

CLASSIC DRIVER

Remember when Marcello Gandini designed a Jaguar?

Lead

The first works of any creative force are always fascinating, whether it be a musician's first songs or a painter's early pieces. For Marcello Gandini, this 1966 Jaguar FT was one of his first designs at Bertone, and it's a rare chance to see the makings of an automotive design visionary...

While the 1960s may be remembered by many as the glory days of car design, we often forget it was also an incredible time to be a car dealer. Manufacturers worked on a personal level with dealerships and importers and, in a practice completely alien in today's automotive retail landscape, would even build cars on a dealer's request. The most notable example would have to be the Porsche 356 Speedster, built on the request of US importer Max Hoffman who believed there was a market for such a vehicle, but there were countless other commissions from dealers worldwide, resulting in some weird and wonderful cars.

Commercial commission



This 1966 Jaguar FT is the outcome of such a commissioning by Italian Jaguar importers Tarchini. Choosing Carrozzeria Bertone as coachbuilder, the brief was to drop a gorgeous four-seater coupé body on a Jaguar saloon, retaining Jaguar's trademark luxury while also injecting some Italian style to the restrained and dignified British barge, which would then be sold as a limited edition. Thanks to the recent departure of a well-known designer, the Tarchinis would see their vision put to paper by a new member of the Bertone team, a 28-year-old by the name of Marcello Gandini...

Two's company



After Giorgetto Giugiaro made his move to Carrozzeria Ghia, Gandini began one of his first designs for Bertone, the Tarchini commission. The chosen underpinnings were that of the new 420 saloon, and a freshly clothed example — christened the FT, in honour of Tarchini Founder Ferruccio Tarchini — was displayed on the Bertone stand at the 1966 Geneva Motor Show. From here, however, things did not quite go to plan. Despite aspirations of the FT being a limited edition with a decent production run, just two FTs ended up seeing production, the Geneva show car and this example.

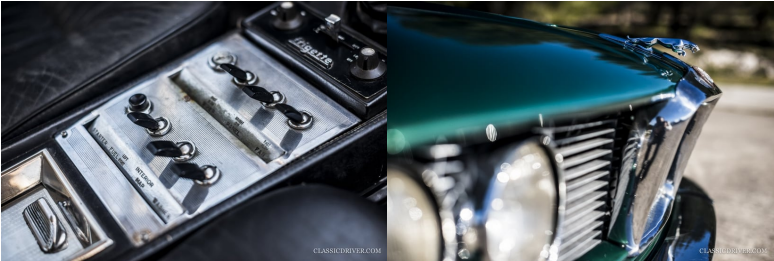
Curious curves



Looking at the design in 2017, on the sun-soaked tarmac around Marseille, it's easy to see the Jaguar design cues in the FT, if a bit harder to see the pen strokes of Gandini. For a designer that went on to create such automotive iconography as the Lancia Stratos and Lamborghini Miura, the FT may seem somewhat subdued, which was perhaps part of the brief, yet it's still undeniably quirky, as with most of Gandini's work. The Mark X-esque grille and quad headlight arrangement up front may help those guessing what on earth is in their

rearview mirror, but from the back, it's even harder to identify this Anglo-Italian oddity.

Best of both worlds



The interior is a harmonious mix of English decadence and Italian flair, with plush seating and delicate toggle switches holding court with the wooden dash and steering wheel, which, coupled with the expansive windows, no doubt made this a special place to watch the world go by for the chosen few. With an XK-derived 4.2 six-cylinder engine and manual gearbox with overdrive under the bonnet, the FT's driving characteristics were even less divisive than its looks.

Forgotten FT



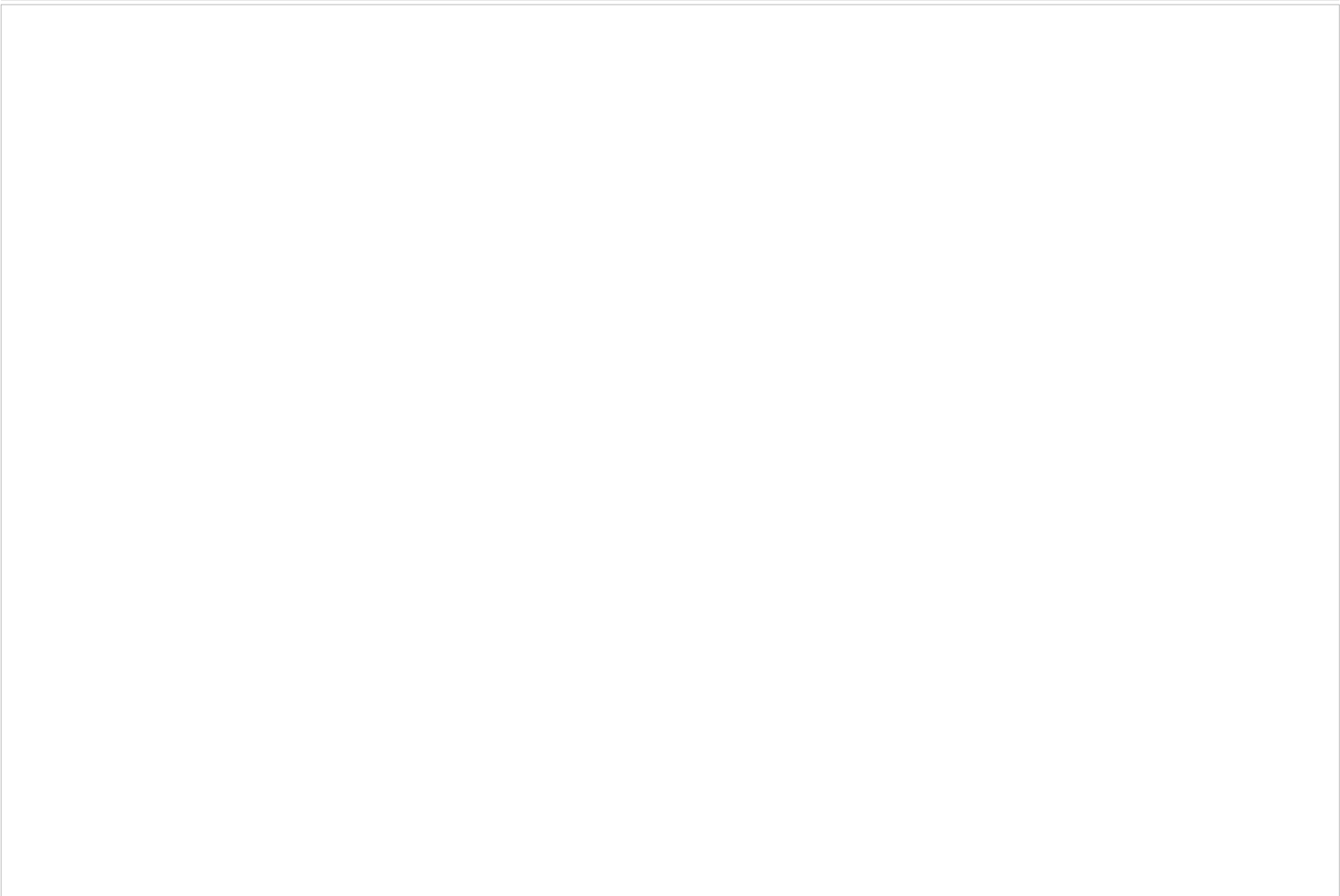
Supplied to Italy in 'CKD' form —which was short for 'Completely Knocked Down', a common practice where cars were shipped in pieces and assembled upon arrival — this example was fitted with Gandini's body in 1966, before heading to its wealthy owner in Madrid. The car was then forgotten, a recurring theme for the FT, and discovered in a corner of an old garage by its second owner. Having since been repainted in its original Emerald Green, the interior has been left untouched and goes some way to show the incredible life this car has led.

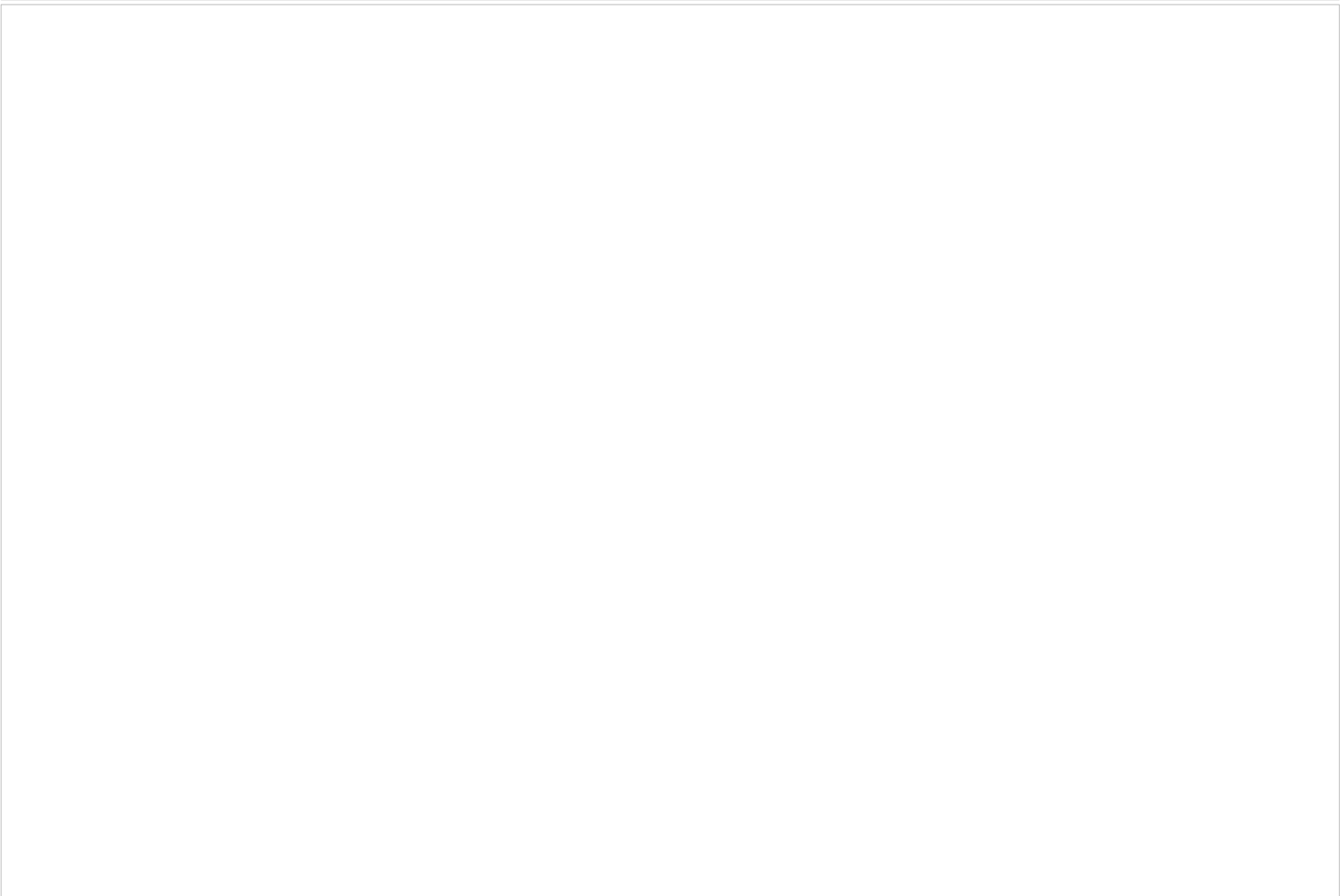
Whether you take issue with the looks or hold a soft spot for this strange survivor, the Jaguar FT is undeniably a memorable motorcar and serves as a marker for the start of the Gandini story. What's more, with this year's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance featuring a 'Jaguar Custom Coachwork' category, this FT is destined to divide opinion for years to come...

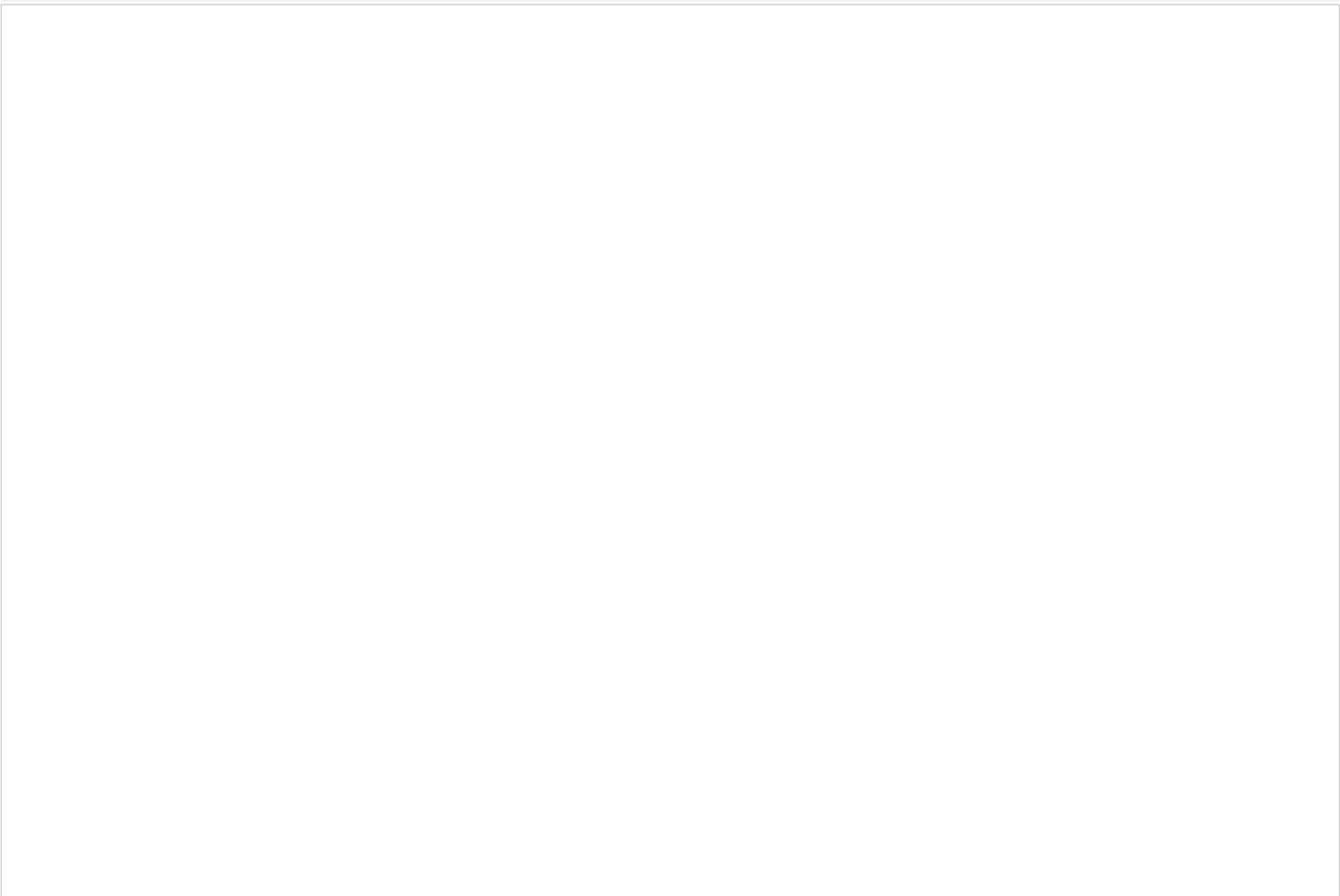
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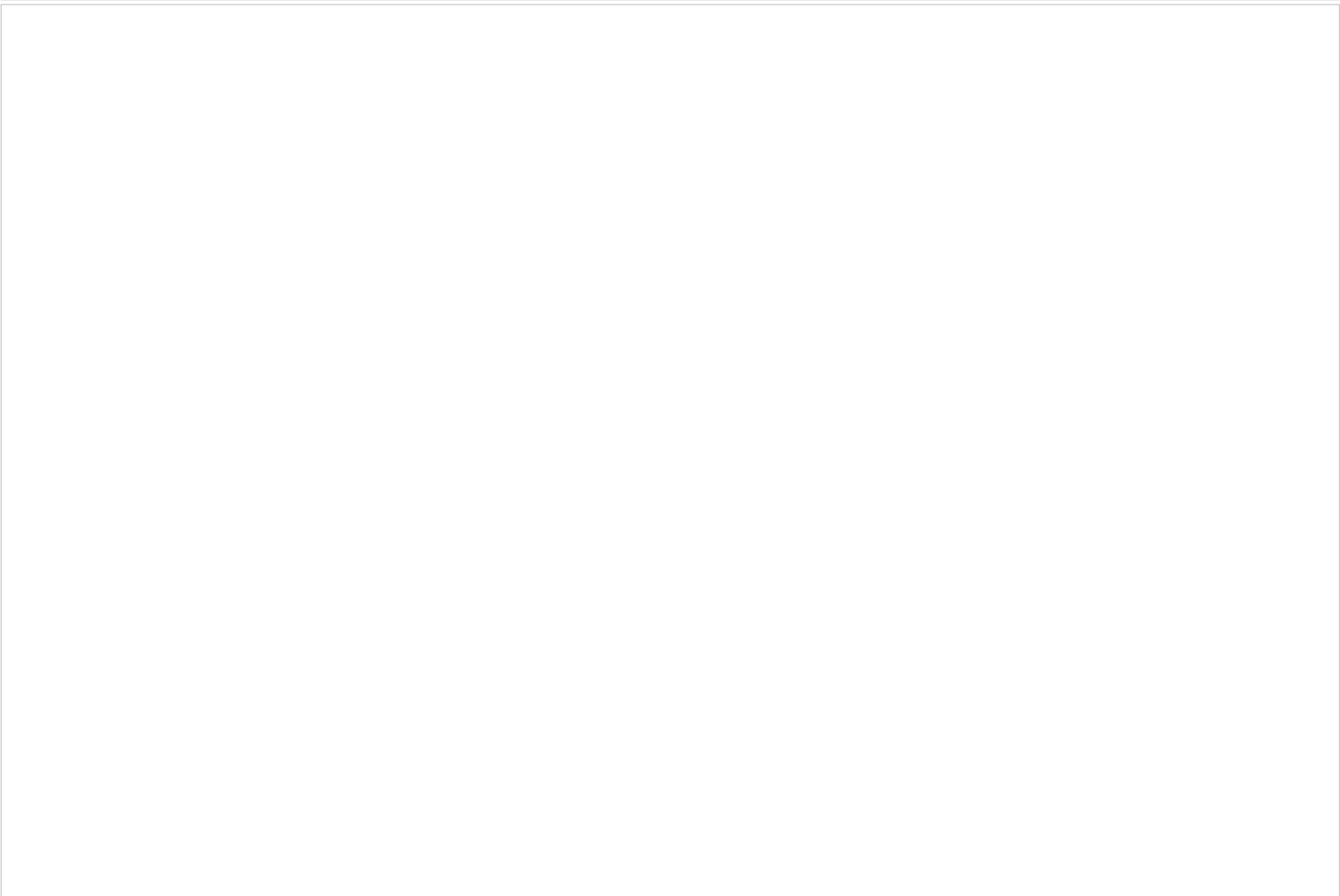
Gallery

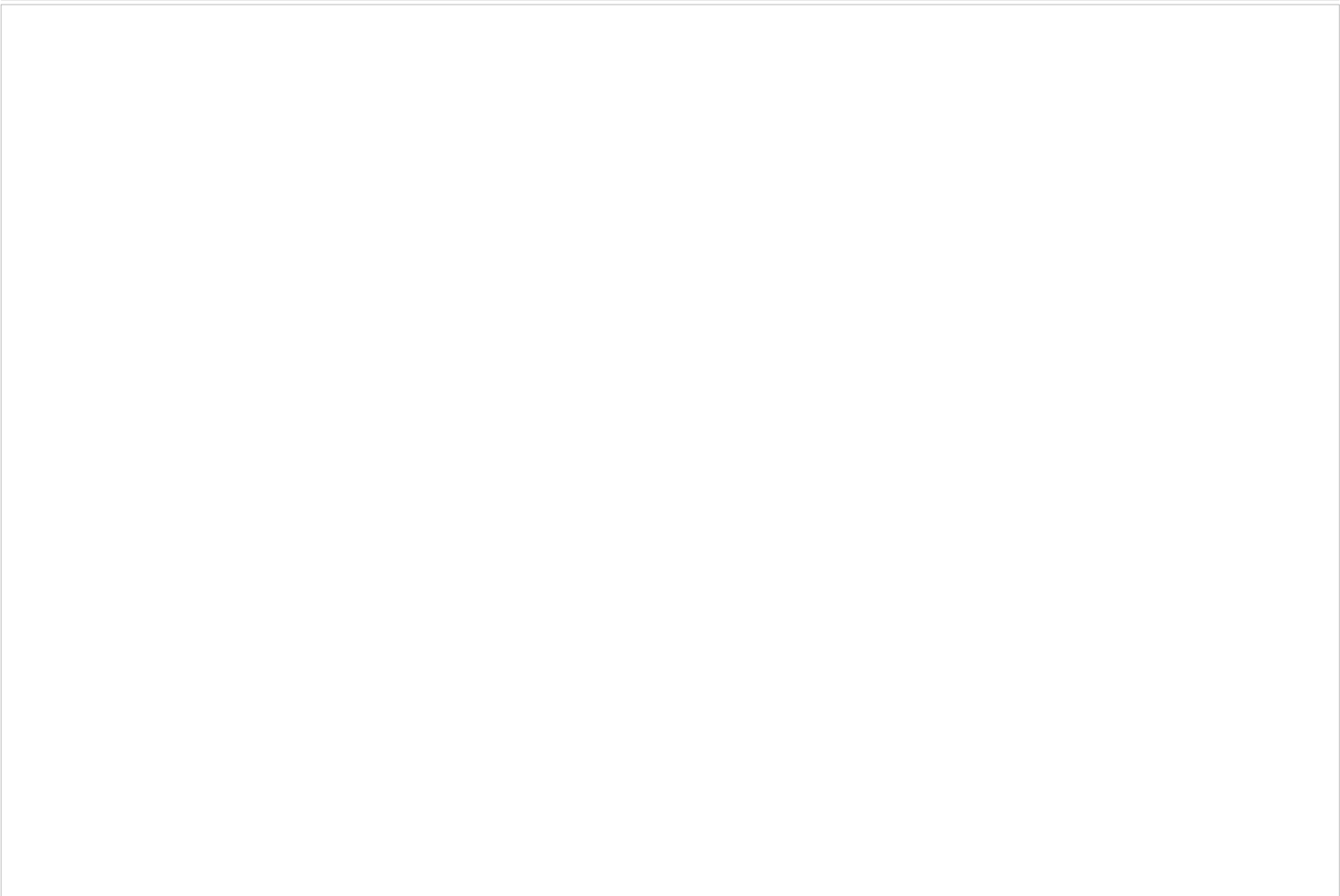


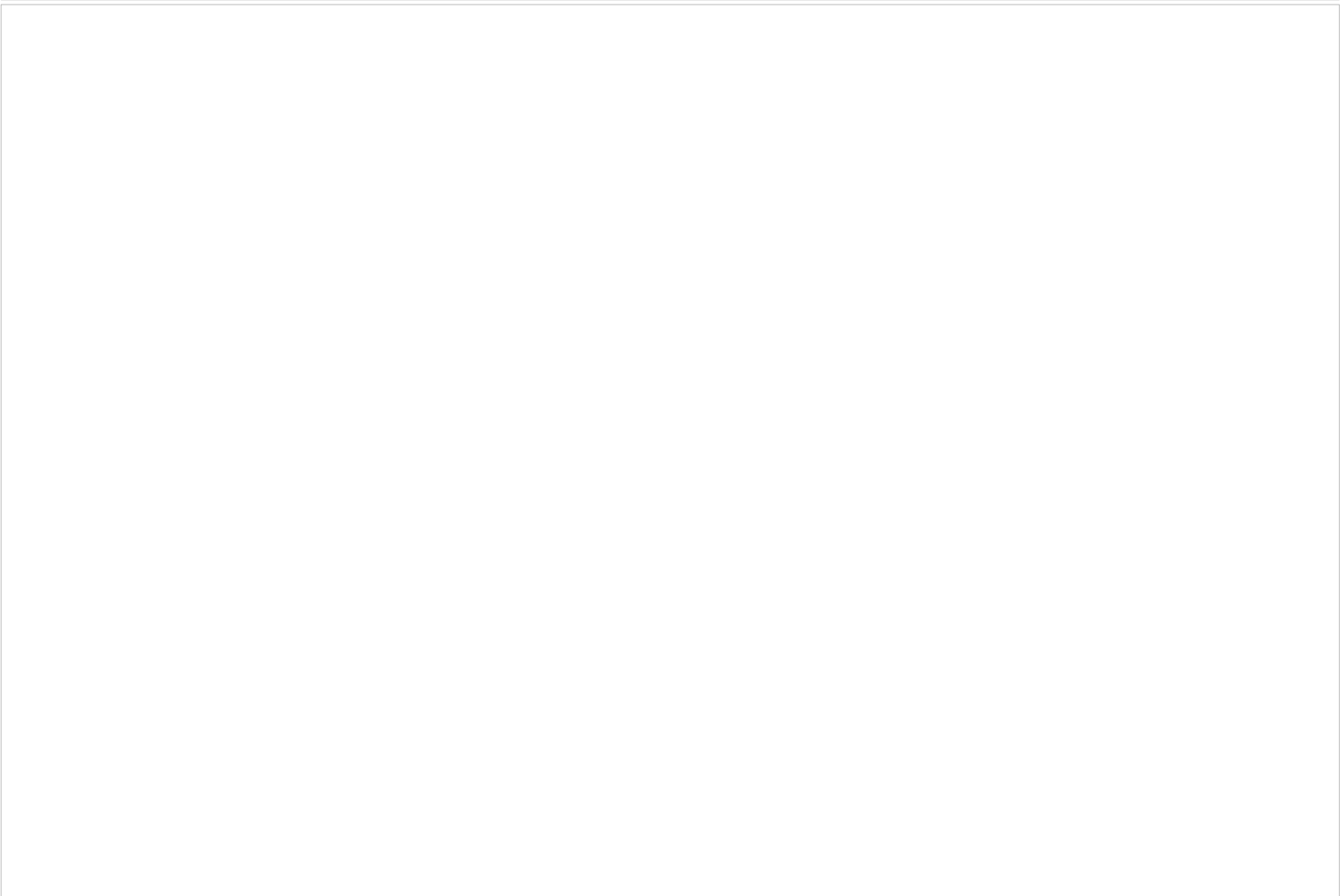


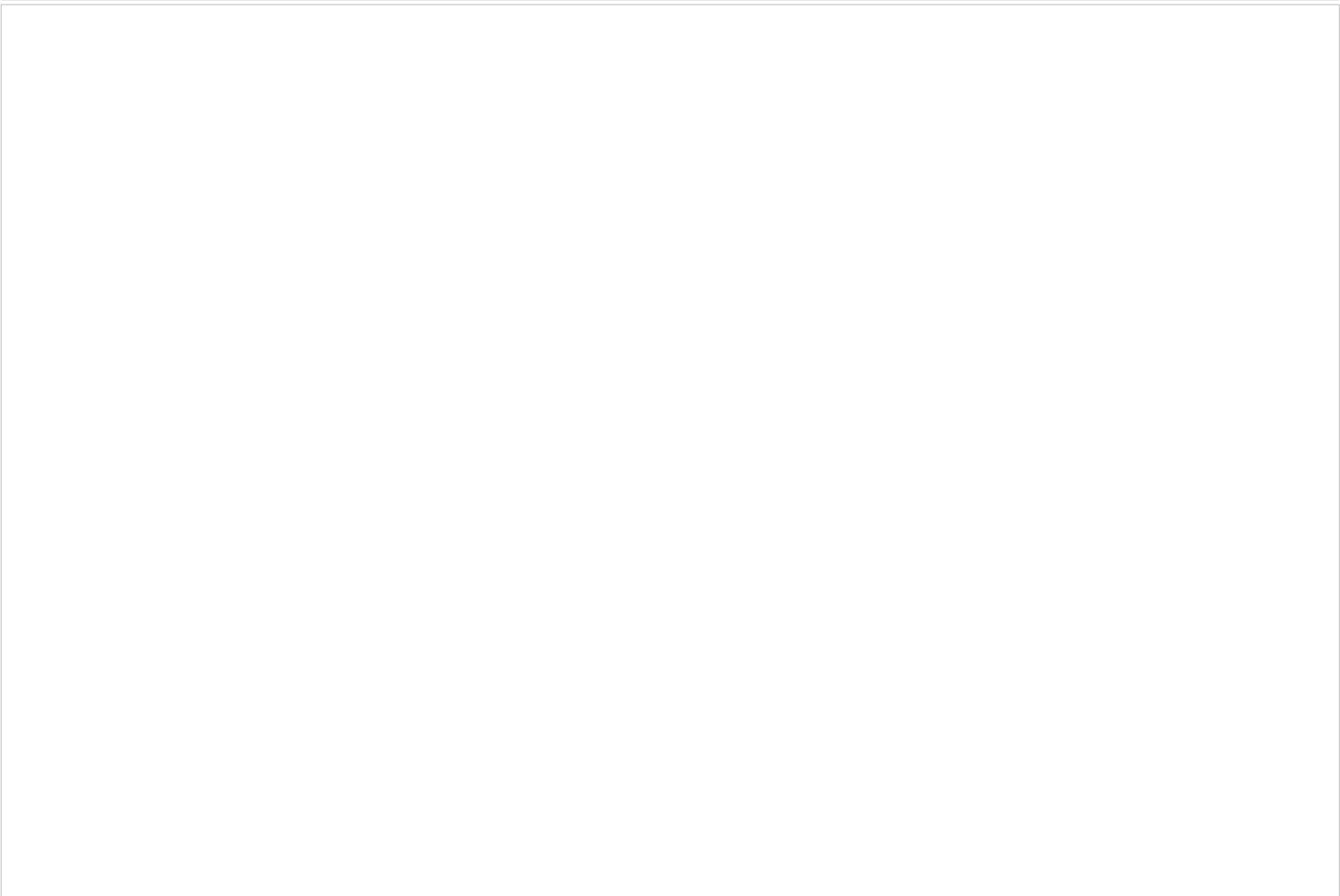


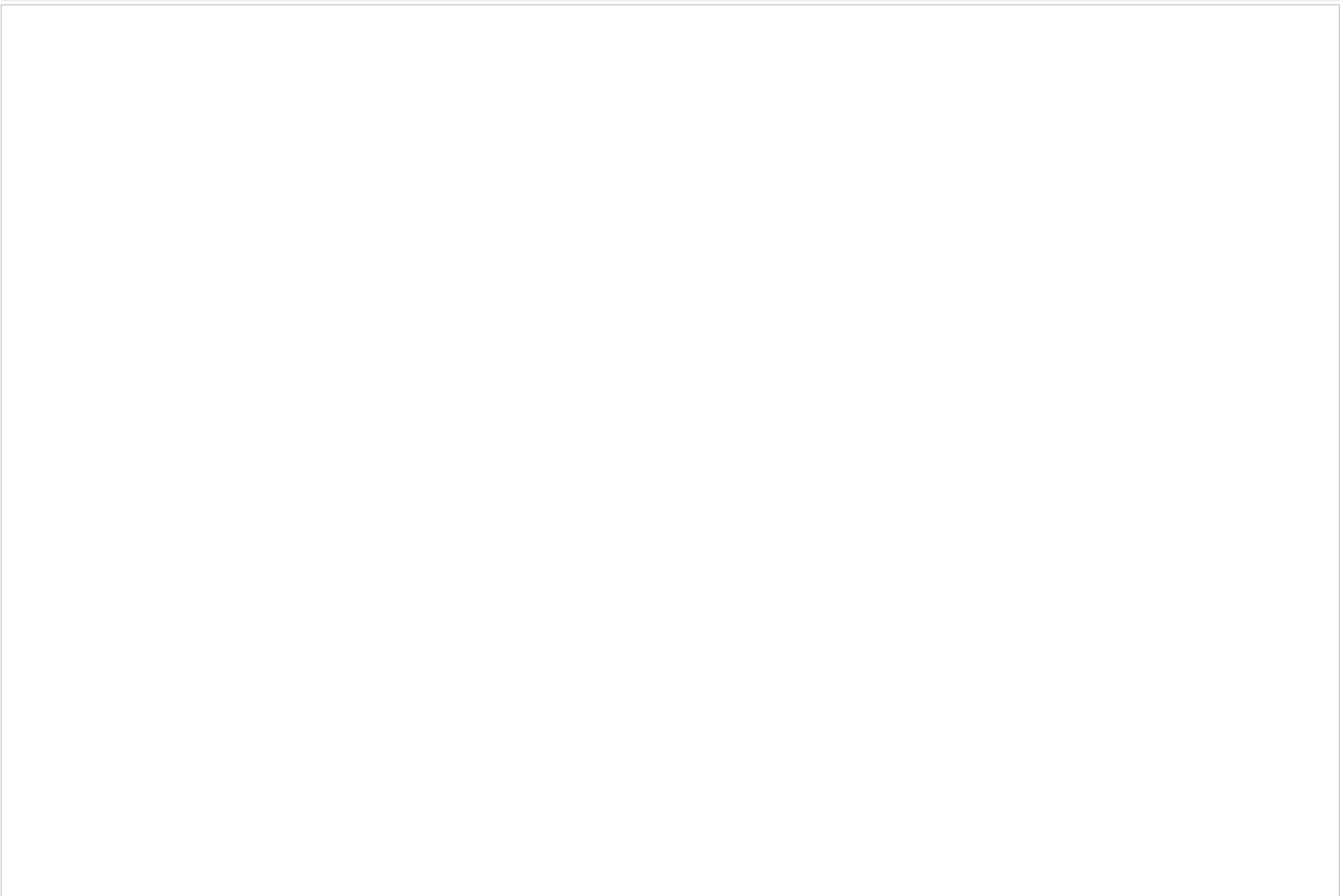


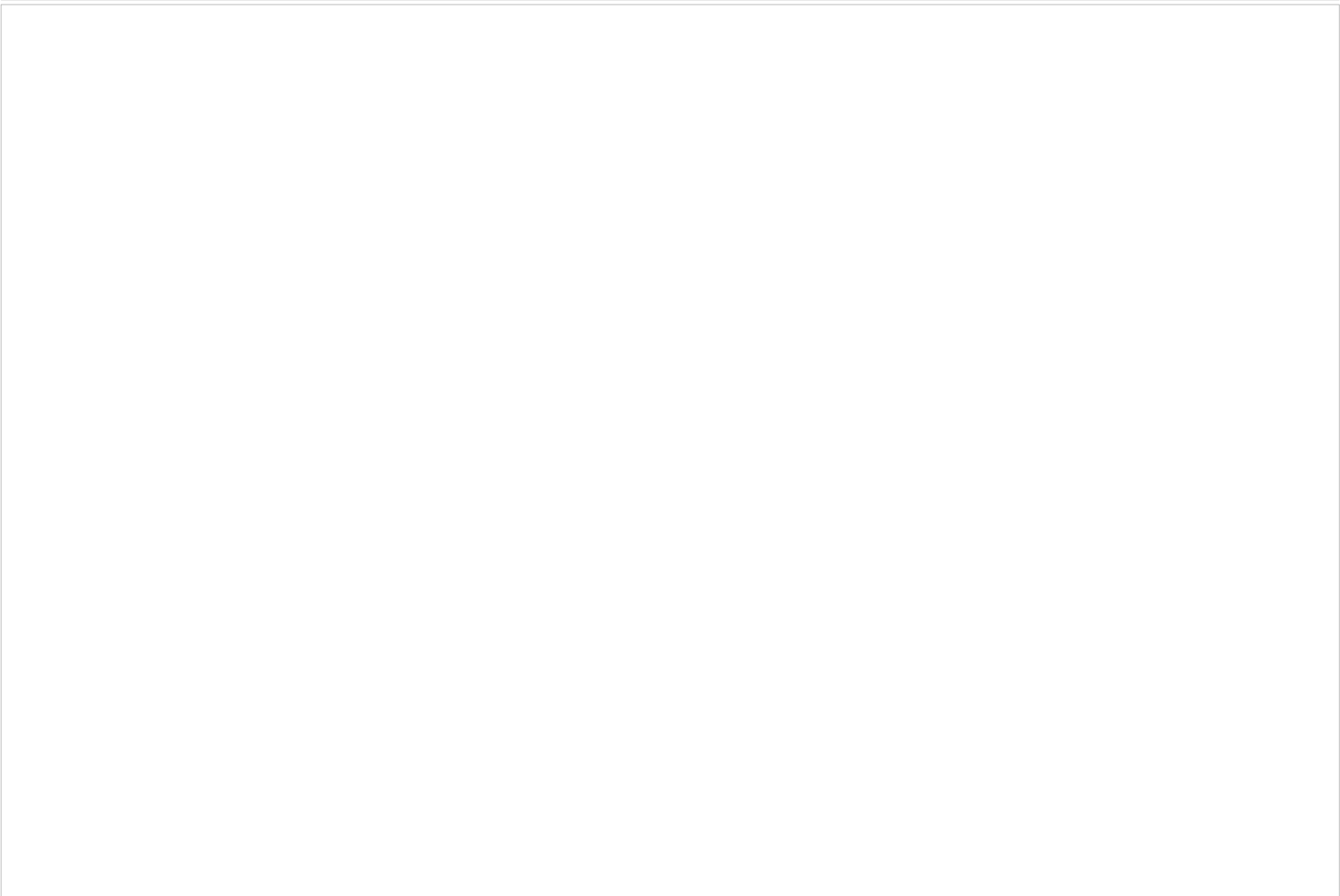


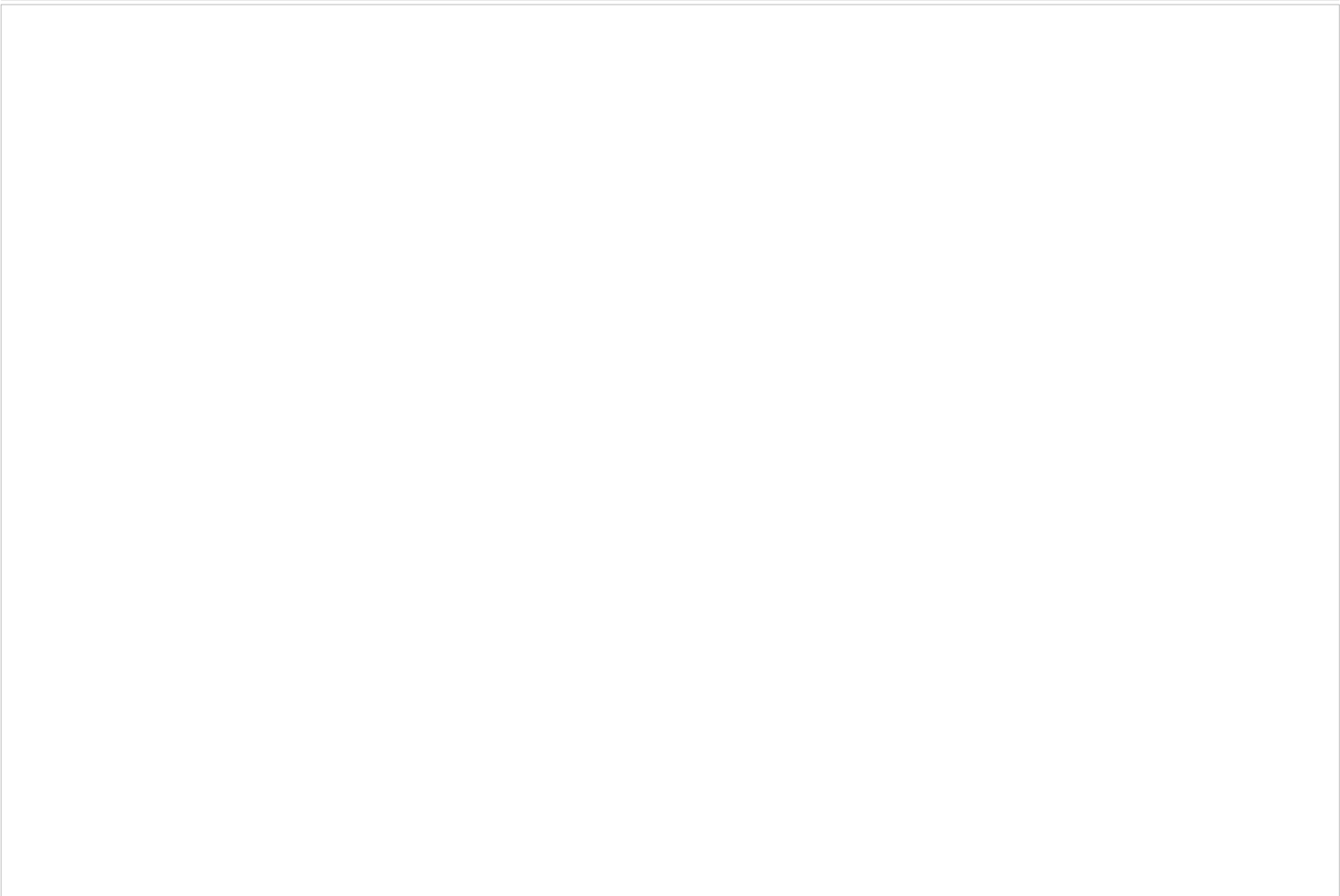


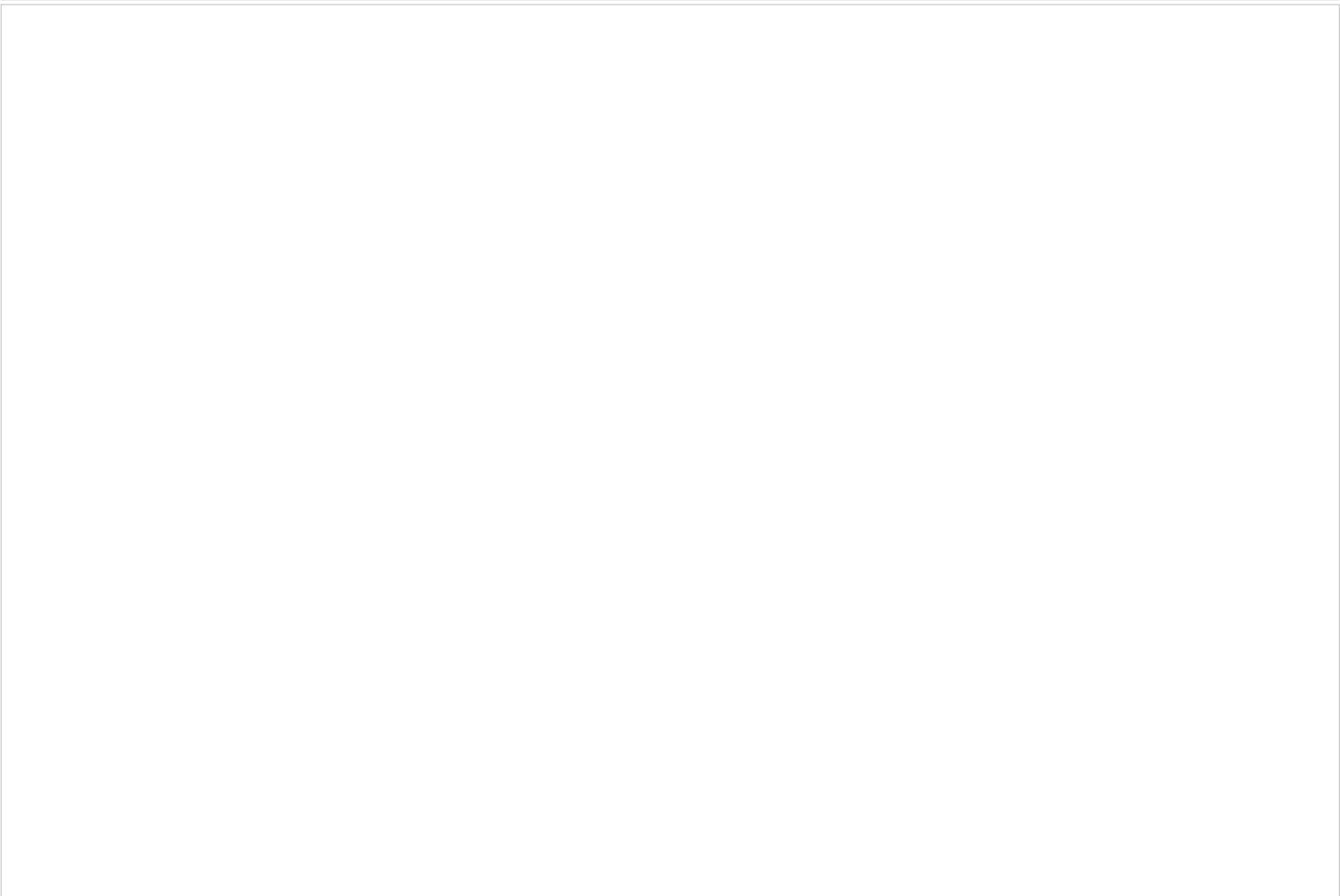
















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