UNIT 7: CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

UNIT STRUCTURE

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7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the marketing communication and its importance
- discuss the characteristics of an effective communication
- explain the marketing Communication Flow and the different types of channel
- explain the Communication Process
- discuss about Interpersonal Communication
- explain the concept of Persuasive Communication.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

The word "communication" has been derived from the Latin word "Communis" which means common. Communication is the process by

which information is expressed and exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior. The information can be facts, opinions, ideas, or feelings. It involves transfer of information from one place, person or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs and symbols. Every communication involves at least one sender, a message and a recipient.It is a bridge of meaning.

Louis A. Allen defines communication as "the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another."

Keith Davis has defined communication as a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.

Marketing Communication is the fundamental part of the marketing efforts of an organisation. It includes advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, public relation activities and sales presentation. The organisation must communicate with the present and potential stakeholders and the general public using different marketing channels and tools. For most of the organisation the question is what to say, to whom and how often to say. They use the marketing communication tools to make the public know or understand the brand. The marketing communication mix is the set of tools which delivers a clear and consistent message to target audiences.

The characteristics of Communication are as follows:

- **It involves at least two persons:** Communication involves at least two persons, a sender and a receiver. The sender is called communicator and the receiver of the message is known as communicatee.
- **Message is must:** A message is the subject matter of communication. The content of the letter, or speech, order, instructions or the suggestions are some example of message.
- **Communication may be written, oral or gestural:** Communication is generally understood as spoken or written words. It includes everything which is used to convey meanings from one person to another. For eg. The wink of eye, waving of hands may convey more meaning than even

written or spoken words.

- **Communication is a two-way process:** It involves both information and understanding. Communication is not complete unless the receiver has understood the message properly and his reaction or response is known as sender.
- **Its purpose is to motivate a response:** The main purpose is to motivate response or influence human behavior.
- **Communication may be formal or informal:** Formal communication follows the formal channels provided in the organisation structure. The managing director communicates with the departmental heads. And informal communication flows from informal channel of communication which are not provided in the organisation structure. This channel is developed among the members because of personal contacts through working with each other.
- **It flows up and down and from side to side:** Communication flows downwards from a superior to subordinate and upward from subordinate to superior. It also flows between two or more persons operating at the same level of authority.
- **It is an integral part of the process of exchange:** It refers to the exchange of ideas, feeling, emotions and knowledge and information between two or more persons.

Communication is one of the most essential elements to provide information about the product to the target customers. Some of theimportances of communication are:

- Communication is essential for decision-making and planning. The decisions and plans of the management need to be communicated to the subordinates.
- Communication makes possible the smooth and efficient working of an enterprise. It is only through communication that the management changes and regulates the actions of the subordinates in the desired direction.
- It helps to bring about unity of action in the pursuit of common purpose.

- It increases managerial efficiency. It is through the communication that management conveys its goal and desires, issues instruction and orders, allocates jobs and responsibility and evaluates performance of subordinates.
- Effective communication creates mutual understanding and trust among the members of the organisation. it promotes co-operation between the employer and the employees.
- Effective communication saves time and efforts. It increases productivity and reduces cost.

Besides the advantages, there are also many barriers to an effective communication process. The communication system is a two-way process. The distance between the sender and the receiver of the message can be an important barrier to communication.Personal factors like difference in judgment, social values, inferiority complex, bias, attitude, pressure of time, inability to communicate etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State the characteristics of communication.

7.3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION FLOW

As we have understood what communication is, and a message is encoded by a sender, decoded by a receiver, all while navigating noise and providing feedback. Communication travels within an organization in three different directions. The channel of communication depends upon the direction in which the communication is flowing. Let's discuss the three different directions of communication.

The flow of communication is divided into three divisions known as base of communication flow.These bases of communication flow are further divided into several categories. These categories/ channel of communication are classified below:

- **Based on organisational structure or relationship**
  - Formal Communication
  - Informal Communication
- **Based on flow of direction**
  - Downward Communication
  - Upward Communication
  - Horizontal or lateral or sideward Communication
  - Diagonal Communication
- **Based on methods or media used for expression:**
  - Written Communication
  - Oral Communication
  - Gestural or non-verbal communication

Let's discuss these elaborately in the subsequent paragraphs.

- **On the basis of Organisational Structure or Relationship**
  - **Formal Communication:** It is that communication which takes place through the formal channels of the organisation structure established by the management. It implies the flow of the information along the lines of authority formally established in the enterprise. The members are expected to communicate with one another as per channels laid down in the structure. These communications are written in policy manuals, procedural books, memorandum, orders, official meetings, interviews etc.
  - **Informal Communication:** The communication arising out of the channels of communication that falls outside the formal channels is known as informal communication. It can be also known as Grapevine. It builds around the social relationship of the members of the organisation. This communication depends upon the personal needs of the members of the organisation. These communications are oral and are conveyed by simple glance, gesture, smile or silence.
- **On the basis of flow of direction**
  - **Downward Communication:** The communication which flows from a superior to a subordinate is known as downward communication. Some examples of downward communication are notices, circulars,

instructions, orders, letters, memos, handbooks, annual reports, group messages etc.

- **Upward Communication:** It means the flow of information from the lower levels of the organisation to higher levels of authority in an organisation. It flows from sub-ordinate to superior then to general manager which is then passes to C.E.O. of the organisation. It includes opinions, ideas, suggestions, complaints, grievances, appeals, reports etc. For eg.: reports, meetings, interviews, conferences, letters, complaints, suggestions, surveys etc.This type of communication provides feedback to organizational leaders about current problems, or even progress on goals.
- **Horizontal, lateral or sideward communication:** The transmission of information between people on the same level of organisation hierarchy is called the horizontal communication. It is also known as lateral, sideward or crosswise communication.
- **Diagonal Communication:** It is the transfer of information between people who are neither in the same department nor on the same level of organisation hierarchy. For eg. When the marketing manager communicates with the accounts clerk directly.

- **On the basis of media or expression**
  - **Written Communication:** The transfer of message in black and white is known as written communication. It includes diagrams, pictures, graphs etc. This communication ensures that everyone concerned has the same message/information. It provides a permanent record of communication for future reference. Some of the examples are reports, circulars, magazines, manuals, memoranda, newspapers, pictures, diagrams, graphs, agreements, rule and procedure books, orders, notice boards.
  - **Oral Communication:** It describes the conveying of the message through spoken words. It is face to face communication between two individuals. It includes communication through telephone, public speech etc. Some of the examples are face to face talks, telephone conversation, interviews, meetings, lectures, conferences, radio talks

and announcements

- **Gestures or Non-Verbal Communication:** Gestures are the transmission of information through expression through body parts like movement of lips or wink of an eye or the wave of hands. It may convey more meaning than written or oral communications.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: What is formal communication?

7.4 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

To communicate effectively, the marketers need to understand the fundamental elements for an effective communication. The communication process involves nine elements. The elements are sender, encoding, message, media, decoding, receiver, response, feedback and noise. Fig 7.1 shows the communication process/model.

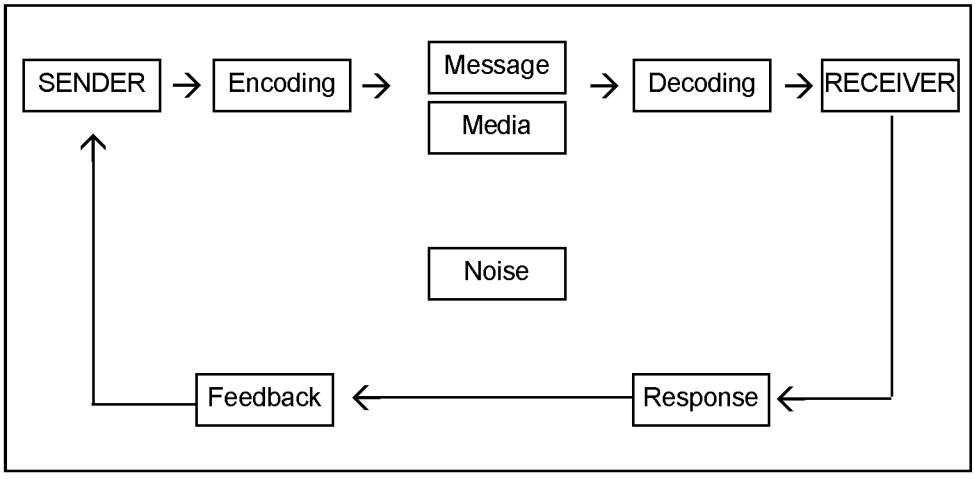


Fig. 7.1 Business Communication Process

The nine elements involved in the business communication process are discussed below:

- **Sender:** The sender or the communicator generates the message and conveys it to the receiver. The sender is the source who starts the communication. They must know their audiences and the responses they want to get. They must encode their messages so that it can be

understand by the target audiences. The message should be transmitted through effective media that reaches the target audience and develop feedback channels to monitor the responses.

- **Encoding:** The message generated by the sender is encoded symbolically in the form of words, pictures, gestures etc. before it is being conveyed.
- **Message:** It is the idea, information, view, fact, feeling etc. that is generated by the sender which is intended to be communicated further.
- **Media:** It is the manner in which the encoded message is transmitted. The media can ne oral or written. The medium of communication includes telephone, internet, post, fax, e-mail etc. the medium is decided by the sender.
- **Decoding:** It is the process of converting the symbols encoded by the sender. After decoding the message is received by the receiver.
- **Receiver:** The receiver is the person for whom the message was sent by the sender. Once the message is received and understands in the proper perspective, the receiver acts accordingly to the message. When the message sent is understood in the same way, only then the purpose of the message is successful.
- **Feedback:** After receiving the message, the receiver confirms to the sender that he has received the message and understood it. Then the process of communication gets completed.
- **Noise:** It is the obstruction that is caused by the sender, message or receiver during the process of communication. The noise can be bad telephone connection, faulty encoding, faulty decoding, inattentive receiver, poor understanding of the message due to inappropriate gestures.

7.5 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging of information and feeling between two or more people through verbal and non-verbal messages. It is also known as face-to-face communication. It

often takes place between people who have some knowledge about each other. It can be defined as the process of interacting simultaneously with another and mutually influencing each other. It may take place in face-to-face settings or through social media platform.

Interpersonal communication can serve many advantages. It influences the behavior, attitudes, and opinions of others. It allows for more effective, efficient, cooperation, and can help us forge or maintain a social bond. Good interpersonal communication helps to work more effectively in groups and teams. It also acts as mediator for information flow from mass media to the wider population.

Interpersonal communication can be divided into: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication is the communication where information is communicated through speaking. But, the non-verbal communication is the communication process where theinformation is communicated without being spoken.

7.6 PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Persuasion is the process of guiding people toward the adoption of an idea, attitude, or action by rational and symbolic means. Persuasion means an attempt to influence a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations and behavior.

Intrapersonal Persuasive Communication

Intrapersonal communication involves reflective thinking or internal vocalization. Persuasive intrapersonal communication happens when something is tried to convinced.

Interpersonal Persuasive Communication

Interpersonal communication is communication between two people who already possess a close bond. Persuasive interpersonal communication involves the use of persuasive techniques between these people. Persuasive interpersonal communication uses more elements of composition than intrapersonal communication. Persuasive interpersonal communication can include persuasive reading and visuals as well as

conversation.

Group Persuasive Communication

Group communication occurs between individuals who may not have a close, established bond. This type of communication happens in a larger setting where more than two people are present. Persuasive group communication most often involves one or more people trying to convince a group of something. Persuasive group communication makes use of many combinations of audio, visual and verbal techniques to convince its audience. Persuasive group communication can include persuasive reading and limited presentation techniques as well as conversation.

Persuasive Public and Mass Communication

Public communication focuses on the person delivering the message. The messenger may be performing, possibly giving a speech in front of a live audience. For example, a lawyer giving her closing argument would be practicing persuasive public communication.

Mass communication is public communication that is transmitted through media to a larger audience. Wide distribution of persuasive reading materials, advertisements, newscasts and radio programs all fall into the category of persuasive mass communication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Group Persuasive Communication?

7.7 SOURCE

Source or senders are objects which encodemessagedata and transmit the information, via a channel, to one or more observersor receivers. Source is a process that generates message data that one would like to communicate, or reproduce as exactly as possible elsewhere in space or time. The source imagines, creates, and sends the message. The source encodes the message by selecting the right order to convey the intended meaningpresenting or sending the information to the audience (receiver).

The source perceives how well themessage is received andresponded with supporting information from the audience's reaction.

7.8 MESSAGE

A message is a discrete communication intended by the sender for consumption by some or a group of receivers. A message may be delivered by various means like courier, telegraph, carrier pigeon, electronic media. A message can be the content of a broadcast. An interactive exchange of messages forms a conversation.

The messages are the information the senderwantstheir audience to hear, understand and remember. They are the summations defining what you do, why you do it, how you are different, and what value you bring to stakeholders.

The message is one of the important elements of communication process. It clarifies the meaning and provides the headline of the issue that needs to be communicated. They serve as the foundation of an organization's branding and marketing efforts and should be reflected in all written and spoken communications.They help the marketer to prioritize and define the informationwhich ensures consistency, continuity and accuracy. It measure and track the success staying focused when speaking with the audiences.

The attributes of the effective messages are:

- **Concise:**The message has to be concise. The focus is to be given on three to five key messages per topic. There should be only one to three sentences for each key message which should be read or spoken in 30 seconds or less.
- **Strategic:**The message should be strategically designed defining, differentiating, and addressing the benefits.
- **Relevant:** The message has to be relevant. There should be a balance what needs to be communicated with what the audience needs to know.
- **Compelling:** The message has to be designed in the way that it compels the audience. The sender should design meaningful

information to stimulate action.

- **Simple:** The sender should use easy-to-understand languageavoiding jargon and acronyms.
- **Memorable:** The sender should ensure that messages are easy to recall and repeat. Thelong, run-on sentences is to be avoided.
- T**ailored:** The message is to be communicated effectively with different target audiences by adapting different language and depth of information.

7.9 MESSAGE APPEALS

The message appeal is the connection between the emotion or logic of the advertisement and the consumers' response to the advertisement. The marketer will select and execute the most appropriate appeal in a creative manner to attract the customers.

It is defined as the strategy which grabs the attention of the people to persuade them to purchase the product or service. The marketer uses appeals to influence their customers. It also helps the people to support a cause. The marketer customizes the appeals for the target customers. The main motive of the message appeals is to entice them to take action that is desired by the seller.

The different types of message appeals are

- **Brand Appeals:** It is for the customers or people who are brand conscious and have an individual inclination towards a particular brand. The brand appeal motivates people to buy a product because the product has an excellent brand. It gives the feeling of differentiation to the customers. For eg: Apple has brand appeal to its customer.
- **Gender Appeals:** This is used to convey a particular message to a selected group of audience. The Alcohol advertisements are often promoted to men by the use of gender appeal in their advertisement.
- **Adventure Appeals:** The primary objective of these advertisements is to appeal to the people that enthusiasm will be enhanced after they buy or use the product or service. For e.g.: the advertisements of energy drink use adventure appeal in them. It is shown that the protagonist of

the ad who is tired drinks the energy drink and achieves something almost impossible.

- **Bandwagon Appeals:** This appeal involves making people that since everyone is buying the product so they should too. The main objective is to ensure that the customer joins the bandwagon and starts using the product because everybody else is using it. It is known as persuasion by masses techniques.
- **Fear appeals:** The fear appeal shows that adverse outcomes can happen because a particular action is not taken. The marketer uses this appeal to use fear as amotivator to promote change. Using this technique, many kinds of toothpaste, deodorants and anti-dandruff shampoos are advertised.
- **Rational Appeals:** When the marketing or advertisement strategy wants people to use their practicality and functionality for a product, then the logic appeals are used.These advertisements are focused on the features of the product and the cost of the product.

7.10 COMMUNICATION FEEDBACK

Feedback in the communication process is the response from the receiver which gives the communicator an idea of how the message is being received and whether it needs any modification. In other words, the observation of the receiver's response is called feedback. It is the amount of response of the receiver that reaches to the sender. Feedback becomes common after WWII as the importance of democracy become more pronounced. It was originated as top-down, single source assessment.

Bartol and Martin define, "Feedback is the receiver's response to the interpreted message". It is the essential part of the process as it helps to know whether the recipient has understood the message in the same terms as intended by the sender and whether he/she agrees to that message or not. It helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the message.

According to Stone and Heen, there are three types of feedback based on purpose.

- **Evaluation:** Evaluation feedback needs to be done "in the moment" to help the person receiving the feedback know where they stand. The primary purpose of an evaluation feedback is to let the person receiving it know where they stand when it comes to their performance. It helps them to have clear expectations and the feeling of reassured and safe.

  Generally, an evaluation involves a rating or a ranking. Evaluation can be given on a scheduled meeting or on a daily basis. To ensure a successful evaluation feedback, the following points should be kept in mind:

  - They should set clear expectations with regards to the roles and responsibilities of the employee(s) receiving feedback.
  - The purpose of giving feedback should be clear.
  - The process and the results of the feedback has to be accountable
- **Appreciation:** Appreciation feedback is the feedback given to show appreciation or thank the employee for their contribution and performance. It is important to acknowledge their effort to further build trust in the relationship. It encourages the employee to celebrate their success and impressive performance to motivate them for their progress and growth.

  The appreciation feedback has to be specific, linked to the receiver's values and authentic. This helps the employee identify what else he or she needs to improve on what he or she needs to keep doing.Lastly, an appreciation feedback needs to be authentic each time it is given. It needs to be unique to the employee and to the situation.
- **Coaching:** After informing the employee where they stand in terms of their performance and giving them appreciation for the effort they are putting in for their growth and improvement, the marketer can give them coaching feedback.

  A coaching feedback is different from evaluation and appreciation, although it can have both elements. A coaching feedback often involves regular and annual reviews. Its primary purpose is to further inspire the employee and lead them towards continued growth and improvement.

Some of the benefits of coaching feedback include:

- It increasing employee effectiveness.
- It prevents them from using behaviours that may hinder their growth.
- It encourages them to maintain effective behaviours.
- It promotes commitment within customers the organisation.

The importance of feedback in an effective communication are:

- **Collection of Information:** It is the way to collect information from the receiver. It helps the organisation to collect information from different people. But, if the receiver doesn't send message of information to the sender, there is no way to collect information from him/her.
- **Completion of entire communication process:** It is the last and the important step of communication process. The sender can learn about the reaction and response of the receiver. So, it is mandatory in a two-way communication.
- **Measuring the effectiveness of communication:** Feedback is the only way to get the response or reaction of the receiver. From it, the sender knows how well the message is understood and how it will be used by the receiver. By analyzing the reaction, positive or negative, the sender of the message can measure to what extent communication is effective and what are the limitations with it. So, in two-way communication feedback is the only way to assess the success of communication.
- **Measuring the effectiveness of media:** The receiver gets the message by the media and understands its meaning. The receiver will send the feedback to the sender ifthe media is appropriate. Improper media cannot reach the message to the receiver and thus fails to produce any feedback. So, feedback can be used as a criterion of effectiveness of media.
- **Taking proper decision:** Feedback helps the sender to take proper decision. If the receiver does not send his reaction or response on certain issue, the sender cannot decide on it. For example, sometimes manager sends plans and decision or policies to the subordinates for their appraisal. If the subordinates send their options, suggestion, complaints,

reaction to the managers, they can take better decisions. So, Feedback helps the managers to take proper and quality decisions.

- **Problem solving:** The two way communication helps to address the problem and provide solution to the problem. Different types of problems may arise in an organization that must be solved duly and timely
- **Getting the reaction of the receiver:** Through feedback the sender can get the responses or reactions of the receiver of his message. From the response, the sender responses, the sender can assess how well the receiver has understood his message and if there is any clarification to be made.

The requirements of aneffective feedback are also shown below:

- **Clear:** Effective feedback is possible if the recipients understand the message communicated to him/her properly. The sender of the message should understand that the feedback is related to the message sent. The sender of the feedback should ensure that it is properly understood by the receiver. The meaning of the feedback should be clear i.e. the language should be simple.
- **Well-timed:** Feedback may require some time to get filled. The delayed feedback may not serve the purpose it is meant for. Thus, it should be meant within a reasonable time.
- **Specific:** Effective feedback has to be particular or specific. A generalized response or an ambiguous reply has no value.
- **Bearing right attitude:** The recipient should avoid fault-finding attitude with the sender. The feedback process will suffer if much of the time is spent in finding fault with the subject matter, presentation skill and the similar matters related to the message. Thus, to make the feedback effective, the undermining attitude of the sender and fault-finding attitude of the receiver should be avoided.
- **Truly representative:** Feedback can be positive or negative. The actual, true and honest reaction should be communicated. The sender should not hesitate to convey the negative feedback.
- **Impersonal:** The feedback should be free from personal reactions. And any personal rivalry or conflict should not have any influence on official

feedback.

- **Informative:** The sender of the message expects from the receiver some information in the form of feedback which the sender doesn't already know. Thus, along with being effective, the feedback should also be informative.

Giving and receiving feedback creates positive learning and growth between all customers and marketers. When feedback is delivered, it should always be aimed to help improve performance, development and positive outcomes regardless of the time and place.



7.11 LET US SUM UP

- The word "communication" has been derived from the Latin word "Communis" which means common. Communication is the process by which information is expressed and exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior.
- Marketing Communication is the fundamental part of the marketing efforts of an organisation which includes advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, public relation activities and sales presentation.
- Communication process involves atleast two person i.e. communicator and communicate. It can be written, oral or gestural.
- Communication is a two-way process either in a formal way or informal way flowing from up and down or from side to side.
- The communication process involves nine elements i.e. sender, encoding, message, media, decoding, receiver, response, feedback and noise.
- Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging of information and feeling between two or more people through verbal and non-verbal messages. It is also known as face-to-face communication.
- Source is a process that generates message data that one would like to communicate, or reproduce as exactly as possible elsewhere in space or time.

- A message is a discrete communication intended by the sender for consumption by some or a group of receivers which is delivered by various means like courier, telegraph, carrier pigeon, electronic media.
- The attributes of effective messages are concise, strategic, relevant, compelling, simple, memorable and tailored.
- Message Appeals are defined as the strategy which grabs the attention of the people to persuade them to purchase the product or service. The marketer uses appeals to influence their customers.



7.12 FURTHER READING

1) Effective Business Communication by Asha Kaul
2) Business Communication byMeenakshiRaman and Prakash Singh



7.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: It involves at least two persons

Message is must.

Communication may be written, oral or gestural

Communication is a two-way process

Its purpose is to motivate a response

Communication may be formal or informal

It flows up and down and from side to side

It is an integral part of the process of exchange

Ans to Q No 2: It is that communication which takes place through the formal channels of the organisation structure established by the management. It implies the flow of the information along the lines of authority formally established in the enterprise. The members are expected to communicate with one another as per channels laid down in the structure. These communications are written in policy manuals, procedural books, memorandum, orders, official meetings, interviews etc.

Ans to Q No 3: Group communication occurs between individuals who may not have a close, established bond. This type of communication

happens in a larger setting where more than two people are present. Persuasive group communication most often involves one or more people trying to convince a group of something. Persuasive group communication makes use of many combinations of audio, visual and verbal techniques to convince its audience. Persuasive group communication can include persuasive reading and limited presentation techniques as well as conversation.



7.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Define marketing communication. Elaborate the importances of marketing communication.

Q 2: Explain the characteristics of an effective communication

Q 3: What are the different channels of communication flow? Explain them.

Q 4: Illustrate the communication process

Q 5: Write a note on interpersonal communication and persuasive communication

Q 6: What is source?

Q 7: Define message? Explain the message appeals.

Q 8: What is feedback? Why is it important for an effective communication process?

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