



Marketing Communication Strategy of Anti Acid Fertilizer CV. Sobat Tani at the Farmer Group Level in increasing Sales in Penajam Paser Utara Regency

Nasrullah^{1*}, Andi Vita Sukmarini², Mujahid³

^{1,2,3} Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Fajar Makassar

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ABSTRACT

Anti Acid Fertilizer CV. Sobat Tani is a new product in solving soil acidity problems for agricultural land so it needs extra work in delivering products to farmers, so it needs a communication strategy by CV. Sobat Tani in marketing anti-acid fertilizer at the Farmer Group Level in Penajam Paser Utara Regency. This study aims to determine the marketing communication strategy of anti-acid fertilizer by CV. Farmer Friends at the Farmer Group Level in increasing sales in Penajam Paser Utara Regency as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the marketing communication strategy. This research uses qualitative methods to explore information by interviews and field observations from certain informants.

The results of this study show that 1) Marketing communication strategy of anti-acid fertilizer CV. Sobat Tani at the farmer group level in increasing sales in Penajam Paser Utara Regency are events and experiences, direct marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal sales. (2) Supporting factors for marketing communication strategy of anti-acid fertilizer CV. Farmer friends at the farmer group level in increasing sales in Penajam Paser Utara Regency are consumer readiness to buy, the existence of competitors and media preferences and availability. But the main one is to get the support of the local government of Penajam Paser Utara Regency. (3) Inhibiting factors of marketing communication strategy of anti-acid fertilizer CV. Sobat Tani at the farmer group level in increasing sales in Penajam Paser Utara Regency is budget availability, limited advertising and sales promotion, limited personal selling resources and public relations at CV. Sobat Tani.

Corresponding Author:

Nasrullah

Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi Fakultas Pascasarjana Universitas Fajar Makassar

Email: Nasrullah@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural potential in North Penajam Paser Regency is very broad, especially rice which is a superior commodity where it is planted on rainfed rice fields covering an area of 9,954.5 hectares (data from the Department of Agriculture, 2023). The condition of the agricultural land is mostly in a condition of high acidity, this is proven based on the laboratory test report of the East Kalimantan Agricultural Technology Assessment Center Number 256.2/TH/06/2021 dated July 28 2021, namely the pH is around 4-5. Seeing the condition of the land requires special treatment in good land management, such as applying lime. In conditions of large areas of land, the need for lime in laurel units is very large, which causes production costs for farmers to increase in addition to providing other fertilizers, so it is very necessary to have alternative

fertilizers that are very effective in minimal quantities, able to minimize the level of soil acidity in order to help farmers save production costs. agricultural fertilizers such as CV anti-acid fertilizer. Farmer Friends whose application only requires 10 kg/Ha.

In agricultural activities, it is very necessary to support the success of production, one of these supports is fertilizer. Fertilizer emerged when human awareness of the existence of natural resources increased and humans were required to preserve nature, in addition to making efforts to continue to provide and support life's needs (Lingga and Marsono, 2002).

Fertilizer is an organic or inorganic material of natural or artificial origin that is given to plants either directly or indirectly to add certain essential nutrients for plant growth. Fertilizer is an important production factor in farming, especially in order to increase food crop production (Sutedjo, 1994).

According to Rosmarkan and Yuwono (2002) fertilizer is a material used to change the physical, chemical or biological properties of soil so that it becomes better for plant growth. Based on distribution and procurement, fertilizer is divided into two, namely subsidized fertilizer and non-subsidized fertilizer. Non-subsidized fertilizer is fertilizer that is procured and distributed outside the Government program and does not receive subsidies. Non-subsidized fertilizer can be distributed anywhere without any location restrictions.

The presence of appropriate fertilizer in terms of quantity, type, quality, price, place and time will determine the quantity and quality of agricultural products produced. The smooth supply of fertilizer to agricultural businesses makes this business more competitive, but in reality the problem that farmers often face is unaffordable prices at the farmer level. A lack of fertilizer can result in abnormal plant growth, thereby reducing farmers' crop yields or even crop failure.

The use of chemical fertilizers by farmers in order to improve the quality of agricultural and plantation products is familiar to our ears. Because in every plant fertilization activity, on average farmers will use chemical fertilizers or inorganic fertilizers. Currently in the field most farmers use chemical fertilizers which are relatively expensive but this does not reduce farmers' interest in buying chemical fertilizers. Fertilizer can be purchased by farmers and retailers at different prices at the farmer level and at the retailer level, where the marketing amount for CV Anti-Acid fertilizer. Sobat Tani could increase or decrease.

CV. Sobat Tani is a business entity whose activities are producing anti-acid fertilizer with the aim of improving soil acidity levels so that farmers are helped in cultivating the land. Apart from that, it is also to obtain CV profits or profits. Sobat Tani is one of the producers and sells non-subsidized fertilizer in North Penajam Paser Regency, and is one of the businesses engaged in selling fertilizer directly to consumers and traders.

CV Anti-Acid Fertilizer. Sobat Tani is a new product in solving the problem of soil acidity for agricultural land, so extra work is needed in delivering the product to farmers. Based on information from the pre-survey conducted, problems arise in the marketing of CV fertilizer. Tani Friends, this is because there are several types of fertilizer in circulation that have the same function, which has a big impact on marketing communications by CV. Farmer Friends. Marketing of this anti-acid fertilizer is spread to North Penajam Paser Regency and outside North Penajam Paser Regency.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative methods to dig up information using interviews and field observations from certain informants. This research was carried out at the CV marketing office. Sobat Tani North Penajam Paser Regency whose address is Babulu District, North Penajam Paser Regency, East Kalimantan Province. The research was also carried out for approximately two months starting from September 2023 to November 2023 according to the length of the research period, a research agenda and schedule was also provided to become a research time plan for researchers.

Data analysis is a process carried out systematically to explore and organize notes from observations, interviews and other data sources. The aim is to increase the researcher's understanding of the case under study and to present findings that can be easily understood by others.

In data analysis, the information obtained is processed and arranged in such a way that it can be sorted and organized easily. Data analysis also aims to find patterns and meaning from the information obtained, so that it can be used to present research results in a clear and structured manner to readers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is the Marketing Communication Strategy for Anti-Acid Fertilizer CV. Farmer Friends at Farmer Group Level in increasing sales in North Penajam Paser Regency

The following is data obtained by the author from research results and data collection while conducting research in the field, namely CV. Farmer Friends. The author uses three types of data collection consisting of interviews, observation and documentation. The author collected data through the director, Kalimantan area sales manager and East Kalimantan manager. CV Management. Farmer Friends can be said to be good because in carrying out their responsibilities they have their respective positions and duties. Even

though there is a dual role in managing its marketing communications strategy, CV. Sobat Tani continues to try to do his best to improve the company's quality, maintain its image, promote products and increase sales.

In marketing communications carried out by CV. Sobat Tani certainly has inhibiting factors such as limited marketing staff so that planning and preparation is done spontaneously. This can influence consumer confidence in the superiority of the product they have. To overcome existing problems CV. Sobat Tani has a supporting factor, namely by carrying out innovations and offers that are attractive and profitable for consumers.

In this research, researchers focused on analysis of marketing communication strategies for CV anti-acid fertilizer. Sobat Tani at the Farmer Group Level in increasing sales in North Penajam Paser Regency with the theory put forward by Kotler and Keller, namely marketing communication theory in the marketing communication mix which consists of eight elements, namely Advertising, Sales Promotion, Events and Experience (Event and Experience), Public Relations and Publicity, Direct Marketing, Interactive Marketing, Word of Mouth Marketing and Personal Selling . The presentation of the analysis of research results is as follows:

Advertising

Advertisements are any form of non-personal communication about products produced by the Company, both goods and services. Companies generally incur large costs in carrying out advertising marketing activities through advertising media, both online and offline (Priansa, 2017). Advertising can be defined as a form of paid non-personal communication and promotion of ideas, products, organizations by a clear sponsor (Kotler and Keller, 2009 in Rohmah, 2023). Advertising carried out by CV. Sobat Tani does not use advertising and still uses conventional methods with a personal approach to improve or promote products to consumers/audience according to the intended target audience. CV. Sobat Tani does not use electronic media such as radio and television which are known as the most powerful advertising media to reach a wide audience in the most powerful advertising to reach a wide audience in the advertising that is carried out. However, in carrying out CV advertising marketing communications. Sobat Tani chooses to use print media and outdoor media.

The print media used is in the form of brochures and does not use newspapers, magazines or bulletins. The outdoor media used is in the form of banners placed during demonstration plots on agricultural land. In order for a brand to be remembered and accepted by consumers, the message conveyed in advertising must be repeated. However, advertising activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani is not carried out continuously and can be said to be a long or short term frequency.

Advertising is a one-way dialogue activity and consumers are not obliged to respond to the advertisements presented. Advertising carried out by CV. Sobat Tani in marketing communications to increase sales can be said to be ineffective because advertising media has not been used and implemented properly, but tends to use a direct face-to-face system in the form of counseling or personal information to inform or promote products and companies.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotions are promotional activities and incentives carried out during sales to encourage trial or purchase of products (Kotler and Keller, 2009). A company usually uses various sales promotion tools such as coupons, contests, premiums and so on. Sales promotion activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani via online and offline or physical media. Promotions carried out through online media in the e-catalog are in the form of discounts given and prices can change if consumers negotiate with Sobat Tani. Promotion through offline or physical media in the form of special prices given when making purchases at agricultural shops (free market).

A company has a way of carrying out attractive promotions in order to get a faster and stronger response from customers or potential consumers. This was also done by CV. Sobat Tani creates attractive promotions in the form of exaggerating products when delivering goods or giving bonuses and providing merchandise to consumers/customers. Apart from creating attractive promotions, companies must have a way to maintain sales promotions so that potential consumers/customers are always interested in the promotions we provide and do not switch to buying other products. CV. Sobat Tani maintains the quality of the products sold to consumers by maintaining the sales promotions given so that consumers can still get quality products according to the specifications they have purchased when they do not receive promotions. This is done to gain and maintain the trust of the public, especially at the farmer group level.

Sales promotion activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani has the advantage of a product that is really needed by the community, especially farmer groups, in increasing soil fertility by fighting soil acidity. However, sales promotions have not been effective in marketing communication strategies to increase product sales. It is not yet effective because the promotions given to the public are not carried out continuously and only at certain times. All sales promotion activities carried out have not been optimal and many potential consumers do not yet know about the promotions provided by CV. Farmer Friends.

Event and Experience

Event and experience is a program or activity carried out and sponsored by actors to create daily or brand-related interactions (Kotler and Keller, 2009). CV. Buddy Tani has never participated in events and experiences, this is because the company is still relatively new and has minimal personnel or marketing staff.

Publicity/Public Relations

Public relations and publicity are several activities created to protect the image and promote the product and company brand (Kotler and Keller, 2009). A publicist himself has an important role for the company in maintaining a positive image and establishing good relationships with the public. The public relations and publicity activities carried out aim to influence public awareness of the Company.

Public relations and publicity activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani in introducing products to consumers or audiences, namely community relations, identity media and publications. Apart from that, in maintaining the image of the CV Company. Sobat Tani has a way of always maintaining product quality in accordance with SOP, returning unfit products and always maintaining customer satisfaction.

Activities carried out in public relations and publicity in marketing communication strategies to increase product sales have not been effective for CV. Farmer Friends. This is because many public relations and publicity activities have not been carried out properly and there is no public relations person who really understands the field of public relations. Among all the public relations and publicity activities carried out there are activities that are not implemented by CV. Sobat Tani actually has an important role for a company in improving its image and raising product awareness, namely the absence of events or social/charity activities organized by the company, and not collaborating or establishing relationships with media relations such as print media and mass media in publications. And also have never participated in an event or activity organized by another party and have never been a sponsor of an event or activity carried out by the government or private sector.

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is an organization's efforts to communicate directly or use direct channels or the internet with customers to generate responses and transactions (Kotler and Keller, 2009). To reach potential customers or individual customers, communication channels that can be used in direct marketing include letters, telephone, e-mail, kiosks, catalogs and so on. For CV shop kiosks. Sobat Tani does not have its own agricultural shop kiosk but instead does marketing to outside agricultural shop kiosks. Direct marketing activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani by face to face, telemarketing via telephone, catalogs and e-catalogues, e-mail and letters.

Consumer response is one of the goals obtained to increase sales in direct marketing. In direct marketing activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani gets a good response from consumers regarding the services provided so that they have trusted partners or regular customers of the Company and there are repeat orders in sales. Of all the activities carried out, there are several marketing communication activities that are always carried out or intensively, namely face to face and via telemarketing or telephone.

Marketing communication activities in direct marketing are effective for CV. Tani Friends in increasing sales. This is because direct marketing activities are carried out well and continuously. Face to face, open negotiation is one way to analyze potential consumers in determining the treatment that Sobat Tani can provide. The existence of repeat orders indicates that the product brand and company have been recognized and remembered by consumers.

Interactive Marketing

Interactive marketing is an online activity used to involve customers or prospects directly in increasing brand awareness, creating sales, and improving image (Kotler and Keller, 2009). The online media or internet used can help to introduce the product or company. Information or messages can be conveyed quickly, widely, without much cost and without using a lot of energy, which is an advantage. To achieve a goal or opportunity for proper interaction with marketers and consumers, interactive marketing activities must be carried out optimally.

CV. Sobat Tani in carrying out marketing communication activities in interactive marketing via online/internet in the form of YouTube, Facebook and websites. The website they own looks new, which was created in 2022. Interactive marketing is carried out by involving consumers, especially what is clearly visible, namely through their social media accounts in the form of YouTube. In the video uploaded via a YouTube account, the author observes that Sobat Tani often involves real consumers who use products from CV. Farmer Friends. All interactive marketing activities carried out online in the form of social media are not carried out continuously and can be said to be passive.

Apart from social media, in interactive marketing there is online marketing through paid internet advertising and internet marketing through online shopping or e-commerce such as Shopee, Tokopedia and

the like which are widely used by business people. However, CV. Sobat Tani has not used paid advertising and does not have a personal company e-commerce account for the interactive marketing carried out. Interactive marketing activities have been carried out optimally according to the business and capabilities possessed. But all forms of interactive marketing activities have not been carried out optimally. The lack of response from consumers or audiences to interactive marketing is due to the lack of information provided via the internet. This happened because of the lack of marketing personnel. Marketing communications in interactive marketing carried out by CV. Sobat Tani certainly has an influence in increasing sales but is not yet effective in the activities carried out.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth marketing is communication between people related to the advantages or experience of buying and using a product (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Form of word of mouth in CV marketing communication strategy. Sobat Tani, namely through verbal communication in the form of stories from person to person, telephone, as well as through written communication from chat rooms such as testimonials and reviews. Communication from person to person and through chat rooms has a big impact in increasing sales. One of the positive reviews from consumers about a product brand and providing testimonials can influence potential consumers so as not to raise doubts about the brand.

While potential consumers can be interested in a brand and buy a product, a businessman, apart from the form of communication used, must have a method to influence consumers. CV. Sobat Tani has a word of mouth method, namely by meeting targets to share information related to work and agricultural situations, providing solutions to these problems. Another method is to host clients to hold meetings at the Company's offices to visit factories so that they can indirectly influence consumer thinking.

All word of mouth marketing activities are carried out continuously by CV. Farmer Friends. The use of word of mouth marketing communication strategies is considered effective for the Company in promoting, introducing and increasing sales. This is because communication can be directly aimed at the desired target, does not cost much and is time efficient and can be done in any situation.

Personal Selling

Personal selling or personal selling is face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective buyers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions and placing orders (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Personal selling is an effective marketing communication strategy to improve a brand, especially in making subsequent purchases, forming interactions, beliefs and buyer actions. Personal sales activities carried out by CV. Sobat Tani takes the form of direct face-to-face contact with potential consumers and customers such as socialization and demonstration plots.

There is another type of personal selling activity, namely outreach carried out by visiting potential consumers from house to house, which can be called field selling. The presentation is carried out by consumers coming to the CV Company. Farmer Friends or visiting corporate or government agencies is called retail selling. Apart from that, sales meetings held by company leaders with the government or other companies are called executive selling.

Extension or socialization activities are provided to farmer groups and farmers by going from house to house and counseling or field schools. Presentation activities were carried out to farmer groups, government agencies and fertilizer suppliers by visiting the CV Company directly. Farmer Friends. Apart from that, there are sales meeting activities held by the company leadership with the government or other companies. The response of the audience or farmer groups in presentations and similar activities is one of the goals to be achieved in order to find out the level of thinking or awareness of potential consumers regarding the product brand or the Sobat Tani Company.

All personal selling marketing communication activities carried out have benefits for CV. Sobat Tani, apart from increasing sales, also aims to improve the brand. Personal selling carried out by CV. Sobat Tani in increasing sales can be said to be effective because the method used directly and face to face has a big influence. In this way, the farmer group or target group will be more easily influenced and understand the information provided. Meeting new people can also increase relationships and get to know the Antazam Sobat Tani brand directly, for example by groups of farmers who don't understand how to use cellphone technology, face to face can make it easier to receive the messages conveyed. However, in personal selling, not everything that is conveyed directly can influence the audience's thinking and there are not always orders and responses that are always positive. However, potential CV consumers. Farmer Friends, like the government and other companies, always place orders after personal sales activities are held compared to farmer groups or agricultural shop owners.

CV. Tani friends in increasing sales at the farmer group level carry out marketing communication strategies such as advertising, sales promotions, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal selling. Of all the marketing communication activities, this is the most effective and influential in increasing sales of CV anti-acid

fertilizer. Sobat Tani is direct marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal selling.

What are the inhibiting and supporting factors for CV's Anti-Acid Fertilizer Marketing Communication strategy? Farmer Friends at the Farmer Group Level in Increasing Sales in North Penajam Paser Regency

Furthermore, from several analyzes regarding CV marketing communication strategies. Farmer Friends, it can be traced that there is a way to increase product sales, namely by guaranteeing and prioritizing product quality for customers, especially at the farmer group level. Perceived quality is related to customer perceptions of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service. Aaker (1997) in Priansa (2017) states that perceived quality is the customer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service that is the same as the intended purpose. Furthermore, Priansa (2017) stated that good quality perceptions will provide a good stimulus for consumers to make purchases.

CV. Sobat Tani also strives to increase brand awareness of its product (Antazam) in the minds of consumers (farmer groups). Aaker (1997) in Priansa (2017) states that brand awareness is related to consumers' ability to recognize or remember that a brand is part of a certain product category. A brand consists of a number of sequential levels, starting from the highest position to the lowest, namely Top of mind, Brand recall, Brand recognition and Unaware brand.). CV. Sobat Tani, to carry out a marketing communication strategy to increase product sales, has gone through stages/levels of brand awareness, but not all of them have been completed.

In implementing a marketing communications strategy, an organization cannot ignore the complexity of its operational environment. A number of inhibiting and enabling factors are inherently involved in the journey towards achieving marketing objectives. These factors create dynamics that must be understood and addressed so that marketing efforts can run effectively.

Inhibiting and supporting factors may arise from various sources, both internal and external to the organization, such as budget availability, product life cycle, type of product or service, consumer purchasing decisions, target audience characteristics, consumer readiness to purchase the product, media preferences, regulations, competition, and media availability.

Thus, a deep understanding of these factors is key in designing an effective marketing communications strategy. Identifying and managing enabling factors enables organizations to maximize their potential for marketing success. Conversely, by identifying and addressing inhibiting factors, organizations can reduce risks and increase the resilience of their marketing strategies amidst dynamic changes in the marketplace.

As stated in (Firmansyah, 2020) every marketing manager or marketer needs to understand marketing communications management in order to develop a marketing communications strategy. In developing a marketing communications strategy or new product marketing strategy, a marketer or marketing manager needs to consider several factors related to selecting and determining the right marketing communications mix.

For most companies, the availability of a budget to market a product can determine the marketing communications mix used. In this context, after conducting observations and interviews with research informants, the researchers concluded that budget availability was one of the inhibiting factors for CV. Sobat Tani in carrying out marketing communication strategies.

As stated by the Director (Mrs. Peggy Putri), currently CV. Sobat Tani has not implemented a massive marketing communication strategy of personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations Before determining the marketing communications mix, marketers or marketing managers need to consider the type of product or service that will be offered to consumers. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers with informants, it was revealed that the anti-acid fertilizer products produced by CV. Sobat Tani is highly anticipated and in demand by consumers, this is proven by the demand from farmers through the government to provide assistance in the form of anti-acid fertilizer.

This condition is an opportunity to carry out massive marketing communication strategy activities. The informants stated that the demand for anti-acid fertilizer is currently very large, so more intensive assistance is needed from East Kalimantan managers to convince farmers or the public. So it becomes an opportunity to increase production so that it can reach maximum levels. Thus, the company decided to develop or increase production by increasing target markets and adding employees.

The results of efforts to maintain product quality and assistance appear to have a positive impact, especially in terms of increasing demand for anti-acid fertilizers by farmers. and publicity, due to budget limitations.

Consumer purchasing decisions are a complex process that is influenced by various factors. In the context of anti-acid fertilizer products by CV. Tani Friends, several key aspects play an important role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. First, the stage of product development is a crucial factor that influences consumer confidence. If the product is still in the development stage and has not reached its maximum level, consumers may feel hesitant to make a purchasing decision because the quality is not yet

optimal.

Furthermore, information or education about products can also support purchasing decisions. Consumers need to understand well what CV products offer. Tani Friends, and this certainty can create confidence for them to make a purchase. In facing these obstacles, marketing communication strategies must be focused on conveying clear information and education that can help consumers understand the value and advantages of the product.

In overcoming this challenge, efforts to improve product quality and attractiveness are crucial. Providing quality anti-acid fertilizer offered to consumers is the right step so that product sales reach maximum levels. Thus, consumer purchasing decisions can be positively influenced when they have confidence in the quality of the product and understand the value it provides.

Additionally, it is important to note that purchasing decisions are not only influenced by product quality, but also by psychological and emotional aspects. Marketing communications strategies can take advantage of this aspect by emphasizing positive experiences, testimonials, or user stories that can increase trust and product appeal. By understanding these factors, CV. Sobat Tani can direct its marketing communications strategy more effectively to achieve more positive purchasing decisions from consumers.

CONCLUSION

CV anti-acid fertilizer marketing communication strategy. Sobat Tani at the farmer group level in increasing sales in North Penajam Paser Regency are events and experiences, direct marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal selling.

Supporting factors for CV anti-acid fertilizer marketing communication strategy. Sobat Tani at the farmer group level in increasing sales in North Penajam Paser Regency is consumer readiness to buy, the existence of competitors and media preferences and availability. However, the most important thing is that it received support from the regional government of North Penajam Paser Regency.

Inhibiting factors for CV anti-acid fertilizer marketing communication strategies. Farmer Friends at the farmer group level in increasing sales in North Penajam Paser Regency are budget availability, limited advertising and sales promotions, limited personal selling resources and CV public relations. Farmer Friends.

RECOMMENDATION

CV. Tani Friends should have good relationships and collaborate with media relations so that there is news about the Company and can be known by a wide audience.

CV. Tani Friends should pay more attention to matters relating to everything related to the public relations department which is useful for increasing brand recognition among consumers both in the North Penajam Paser Regency and other areas.

CV. Tani Friends should have a publicist who is professional and understands their field so that they can carry out their public relations duties well, and can also maintain and improve the company's image.

CV. Sobat Tani should improve and add human resources (HR) in the management, structuring and division of work so that in carrying out their duties in marketing, all marketing communication activities can run effectively and there will be no double-jobs in the CV structure. Farmer Friends.

CV. Farmer Friends should increase their activeness in using online/digital media so that the dissemination of information can be widely reached, quickly and not left behind by technological developments.

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