

The Dollars & Sense of a Professional Resume

NEW STUDY CONFIRMS THAT INVESTING IN
YOUR CAREER PAYS OFF

THE BURDEN ON today's job seeker:

Create a resume that appeals to both human and machine.



Recruiting software and resume-scanning tools have created a new audience and shifted the way we define a well-constructed resume.

Enter [TopResume](#), a Talent Inc. company that has distilled this balancing act into an art and a science: professional resume writing. But, what are the benefits of a professionally written resume beyond ensuring the document makes it into the right hands?

- Are professionally written resumes perceived differently by recruiters?
- Will job seekers achieve better results?

Until now, these questions have gone unanswered and the benefits of a professionally written resume have been mostly anecdotal.

Itemizing the investment

From November 8 through December 5, 2018, TopResume commissioned a study of recruiters and job seekers to understand the way a professionally written resume impacts the hiring process.

The results were definitive: An investment in a professionally written resume gives job seekers a competitive edge over those whose resumes were self-written.

In fact, recruiters perceived candidates with professionally written resumes to be **worth 7% more** than those without them. They also perceived these candidates as more polished and better able to deliver results, and they felt more confident about the prospect of presenting these candidates to clients.

Of the candidates who received TopResume's free resume critique, those who purchased a professional rewrite reported **finding a job at a 32% higher rate** than those who did not. Of those candidates, 68% secured that job within three months of having their resume professionally written and 42% of them moved on to a higher-level position.

Setting up the study

Under the direction of [zhaus](#), a Brooklyn-based consulting firm that champions a data-centered and validated learning approach to product development, a two-part study was performed to answer two critical questions:

- Do recruiters perceive candidates with professionally written resumes to be more desirable and employable?
- Do job seekers significantly benefit from investing in a professionally written resume?

KEY BENEFITS OF A PROFESSIONALLY WRITTEN RESUME



Earn **more** money



Land a new job **sooner**



Advance your career



PART ONE

The recruiters

One hundred and fifty-seven talent acquisition professionals (recruiters), all of whom possessed at least five years of experience and were familiar with New York City's talent market, were asked to review three candidate resumes, one at a time, and then answer the same four questions:

1. How "polished" the candidate appears
2. How well the resume communicated the candidate's ability to deliver results
3. What salary the candidate might be worth in the New York City job market in 2018
4. How confident they would feel presenting the candidate to a client

The study was presented randomly in three versions. In each version of the survey, recruiters were shown the same three anonymized candidates; two of the candidates were presented using the self-written (DIY) version of their resumes, while the remaining candidate was presented using TopResume’s professionally written version.

The three “candidates” were:

A

A director-level sales professional

B

A senior-level financial planning and analysis professional

C

A communications and public relations management professional

In each version of the survey, a different candidate was presented with the professionally written version of their resume.

Recruiter Survey Versions	Candidate A Sales Director	Candidate B Senior FP&A Professional	Candidate C Communications/PR Mgmt
Recruiter Survey Version 1	Candidate A Self-Written Resume	Candidate B Professionally Written	Candidate C Self-Written Resume
Recruiter Survey Version 2	Candidate A Self-Written Resume	Candidate B Self-Written Resume	Candidate C Professionally Written
Recruiter Survey Version 3	Candidate A Professionally Written	Candidate B Self-Written Resume	Candidate C Self-Written Resume

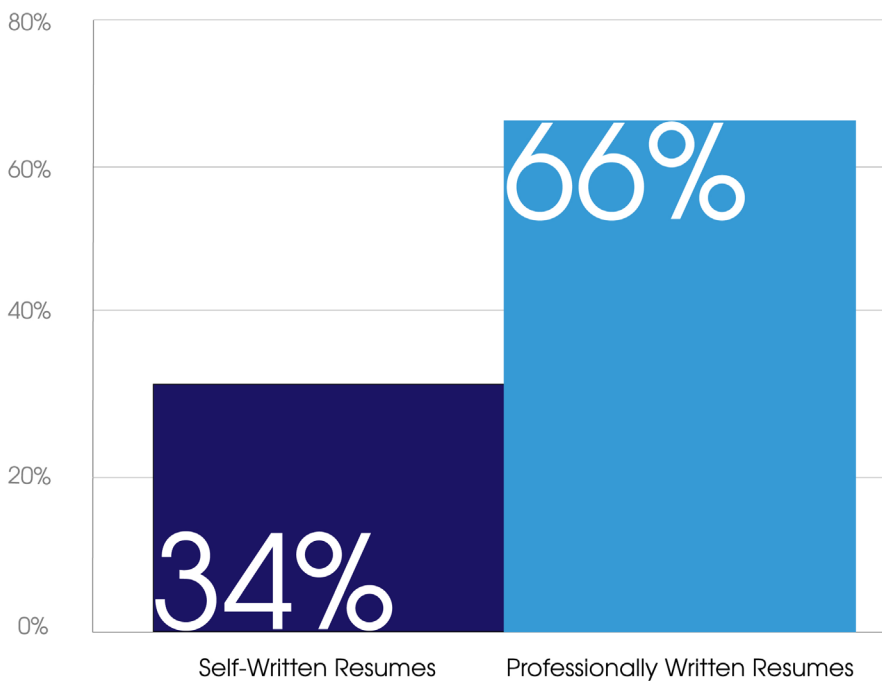


First impressions

After reviewing each resume, respondents were asked to rate how “polished” they considered the candidate’s resume to be based on a Likert scale of 1 through 5; 1 being “not polished” and 5 being “very polished.” Scores of 4 and 5 were considered high.

How “polished” do you consider this candidate to be?

Percentage of “4” and “5” ratings



FINDING
Recruiters were twice as likely to rate a professionally written resume as highly polished.

Recruiters rated the professionally written resumes with one of the top two marks (4 or 5) nearly twice as often as the self-written resumes: 66% vs. 34%.

“A polished resume is clean, consistent, and easy to understand. It clearly articulates what you do, what you want to do, and, essentially, tells your story ... This is important because your resume is likely in a stack with many others. If it’s not clear and easy to read, it’s very easy [for recruiters] to just flip to the next person.

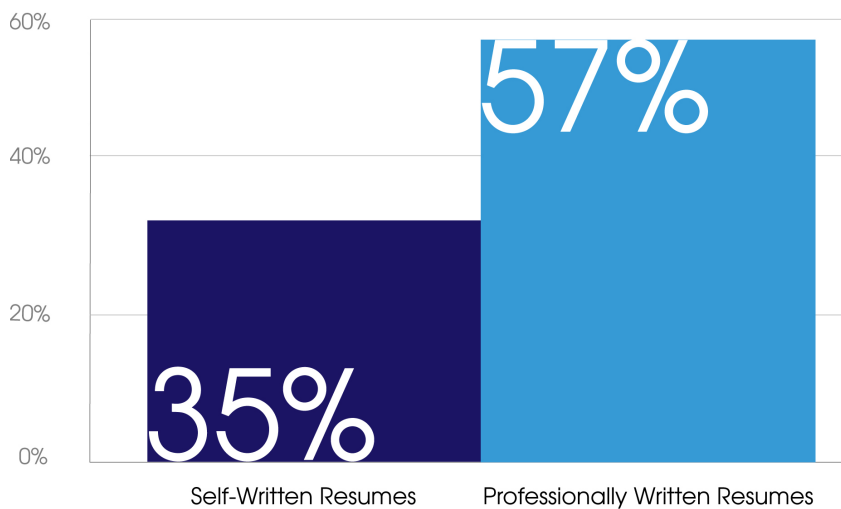


Angela Romano Kuo
HR & RECRUITING CONSULTANT

Gauging potential

Respondents were asked to rate how well each resume demonstrates and/or quantifies the candidate’s ability to deliver results based on a Likert scale of 1 through 5; 1 being “not well” and 5 being “very well.” Once again, scores of 4 and 5 were considered high.

How well does this resume demonstrate and/or quantify the candidate’s ability to deliver results? Percentage of “4” and “5” ratings



FINDING
Candidates with professionally written resumes were more successful in demonstrating their ability to deliver results.

When presented with the professionally written resume versions, respondents rated them a 4 or 5 for how well they demonstrated the candidate’s ability to deliver results 57% of the time, versus 35% of the time for the original versions.

Recruiters want to see the results a candidate has achieved in his or her work history, as it speaks to that candidate’s potential to succeed in the position they’re trying to fill. The more effectively a job seeker quantifies his or her work and achievements, the easier it is for recruiters to grasp that person’s value.

“ I’m always looking for resumes that are results-focused ... the ones that seek to quantify and monetize their achievements are always the best.



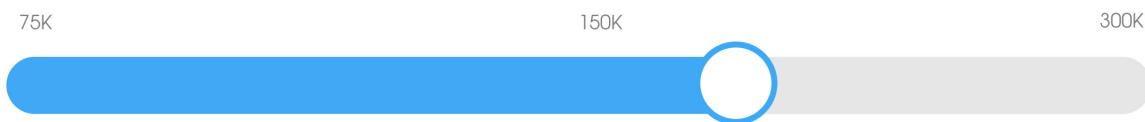
Dave Barner
PRESIDENT, BARNDOG STAFFING

In fact, when TopResume separately surveyed over 350 recruiters in February 2018 to determine the [biggest resume “deal-breakers”](#) that can cost a candidate the job, “failure to demonstrate and quantify results” fell within the top five. When a resume fails to illustrate an individual’s achievements and contributions, recruiters may assume the candidate held “responsibilities” but failed to take initiative or achieve actual results.

Estimating worth

Respondents were asked to gauge what base salary each candidate would be expected to earn in the New York City job market:

What base salary (USD, in thousands) would you expect this candidate to be worth in New York City?



This question was followed by a self-qualifying question about the respondents’ confidence in the salary estimate:

My level of confidence in a salary assessment is ...

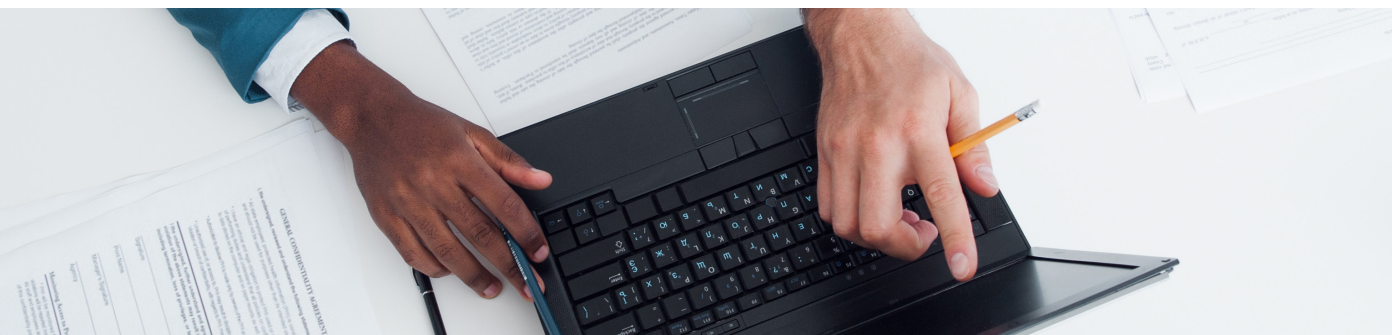
- Low** – I don’t feel qualified to make this assessments
- Medium** – I feel qualified, but it could be more than +/-25% of what I answered
- High** – I am qualified and I’m pretty sure what this candidate should be making, give or take 10-15%

FINDING
Recruiters perceived candidates with professionally written resumes to be worth 7% more than other candidates.

Answers with low confidence ratings were eliminated. For example, a recruiter might not have enough experience with the public relations field to be qualified to estimate the base salary for that candidate.

After eliminating the low confidence responses, respondents who reviewed the professionally written resume version perceived the candidate to be worth 7% more than candidates presented by their original, self-written resume versions.

This means that candidates who use a professionally written resume are more likely to be offered more money for the job than if they used the original, self-written version of their resume — before the interview process begins.

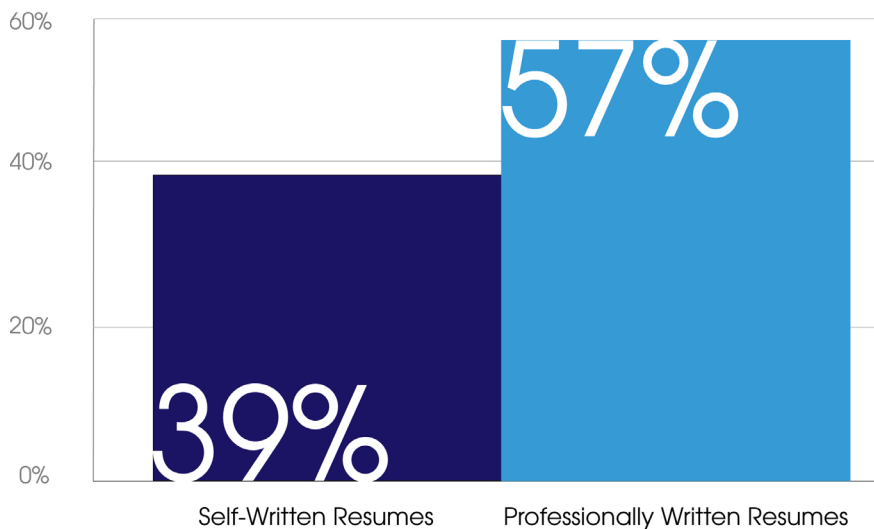


Quantifying confidence

Using the same rating scale, respondents were asked how confident they would feel presenting each candidate to a client or hiring manager. Again, those with professionally written resumes received higher marks (4 and 5) than job seekers with self-written resumes: 57% compared to 39%.

How confident would you feel presenting this candidate?

Percentage of “4” and “5” ratings



FINDING
Recruiters were more confident presenting candidates with professionally written resumes to hiring managers or clients.

PART TWO

The job seekers

One hundred and thirty-two job seekers, all of whom had requested a free resume critique from TopResume in the six to 12 months prior to the study's launch date, were asked similar questions about their current job status and the results of their job search. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents had hired TopResume for a professionally written resume; the remaining third had not.

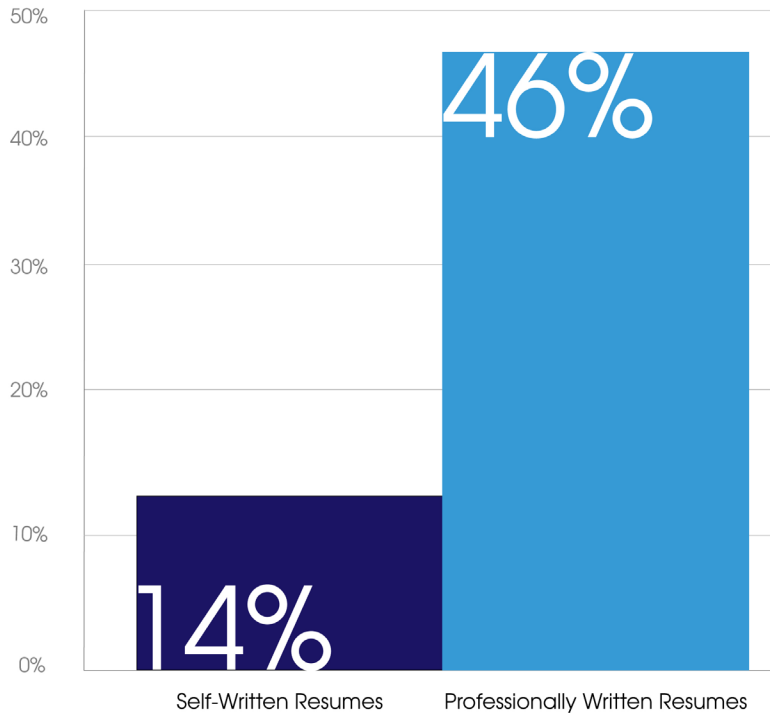
A more fruitful job search

All candidates were asked to describe their current job status: whether they secured a new job, were still looking, or had taken a break from job searching. A fourth option allowed respondents to write in an alternative job status.



What is your current job status?

Percentage of candidates who reported getting a new job



FINDING
 Candidates who had their resumes professionally rewritten by TopResume had a 32% higher rate of landing a new job.

Candidates who had their resumes professionally rewritten by TopResume had a 32% higher rate of landing a new job than those who did not. Among candidates with self-written resumes, 14% reported landing a new job, compared to 46% among those with professionally written resumes. Additionally, most candidates (68%) who used a professionally written resume landed that new job within three months, and nearly half (42%) advanced to a higher position.

This self-reported job-seeker data confirms the assumptions drawn from the recruiter study: A professionally written resume helps job seekers make a better impression with recruiters and, ultimately, land a job more quickly.

“Once I posted my new [professionally written] resume online, I received four phone interviews and two in-person interviews — and it has only been one week. Amazing!”

Angelique V.
 ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL

Key takeaways

For talent acquisition professionals and job seekers, the perceived differences between professionally written and self-written resumes have a significant impact in the real world, as well as a measurable and considerable ROI.

Anonymized director-level sales professional

Self-written vs. Professionally written resume

121 Street Address, City, State Zip •###-###-#### @#email@email.com

Candidate A

QUALIFICATIONS

- Innovative results driven professional with 15 years channel / direct sales experience
- Expertise in channel development, National Partner Programs, Enduser Sales
- Trusted advisor for reseller partner community
- Business Dev/ New product/ Program launch and positioning
- Channel Partner Development and strategic sales planning

EXPERIENCE

Feb 2017-Present Company A, City, State
Channel Account Director (National)

- Responsible for growth of assigned partners in Company A's Large Var Space

2015-2016 Company A, City, State
Acquisition Program Lead (National)

- Designed and implemented Company A's Large VAR Acquisition Program
- Focused on recruitment and development of key Acquisition Partners
- 100% YOY growth
- Achievements: National AE of the year (2015 and 2016), Circle of Excellence (2015 and 2016)

2008 - 2014 Company A, City, State
Senior Channel AE - US Western Region

- Impact revenue growth through the development of National and Super Regional Partners.
- Own sales/marketing strategy across all lines of business in the Company A portfolio
- Strategic advisor and trusted advocate/champion for the partner's business
- Uniquely position and correlate each partner's value to both internal and external stakeholders
- Achievements: AE of the year West 2011, 13,14 100%+ quota achievement 5 out of 5 yrs.

2007 - 2008 Company B, City, ST
National Partner Manager

- Played key role in the development of this new program launch (National Partner Program).
- Profiled, recruited and developed large national partner candidates
- Managed team of 15 Channel resources to drive strategy and engagement nationally
- Achievements: Presidents Club 2007, CAM of the Year 2007

2002 - 2007 Company B, City, ST
Channel Account Manager / SMB AE

- Responsible for Channel Growth - both sales revenue and channel partner community
- Responsible for Technical Sales and training across all product lines.
- Responsible for executing and creating marketing plans for all focus partners
- Conducted Quarterly and Annual Business planning and reviews
- Achievements: Presidents Club '04, '05, '06, CAM of the year '04, '05

1999-2002 Company C, City, ST
Channel Manager / Sales Exec

- Directed Channel and Enduser Sales through Company C's distributed model
- Launched early stage companies ie: BlackBerry, Juniper into the channel
- Worked closely with companies to develop their go to market strategy

SELF-WRITTEN

Candidate A

City, State zip
 email@email.com • ###-###-#### • linkedin.com/profile

National Channel Account Director

Enthusiastic, growth-focused technical sales leader with proven success stewarding accounts in dynamic, fast-paced environments to ensure client loyalty and increased year-over-year spend.

— **Areas of Expertise** —
 Operations Leadership | Business Expansion | Growth Execution | Channel Partner Acquisition
 Consultative & Solution Selling | Exceeding Revenue Goals | Complex Technical Sales Cycles
 Negotiations & Closing | Client Relations & Retention | New Product/Program Launch & Positioning

— **Career Accomplishments** —
 15+ years' Distinguished Channel / Direct Sales Experience
 Multiple Company A and Company B Recognition Awards for Outstanding Sales Leadership Achievements
 Highest Attainment in Company A US Global Commercial Channels for Two Consecutive Years:
 2016: 255% of quota; 100% YOY | 2015: 215% of quota; 50% YOY

Professional Experience

Company A City, State
National Channel Account Director / Acquisition Program Lead 2014 - Present

Tenaciously manage and cultivate Company A / EMC highly-visible service portfolios; hold \$100M in annual revenue accountability.

Key Contributions:

- Aggressively pursue sales targets and develop comprehensive GTM operational programs; commended for meticulous forecasting accuracy, highest quota attainment, and first half 2017 revenue growth of 20% YOY.
- Honored with multiple performance awards including Circle of Excellence (2015-2016) and National Account Executive of the Year (2015-2016).
- Inspire and mentor virtual team; skillfully orchestrate staffing directives with regional engineering, SMEs, and sales support professionals to secure and retain Company A's largest strategic partnerships.
- Recognized for skillful identification of Company A Program coverage model limitations; appointed to newly-created position as key stakeholder leading Large Var Acquisition Program initiatives.

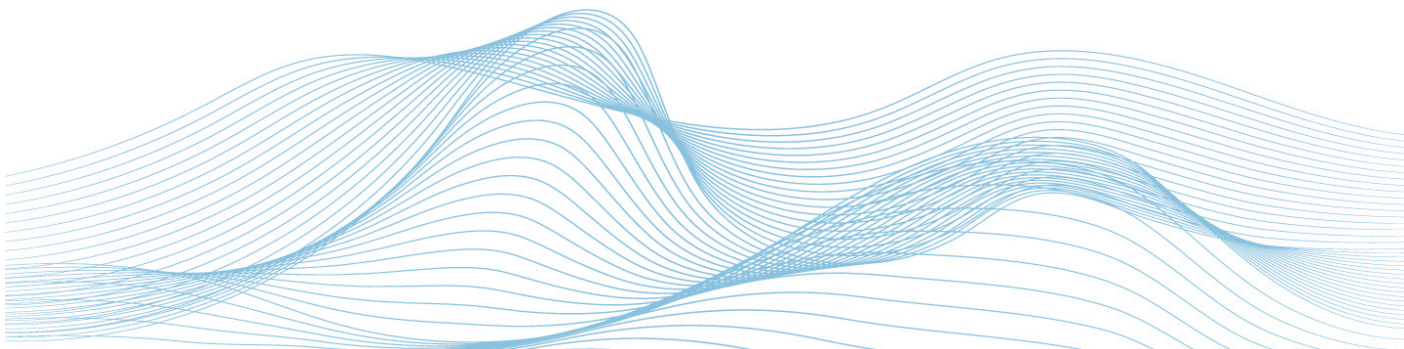
Company A City, State
Senior Channel Account Executive, Western Region 2008 - 2014

Overcame National and Super Regional Partner gatekeeper resistance to gain access to key decision makers; leveraged incentives and keen negotiation skills to close complex technical sales.

Key Contributions:

...continued...

PROFESSIONALLY WRITTEN



A professionally written resume achieves three critical goals:

1. Presents a compelling career narrative

A successful resume should walk the reader through a candidate's experience, highlighting the skills learned and results achieved along the way. It should emphasize how those skills and results qualify the candidate for his/her next position.

“A really strong resume tells the right story. It is relevant to the job and is able to create a narrative about why this person is qualified for the job.”



David G.
SVP OF HUMAN RESOURCES, DELOS

2. Balances visual elements

Resumes should be formatted to be visually appealing, striking a balance between content and white space. However, elaborate formats, excessive color, and other design elements can have the opposite effect, making the resume look congested and uninviting.

3. Highlights a candidate's value

A strong resume demonstrates the candidate's ability with specific examples, quantifiable results, awards, case studies, and other proof points.

“The first draft of my new resume left me stunned ... it showed me how much I had been selling myself short ... this experience has been very empowering for me.”

Eric K.
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL

While the average job seeker, with enough care and attention, can avoid many [common resume mistakes](#) that recruiters regard as “deal-breakers” (e.g. spelling and grammatical errors, missing or incorrect contact information, inappropriate email address), most self-written resumes fall short when they attempt to achieve these critical goals.

To learn more about this study or TopResume, please [contact us](#).

About TopResume

TopResume, a [Talent Inc.](#) company, is the world's premier resume-writing service, writing and analyzing more than 4 million resumes and LinkedIn profiles each year. Job seekers work directly with professional writers and industry experts to redefine their personal brand and stand out from the crowd during the job-search process.

Invest in a professionally written resume to earn more money, spend less time job-searching, and advance your career.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT TOPRESUME'S RESUME-WRITING SERVICES](#)

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- ☎ [1-800-604-1929](tel:1-800-604-1929)
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