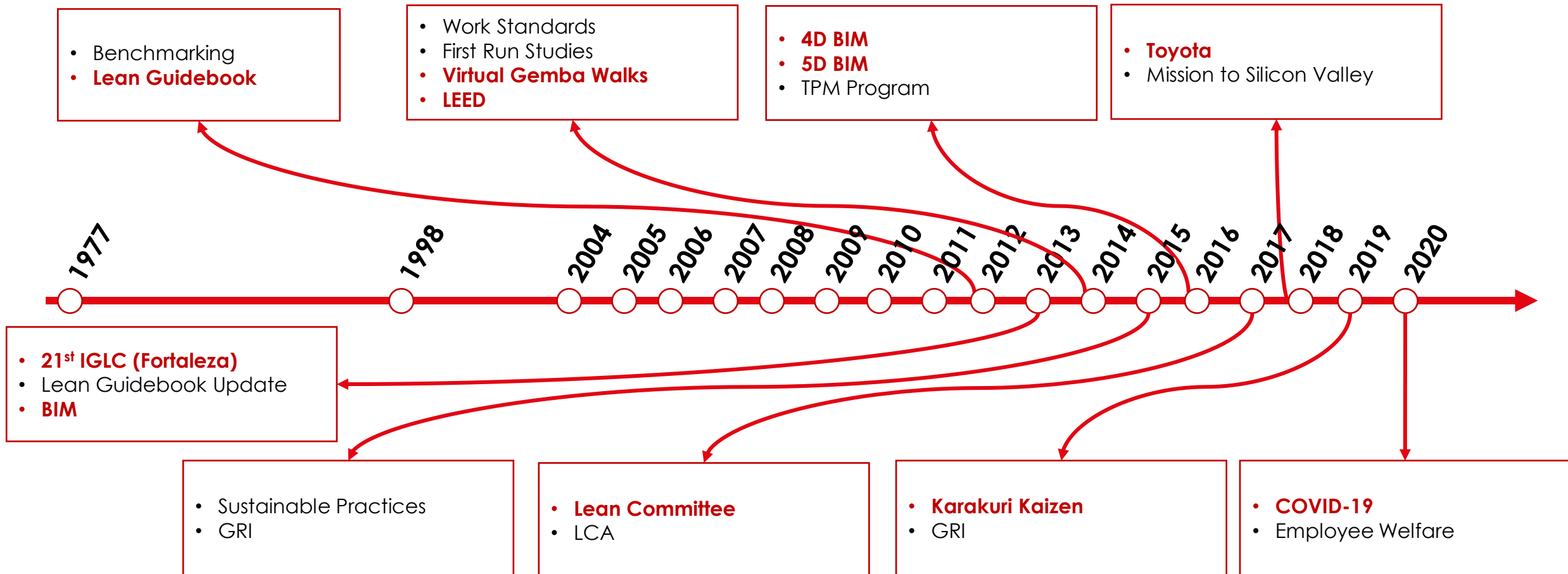
Paper structured according to **storytelling fundamentals** to allow a narrative account of events. There are four elements in storytelling:



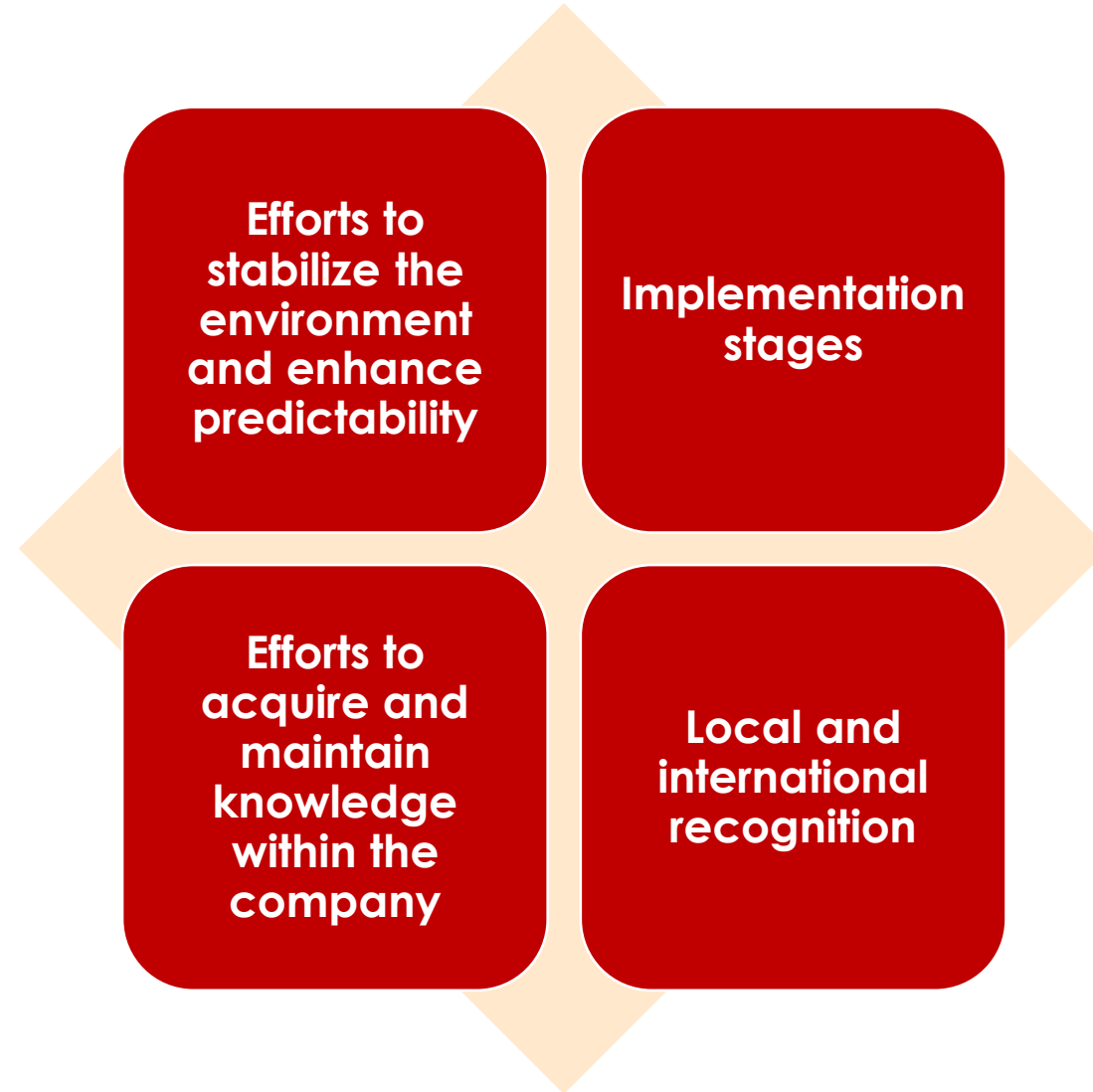
THE JOURNEY TOWARDS LEAN



THE JOURNEY TOWARDS LEAN



DISCUSSION



CONCLUSIONS

Two messages...

The first message is to better understand underlying strategic choices and how they impact lean implementation.

The second message is to capture the rationale behind decision-making and strategic alignment.

Stabilizing the environment requires more than implementing the Last Planner System and other operational level practices from the lean toolbox. (...) The strive for excellence starts with the formalization of strategic choices in production strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Pio Rodrigues Neto
Ricardo Miranda M. de Sousa

THANK YOU!

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