**How Brands Communicate.**
*Leonidas* **– A Kept Promise**

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**Abstract**

Building a genuine brand is a growing challenge on a competitive market. The modern consumer has become an elitist one, being more interested in the quality of the products they consume and appreciating the personalized brand communication. Loyalty often occurs when the consumer's experience following the interaction with the brand is a memorable one, both in the traditional environment and in the digital environment. Starting from a review of the elements that contribute to the construction of a brand (story, name, logo, tagline), we propose to present the ways in which a name with an existence of over 100 years has become known on the international market and has constantly tried to differentiate itself, taking into account the consumption preferences and trends.

**Keywords**: *brand, brand story, naming, logomark, tagline/slogan*

### 1. Introduction. What is a brand? In search of a definition

A brand – whether it is a name and/or a distinctive symbol materialized in a logo, a registered trademark or a packaging design – has the role of identifying the products and differentiating them from those of the competition. Differentiated brand creation is based on unique brand associations built on product attributes, names, packaging, advertising and distribution strategies (Aaker, 2005: 22-23). Neverthless, a brand is more than a word, a logo or a symbol which serves to identify products or companies. A brand is a combination of emotions, perceptions, attitudes of consumers in relation to a product:

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"A brand assumes the perception about quality, image, *lifestyle*, status and refers to the qualities, the tangible and intangible aspects of a product" (Balaban, 2009: 81). The capital of a brand is based on the loyalty to the brand, name recognition, perceived quality, brand associations and other assets owned by the brand (patents, registered trademarks, relationships within the distribution channels, etc.). These are the assets and liabilities related to the brand, which differ from one context to another and which reflect the value of the brand for consumers. Based on the assets, consumers can interpret, process and retain information about products and brands, and, as a result of familiarizing themselves with the characteristics of the brand, their confidence in the purchase decision may increase. Moreover, the perceived quality and the brand associations contribute to the buyers' satisfaction after using the respective brand (Aaker, 2005: 34-35).

A strong brand is based on a brilliant idea, which generates success through simplicity. A brand is different from a product (Cărămidă, 2009: 15-18). Thus, a product is bought for what it is, while the choice of a brand is made according to what it represents; a product is on the store shelf, whereas, a brand is in the mind and soul of the consumer; the life of a product is finished, but a brand has no limit; a product can become a brand, as opposed to a brand, which can never be a product; a product may be counterfeit, but a brand is unique (it is all about the unique selling proposition – USP), "a special feature, which **provides added value** to customers and cannot be easily copied or imitated by competitors." The product offered does not necessarily contain this UPS. It can be a special production or delivery process, extraordinary services made available to customers or a special industrial design; Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 103). The brand also differs from the trademark (Cărămidă, 2010: 73-74), the latter having an essential role in the construction of the brand, namely that it does not only represent the name or logo of a product, but it also contributes to the differentiation between products and their identification in relationship with origin and manufacturer. Any

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graphic, semantic or of other nature concept which may be registered in accordance with the trademark law, may become a trademark.

### 2. How to build a brand?

Products are identified and differentiated through visual and sometimes physical tools, which constitute the elements of the brand. For the capital of a brand, the proper choice of these elements and their coordination are very important. In addition to the story of a brand, the name, logo(type), tagline (slogan) contribute to building a powerful brand – which confer the visual identity of a brand and which convey its essence and personality, as well as the corporate culture. However, the brand identity differs from its image by the fact that the former represents a long-term strategic quality, which transmits the perpetual values of the brand, as long as the second one is more tactical, which can be modified at some point.

The power of **a brand story** – "a kind of legend" about its appearance – resides in the depth, credibility and significance of the message, which helps all parties involved to believe in the stated vision and mission. Thus, the FedEx company is based on the story of a young student, who had the idea of setting up a night delivery company and who was not discouraged that he received an average grade for this from his professor at Yale (at least according to some sources); the story of the innovative spirit of the founders of the Hewlett-Packard Company is linked to a small garage, where Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard started developing their instruments; the story of the Michelin Little Man was inspired by a stack of tyres that resembled a human form (Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 101; 103; 111-114).

For the **choice of a name**, it is recommended to use a specialized company, which will also create the logo, the slogan and, as the case may be, the identity manual. However, if this solution is not chosen, a number of issues could be taken into account in choosing the name (Cărămidă, 2009: 76-79). Thus, the name should respond to the aspirations and desires of all those involved in this choice, starting from a common point of view. Usually, the approaches differ

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depending on the reference element (product/company/person/ social, political, cultural, sporting event) and the estimation regarding the life of the brand. When it comes to a company which owns several brands, the choice of a name generally respects the conditions imposed by the "mother" brand. The name is chosen based on the nature of the future market (local or global), the primary audience, the field of activity, the story of the brand, its defining characteristics, its personality, the promises it makes and the elements that differentiate it from the competition.

The name of a brand is loaded with emotions, associations, meanings and reflects a number of values and aspirations. In a name, there lies the essence of all the branding strategies (Cărămidă, 2009: 36-37). Just like the brand, a well-chosen name can be a valuable asset, which intervenes in all forms of brand communication. The choice of a name can be made using processes such as (Cărămidă, 2009: 79-81; Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 105-106): abbreviation (*Microsoft*), acronym (*KFC*), allusion (*London Fog*), evocation (V-8), suggestion (KitchenAid), analogy (*Koo-Aid*), semantic combination (*NutraSweet*), two or more word composition (*LaserJet*), description (*Bath & Beyond, British Airways*), metonymy (*Silicon Alley*), onomatopoeia (*Kookooroo*), association of two or more words diametrically opposed as meaning or significance (*True Lies*), association with a well-known song or story (*Chimney with Care, Orient Express*), truncation of two or more words (*Intel*), metaphor (*Oracle*). In addition, the name can also come from the founders (*Adidas*, *Boeing*), from the classic root of words (*Avis*) or from words from a foreign language (*Volare*); it may be a historical or geographical reference (*Winnebago*, *Fuji*) or it may refer to a mythological character (*Centaur*); finally, it can be humorous (*Google*, *Cracker Jack*), poetic (*El Pollo Loco*) or rhythmic (*Lean Cuisine*) or it can be a lexical invention (*Agilent*).

It is considered that the use of stereotyped names is an inefficient strategy, found especially in the business to business (B2B) sector, where we find terminations which, even if reflecting very well

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the specifics of the company, fail to differentiate and, as a result, position effectively, because those names are easily confused with those of competing brands (e.g., *Net, Sys, Tech, Tel, Pharm*). Moreover, it is a real challenge to find a name that is globally appropriate, because some words have unexpected meanings in other languages, and the pronunciation of international brand names sometimes raises problems, which even require extensive communication campaigns with the purpose to educate clients in this regard (Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 105 107; cf. and Cărămidă, 2009: 84).

A brand name can be successful if it is short, attractive, easy to pronounce and memorable in the context of a global market, if it conveys a sense of authenticity and credibility, if it reflects, as far as possible, in a single word, the unique quality which it represents and if it is available for registration as a brand and as an Internet domain (Cărămidă, 2009: 84-85).

Just as important as the choice of a name is the **logo**(**type**) or **logomark**, which is the "graphic representation" of a brand name (Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 107) and in which graphic symbols, different colours, illustrations, typographic characters, photo images can be combined (Cărămidă, 2009: 91-92). Sometimes the name is enough to represent the brand image in a logo. A condition of success and a guarantee of the stability of the image of a brand are given by the harmonious combination in the logo of the graphic and semantic elements with the name. Like the name, the logo should attract attention and leave a positive impression, be characterized by simplicity and elegance, create a unique and distinct image, reflect what the brand represents, easy to be associated with the name and not causing confusion with other brands, being memorable and conveying a clear message (ibid.: 94-95).

Just like the name and logo(type), **a tagline** or **a slogan** is an expression easily recognized and memorized, which contributes to the creation of the brand identity. In marketing communication programmes, a slogan frequently accompanies a brand name and supports its image. However, to consider a slogan as comprising the

whole identity of a brand would be a mistake which narrows the vision on the brand. A slogan should reflect both the functional and emotional values translated in a language which is accessible to customers and which make an essential contribution to the difference from the competition. Many slogans have been recorded over time in popular culture (for example, "Just do it", "Think different", "Got milk?"; Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 109-110; "I want, I can" – Adidas Torsion, "Titan Ice – Different story!"; Balaban, 2009: 108) or they have a true "neo-romantic current" format because they had the emotional idea ("I'm loving it" – Mc Donald's, "Chocolate with love – Kandia, "The magic of coffee aroma" – Jacobs, Volkswagen – "For the love of the drive"; Balaban, 2009: 109).

Brand communication differs in the business to consumer (B2C) sector, where very high importance is given to brands, compared to the B2B sector, where branding is not necessarily relevant (Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 15). The purpose of communication in the case of B2C is to create notoriety and an emotional experience that will lead to the preference for a brand, while in the case of B2B communication it has practical and pragmatic functions. However, it is advisable to avoid transmitting information which is too complex about a company, as this could cause confusion in the minds of consumers, and focus on the advantages of the product, as well as on the explicit needs pre-empted by the offer (reducing costs, working time, fixed and variable expenses etc; ibidem: 114). The process of making a brand (branding) starts with the prior research about the target audience, followed by the elaboration of a clear platform, the integration in the specific structure in relation to other brands in the same portfolio, the creation of a distinct identity, the promotion/internal communication, the promotion/external communication, the evaluation of results (Balaban, 2009: 66-68). During the development of a clear platform, the specific mission, vision and values are communicated (the latter should not be more than five).

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When deciding to integrate the brand together with the brands in its own portfolio, one can opt for the same generic name (*monolithic structure*), the differentiating elements being symbols or figures (for example, BMW cars: BMW 1 series, BMW X3, BMW X5, etc.), for a specific name of each brand, together with the generic name of the company (*endorsed structure*; for example, Volkswagen: Fox, Lupo, Polo, Golf, etc.) or on a combination between the two structures. In the first case, the costs of communication are small, because the effects of advertising for one of the models also affect the others; in the second situation, the degree of independence of the brands is higher, but not as high as that of the independent structure, and there is apparently no connection between the brands in the portfolio at the communication level (for Unilever and Procter & Gamble).

Once the place of the brand is established, a distinct identity is developed, in accordance with the brand platform. This identity is expressed by the brand name, logo, shape and colours chosen. Brand communication is done first within the manufacturing company, then with distributors and finally with consumers. The loyalty of the employees contributes to the increase of their performances and, implicitly, of the quality of the services provided, which can lead to the clients' satisfaction and, consequently, to their loyalty. Regarding the external communication, this is achieved through advertising, public relations, personal sales, direct marketing, fairs and exhibitions, promotional sales (cf. and Kotler, Pfoertsch, 2011: 119), by reference to the particularities of the target audience regarding media consumption habits and values system. The evaluation process, applied frequently in the case of international brands, takes into account the volume of sales, the value of the actions, the elements of perception and image determined by specific modalities.

Regarding the perception on different products, as well as the purchase intention, studies have shown that they can be influenced, directly or indirectly, by the consumers' image regarding the country of origin of the products (cf. Nicolaescu, 2008). Several factors contribute to shaping the country's image: representative national

products, economic and political characteristics, culture, history, inhabitants, and personal experiences during their visits to the country, its media representations, etc. Thus, Italy is famous for pizza, pasta, Rome, art, shoes, Pavarotti; France, for wines, cheese, gastronomy, perfumes, Paris, fashion, Gérard Depardieu; Switzerland, for watches, chocolate, banks, expensive mountain resorts; Belgium, for beer, chocolate, pralines, chips, lace, Brussels, Tintin etc. The theory of place marketing supports the idea that places have characteristics of identity, differentiation and personality, which can be used to increase their capital. Geographic locations can receive a brand and, in order to increase their attractiveness, resort to *local branding* (place branding; *ibidem*), which includes nation branding, regional branding and city branding and which is considered a much more difficult process than the one for products.

### 3. Researching the *Leonidas* brand
### 3.1. Research methodology

Our analysis follows the way in which one of the iconic brands of Belgian chocolate (Padoan, 2018), **Leonidas**, has built its identity and is trying to differentiate itself from other similar products. Belgium is famous for the over 2000 *chocolatiers* who preserve the characteristics of the artisan production, as well as for the almost unmatched refinement of pralines (Codreanu, 2016), which has become a national symbol. Among the circuits organized in Brussels, there is the chocolate tasting, which is organized every Saturday and allows visitors to discover the history of Belgian chocolate and delight their taste buds with a wide range of pralines made in the shops of famous artisans (Pierre Marcolini, Mary, Pierre Ledent, Galler, Méert, Neuhaus, Maison Dandoy, Godiva), including Leonidas. Although Belgian bloggers believe that the best chocolatiers in Brussels are Frédéric Blondeel, Jérôme Grimonpon, Mike & Becky, Laurent Gerbaud or Pierre Marcolini (Hubert, 2019), however, Leonidas

remains a representative brand, alongside Neuhaus, Corné Port-Royal, Jacques (Padoan, 2018).

### 3.2. Leonidas – branding and rebranding

From the beginning, the Leonidas brand was based on the freshness and quality of the ingredients used for the manufacturing of the product and on the philosophy of "pralines accessible to all". The **mission** of the brand, which appears on the company's website[1] together with the stated **vision** and **values**, is to create moments of happiness for everyone, in the spirit of closeness and sharing. Leonidas aims to be the best producer and global marketer of Belgian chocolate products, guided by values such as: team spirit, responsibility, respect & integrity, passion.

### 3.2.1. The brand's story and name

According to the company's website, we learn that the founder of the Greek-born brand, Leonidas George Kestekides, whose first name also bore the brand name, emigrated at the age of 18 to the United States and became a confectioner. In 1910, he exhibited his confectionery products at the World's Fair in Brussels, where he was awarded the bronze medal, and three years later he received the gold medal and professional recognition at the World's Fair in Ghent. At the same time, he opened a café in Ghent with his wife. In 1922, his 19-year-old nephew, Basilio, joined. After two years, they put together the foundations of a teahouse in Brussels. Basilio found that wealthy people liked pralines, being considered luxury products. Therefore, he opened a workshop in which he prepared pralines at night and sold them in the morning, crossing the city in a cart. He received several warnings from the police for street trade and was forced to rent a small space where he could sell his products. But the space had no exit to the boulevard, and the sweets were displayed along the window. Thus, came the idea of the "guillotine window", which in the following years became a distinct brand for all its stores. In this way, he managed to

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[1] https://www.leonidas.com/be_fr.

sell directly the products to the passers-by, at half the price of the competition, gaining time and maintaining, at the same time, the freshness of the products.

### 3.2.2. Logo and registered trademark

1937 was the year when Basilio registered the mark and the logo in order to protect the products. The brand bore the name of his uncle, and, as a symbol, it had the image of the King of Sparta, the warrior Leonidas I, proof of Basilio's ambition and respect for the Greek origins of the family. The logo was represented by a circle above which "Leonidas Pralines" was written (see Fig. 1.).



**Fig. 1. Logo 1**

Basilio became the master confectioner, and his uncle entrusted him with the management of the business, which he still dealt with after Leonidas's death in 1948, and which was becoming more and more flourishing. When the demand for pralines was growing, Basilio decided to increase production and moved the workshop to a larger space, on the same street, space occupied by Leonidas at present. Gradually, several Leonidas stores appeared in Brussels, then, under the franchise, in Aalst (Belgium) and Lille (France). After Basilio's death in 1970, his brothers and sisters inherited the Leonidas' confectionery, and the brand began to be sold internationally in Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, the United

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Kingdom. As a result of the growing demand on the market, Leonidas Confectionery JSC bought the old Crown-Baele factory in Anderlecht, which is still the company's headquarters. Leonidas remained a family business also after the death of Basilio's brother, whose children, together with a German cousin, took over the company and continued to grow production, acquiring, also in Anderlecht, a former building of a cheese factory. In 2000, Leonidas expanded to the US and Asia, where it became a market leader[2].

### 3.2.3. Tagline

The "Fresh Belgian Chocolates" tagline reflects the freshness and quality of the ingredients used from the beginning and kept until now: 100% pure cocoa butter, fresh milk and cream, hazelnuts from Turkey, almonds from Italy, Morello cherries from the Périgord region, oranges of Valencia etc. Leonidas praline recipes continue to respect Basilio's values: freshness, quality, choice and affordable price. In order to ensure the transportation in perfect condition, the temperature of the airplanes with which the daily production is sent to the destination is controlled[3].

### 3.2.4. Leonidas stores

In 2005, Leonidas stores were redecorated in a new style, in colours that reflected the authenticity and values of the brand, but which at the same time created a welcoming and modern atmosphere. The emblematic guillotine window was only kept in a few shops, one of them being in the centre of Brussels, very close to where Basilio's first guillotine-window store had been. The uniformity of the style of Leonidas stores has taken place worldwide, and the feeling of luxury has been emphasized by the royal blue of the logo and by of the bags in which Leonidas products are sold. This colour "creates the

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[2] cf. https://www.leonidas.com/be_fr/a-propos-de-nous/histoire; https://ciocolatabelgiana.ro/branleonidas/.

[3] https://www.leonidas.com/be_fr/a-propos-de-nous/histoire.

impression that the luxurious Leonidas handmade pralines are presented on the blue velvet, like diamonds", according to the statements on the official website[4].

In 2007, there appeared in Brussels and Vienna and then extended, internationally, the concept "Leonidas Chocolates & Café" (LCC), which offered the opportunity to enjoy Leonidas handmade chocolate with a cup of coffee or a Chocolate beverage.

The brand arrived on the Romanian market in 2001, when M'B Business opened a Leonidas chocolate shop in Bucharest and became the first master franchisor for our country. According to the statements of M'B Business manager, Jolyon M'Bei, the business was not profitable in the first two years, going through a loss, but the investment was recovered in the next two to three years (Caltea, 2009). When asked about the business experience as a franchisor, the Leonidas representative in Romania states that it has been a step-by-step learning process. When he took over the franchise, his only chocolate experience was a 2-week internship at the brand's flagship store on Brussels Anspach Boulevard[5]. Jolyon M'Bei believes that, in addition to his passion for chocolate and business confidence, an essential condition for future franchisees is "to be able to explain very well to customers what Leonidas is all about."

In fact, this is what Jolyon M'Bei did in the first year with the customers who had not heard of the Leonidas brand or who did not have a chocolate culture. Nevertheless, as the brand became known, the price of the products, accessible in relation to the Romanian purchasing power, was also less and less a matter of customer education. The promotion of the business at the national level was done mainly through the customers, the marketing strategy which was used being the tasting at the place of sale. Thus, they tried to gain and keep the customers entering the store.

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[4] https://www.leonidas.com/be_fr/a-propos-de-nous/ on-marque.
[5] https://leonidas-online.ro/ro/franciza.

Its campaign was also made through numerous press releases, due to the fact that the master franchisor was the first to bring the brand to Romania. Stable clients of the stores are people from abroad, who have got high incomes and are happy to find Leonidas products in the country. The stores also have occasional customers, who have average incomes and buy products particularly for special events. Another category of customers is represented by companies, which buy mainly during holidays over the year. The image enjoyed by the brand abroad, the freshness of the products imported every two to three weeks during the summer, the tasting in order to differentiate the fresh pralines from the long-standing pralines on the supermarket shelves as well as the preferences of the loyal customers in terms of pralines and packaging have played an important role in the establishing customer loyalty process (Caltea, 2009).

In order to reach as many consumers as possible and to adapt to the current purchasing trends, the website leonidas-online.ro was created, which offers the possibility of combining the preferred pralines in the specific packaging, called *ballotin*, just like in the traditional stores, whether you are buying pralines with attractive design, confectionery, beverages, coffee, tea or gifts. The site https://www.leonidas-online.ro/en/acasa welcomes visitors with urges, such as "Buy now! Manon Ruby, a bright taste", "Enjoy the most appreciated Belgian chocolate with your beloved!", "Buy now! Corporate Gifts - Choose from the Leonidas delights!". In addition, on the first page, you will find the Christmas Catalogue, Leonidas Recommendations top products and details about the Leonidas franchise, through which the Leonidas brand and products are promoted.

In 2009, Ion Codreanu became the second Leonidas franchisor in Romania and implemented a new strategy, initially focused on corporate gifts and a flagship store in Bucharest. The network then expanded locally, in Iaşi, Cluj, Timişoara, and was developed by introducing the concept Leonidas Chocolates & Café, which encourages authentic consumption (Raduly, 2017). Currently,

Leonidas Belgian Chocolate has got 6 chocolate shops in Romania, 4 of which are Leonidas Chocolates & Café, and it is the only chocolatier in the country that offers more than 40 gift packaging options in standard boxes or in limited editions. Annually, Leonidas offers Belgian specialties, gifts, novelties in gift boxes or specialties, in at least 4 catalogues, in order to make it known in particular to companies, but also to those who want to discover the world of Leonidas pralines[6]. Each ballotin is hand-packed, depending on the season, collection or occasion, in Leonidas paper of different colours (classic red, standard gold, classic cream), special Christmas/Easter paper or Manon Collection paper (Manon Café is the star of the brand since 1969).

The elegance of the packaging is enhanced both by the Leonidas ribbon, in a variety of colours (classic red, standard gold, royal blue, classic cream, Christmas Special/Easter Green), which contains the brand's name, by the silk paper, which is put in blue or red bags (Christmas special edition). Leonidas collections can also be purchased from the website https://ciocolatabelgiana.ro/, where we find, on the first page, the following links that are rapidly succeeding, as follows: "Christmas Catalogue 2019. See catalogue", "New star Leonidas – Ruby Manon. Buy", "Choose happiness! Try the selection of autumnal pralines from Leonidas ", "Why not yours? Over 1200 chocolates worldwide. Leonidas Franchise", "Enjoy your partners and employees! Leonidas corporate. Choose gifts", "Every day starts with Leonidas Chocolate Café. Discover".

The passion and respect for tradition, which guarantee the quality and pleasure offered by Leonidas, are highlighted by the message "Leonidas – 100 years of pure pleasure". The centenary's achievement brought the Leonidas brand the royal coat of arms, since 2013 being on the list of official suppliers of the Royal Court of Belgium, due to the excellent quality in relation to the affordable prices[7].

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[6] https://ciocolatabelgiana.ro/cataloage-produse/.
[7] https://ciocolatabelgiana.ro/brandul-leonidas/.

### 3.2.5. Brand repositioning and logo restyling

In 2017, the Leonidas brand was repositioned and the logo was restyled. The circle surrounding the figure of Leonidas remains open and is partially filled by the king's helmet, "Leonidas Pralines" no longer appears around the circle, and the colour cream is replaced by white, which contrasts more strongly with the royal blue background (See Fig. 2). The newly adopted strategy aims, according to Ion Codreanu's statements, at "a fresh, youthful and tonic spirit" (Raduly, 2017). As for the new motto of the company, which appears in the logo, "The Preferred Belgian Chocolates", it highlights the claim of positioning the brand on the first place in the top of the preferences of Belgian chocolate consumers.



**Fig. 2. Logo 2**

### Conclusions

The experience which the Leonidas brand offers to the consumer is unique and unforgettable. Anyone who crosses the threshold of a Leonidas chocolate shop or accesses the company website is impressed by the presentation of the products, which can be an inspirational gift for different occasions. The brand has been continuously trying to adapt to the needs of the consumers, giving them the feeling that they are special customers, by offering products that fall into the luxury category, both by quality and design, and

which can be purchased by as many chocolate fans through their online stores.

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