

Brand Building and Development for the Group of Asian International Education in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Brand building is an important marketing activity for business organizations. It is also important for private educational institutions in Vietnam where one of the leading and dynamically developing is the Group of Asian International Education (GAIE). In this article, we introduce readers to the specific process branding, brand building and development of this unique education group in Vietnam as a role model for other private international educational institutions to refer to, to consult and to follow current track of development.

Keywords

Brand management; brand building; GAIE.

Introduction

Vietnam is a transition economy. In the context of the trend of liberalization and privatization, Vietnam's education has gradually shifted from a state monopoly to market-oriented competition. Vietnam's international integration in the current period has contributed to further increase the level of competition. Competition takes place not only between domestic universities but also with international universities through joint training programs or directly present in Vietnam. The level of competition is even more fierce as the media have developed a rating system for all universities based on the entry scores of each institution in previous years (Tien, 2019c).

With the trend of regional and international integration, especially when Vietnam joined the International Trade Organization (WTO) with the view that education is one of the twelve service sectors under the scope of the Agreement. general trade in services (GATS). Along with the development of the economy that requires education and training, Vietnam must take appropriate development steps to provide a source of qualified and capable labor, effective

job practice skills, responding to the needs of the market (Do & Huyen, 2009).

Group of Asian International Education (GAIE) consists of three main pillar: Asian International School (AIS), Institute of Asian Studies (IAS) and Saigon International University (SIU). The latter is one of more than 500 universities and colleges in the country with an annual size of about 650 students. In GAIE, in contrary to AIS, although established for more than 10 years, with the increasing scale and quality of training, the name and image of SIU have not really been affirmed adequately. Therefore, enhancing the brand value of a university, especially a non-public university is necessary to increase competitiveness and attract students.

Objectives of the study:

- Clarifying the theoretical basis of the effectiveness of the brand development of universities in general, including international universities (which are in the group of schools that directly compete with SIU schools such as: Hong Bang International University, International University under National University).

- Analyzing and assessing the real situation of brand building and development,

identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to propose measures to improve the effectiveness of brand building and development.

Research content:

- Find out the status of building and developing brand name of Saigon International University. Evaluate strengths, weaknesses, subjective causes and objective reasons affecting the brand development of the School.

- Proposing solutions to develop the brand of Saigon International University in the coming time.

Literature Review

Concept of brand and brand of the university

Concept of brand

Currently, the term brand is widely used in Vietnam. However, there exist many different interpretations around this term. In the legal documents of Vietnam, there is no brand term but only other relevant terms including many views on trademark, trade name, name of origin, geographical indication, industrial designs (Think, 2003; Thai et al, 2019; Loc & Ha, 2009)

The American Marketing Association defines: "A brand is a name, a word, a sign, a symbol, a drawing or all of the above elements to distinguish a seller's products or services. to another seller's products and services. A brand can identify a single product, a series of products, or all of the seller's items"

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO): "A brand is a special (tangible and intangible) sign that identifies a certain product or service that is produced or provided by an individual or an organization. For businesses, brand is the concept in consumers about products and services with the mark of the enterprise attached to the surface of the product and service to confirm quality and origin. Brand is an important intangible asset and for large businesses, its brand value accounts for a significant part of the total value of the business".

Brand of the university

According to McNally & Speak (2002) quoted in Beneke (2011), the brand of higher education as "perception or emotion maintained by a prospective buyer or buyer describing the experiences involved in dealing with a team. academic institutions, with products and services

of academic institutions". Meanwhile, Bulotaite (2003) argues that when someone mentions the name of a university, it immediately evokes "connections, emotions, images and faces".

Temple (2006) argues that a university's brand functions as a function of organization, performing well in response to customer needs. Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2007) argue that a university brand is an expression of an organization's features to differentiate it from others in response to student needs, creating confidence in the ability to provide a higher level of education and help potential learners make admission decisions.

Through the above concepts, we can draw some comments as follows:

- Alike in the business sector, the higher education sector also has product brands and organizational brands (based on the McNally & Speak concept). Specifically, product brand is the trademark of a specific training discipline of a university (For example: Brand of Foreign Trade Department of Foreign Trade University); Institutional brand is the trademark of the university (for example: Foreign Trade University brand).

- Both product brand concepts and organizational / enterprise branding appear in practice. However, in recent times, brand concepts in higher education sector often refer to organizational brands (e.g. Temple's concept, Bennett & Ali-Choudhury concept). Tran Tien Khoa (2013) thinks that the concept of organizational brand is increasingly being used more commonly. According to Hatch & Schultz (2001), an organization brand is increasingly perceived by many to increase an organization's reputation and image in ways that cannot be achieved by product branding. The corporate brand builds an image of the organization not only at customers, but also towards stakeholders such as: employees, investors, suppliers, business partners, authorities, the community. settlement.

- Branding in the higher education field helps learners distinguish one university from another and helps potential learners make admission decisions. Thus, the branding of the university will increase the reputation, image and attract many quality students.

As a specific service brand, the brand of a university is shown through the business name of

the school, associated with its own identity, reputation and image to make a deep impression on the university. with learners, partners, employers and differentiate from other schools in training activities. In other words, the brand of a school is the perception of learners, faculty, staff, collaborative partners, employers and the society with the image that a university has what they give to society (Minh et al, 2019; Bien et al, 2019).

Brand building and development

Brand vision building

The process of building brand identity begins with the process of building brand visibility, the foundation for all branding efforts, is a guideline for the direction of the brand. A brand's vision suggests direction for the future, for a brand's aspirations about what it wants to do. This is a brief, clear and thorough message, orienting the company's / organization's activities and also orienting the development of the brand, showing the brand goals that the business has created. In other words, brand vision shows the reason for the existence of an enterprise, brand vision is the expression of senior leaders' determination towards the target of position in the market that the enterprise / organization sets out, is the message that management wants to send to all members of the business / organization, shareholders, customers, partners, government, the public and people related to the operation of the business / organization. The task of the administrator is to convey the brand vision to everyone, turning it into a common perception of the long way the brand needs to work for the business / organization in the next 5-10 years, respectively with brand value, business / organization and profit contribution (Vu et al, 2019; Hung et al, 2019).

Brand positioning

As defined by P. Kotler, "brand positioning is the set of activities that aim to give the product and product brand a definite position (relative to the competitor) in the mind of customer". That same definition, according to Marc Filser, "brand positioning is the effort to give products a unique image, easy to enter into the perception of customers. Or more specifically, what businesses want customers to associate with each time they face their brand ". In short, just as

people need a position in society to be respected and asserted themselves, brands also need to be positioned to assert the brand's products as well as affirm the company's influence. with the brand.

Brand positioning aims to create a brand image that is separate from other brands. Regardless of the form, the brand must also have its own distinct characteristics, helping customers distinguish from products of the same type. Brand positioning should be formed in the process of branding and branding. Positioning strategies that businesses can apply in positioning their brands (Cuong 2003, Dung et al, 2019):

- Positioning based on problem and solution
- Feature-based positioning
- Positioning by quality
- Positioning based on the opponent
- Positioning based on value
- Positioning based on usage
- Positioning based on relationship
- Positioning based on wishes
- Positioning based on emotions

Brand identity system

A brand's identity system is all of the types and ways that a brand can reach customers. More simply, a brand identity system is what consumers see and hear about that brand in everyday life. The goal of a brand identity system is not only to create awareness, differentiation, express the specific personality of the business / organization, but also aim to influence perceptions, create a sense of scale. The business / organization is large, the professionalism of the business / organization is high for customers and the public. In addition, for businesses / service organizations, the addition in the brand identity is the way of serving customers, the customer service attitude, a scientific and methodical working process bearing bold identity. of that business / organization (Thai, 2007, Thuy et al, 2019).

The brand identity system is formed from a creative combination of visual and language elements. During the creation process, images and words must also exude the aesthetic beauty hidden in them. A strong brand identity system must have a specific, distinctive, memorable, reliable, flexible, flexible idea that must demonstrate an identity that conveys core brand values of the business. What is needed to promote the

effectiveness of a brand identity system is high popularity.

Brand communication

Brand communication is the first activity that businesses / organizations need to do to bring products to customers widely such as: what is business / organization's name, what product or service is offering, what is the difference from other companies / organizations in the same industry, why customers should choose products of business / organization. Brand communication is a tool for customers to reflect on quality and Business services help them constantly improve so that their products are more and more perfect before they reach consumers. Brand communication has two forms: direct and indirect (Thai, 2007, Thuy et al, 2019).

Direct communication:

Face-to-face, using sales staff to introduce new products in crowded places like residential areas, markets, supermarkets ... This is the way most consumer goods businesses apply. strong when launching a new product.

Advantages: easy to grasp the psychology of the majority, easy to persuade and effective quickly.

Disadvantages: costly time, money and manpower, unable to spread the information on a large scale.

Indirect communication:

Through books, newspapers, movies, advertising, banners, Internet, pictures. This is the brand communication method that is commonly used today.

Advantages: Subjects great impact in a short time. There are many different ways of expressing such as clips... pictures, words that are easy to attract customers.

Brand building and development process

Saigon International University (SIU) offers undergraduate and graduate education for Vietnamese and foreign students. The school has curriculum in Vietnamese and English according to American university program standards. Students who teach in English are recognized for the last two years if they wish to transfer to foreign universities in partnership with SIU.

Disadvantage: not being in direct contact with customers, so it is not possible to feel the customer expression.

Brand assessment

Currently, businesses not only focus on product and service development but also focus on other activities such as research on development trends, customer satisfaction assessment or brand development, marketing activities. In which, evaluating brand strength or health is an activity that is interested by many customers. Brand not only helps businesses shape products / services in the perception of customers, but also is one of the important factors contributing to maintaining, expanding, and developing domestic and foreign markets for businesses. Not only improving commercial activities of businesses, but brands also contribute to combating unfair competition issues. Especially, businesses are faced with fierce competition when joining global value chains and e-commerce booming in the current international economic integration context (Khanh, 2004; Anh & Tien, 2017).

Therefore, it is very essential for businesses to build brands for their goods and services. At the same time, businesses need to evaluate brand strength to position where they are in the global trade and economic picture as well as compared to their competitors in the current market. A strong brand is one of the metrics of business success. Strong brand name helps businesses sell better, thereby increasing revenue and profit. In addition, the assessment of brand strength helps businesses visualize whether they are on the right track or not to implement timely adjustment measures (Anh & Tien, 2017).

After graduating from the bachelor program, SIU students can continue to study for masters and doctoral degrees at SIU or universities of Vietnam and the US, Australia, UK, Canada. According to the 2019 survey, nearly 97 % of Saigon International University (SIU) students have jobs, the remaining 3% study to higher level or transfer to study abroad in many countries around the world.

Saigon International University (SIU) is the international university in Vietnam belonging to the Asian International Education Group (GAIE), including the members: Asian

International School (IPS Primary and Secondary, AHS (Asian High School), Asian Studies Institute (IAS) and Saigon International University (SIU), are considered the international standard education system from elementary, high school to university, postgraduate and The largest scientific research in Vietnam. Established in 1999, GAIE is proud to have nearly 82,000 students - students - students from many countries and cultures studying; More than 2,000 Vietnamese teachers - staff & nearly 200 foreign teachers with bachelor's, master's, doctoral, assistant professors and professors are working at 15 modern facilities in the city. Ho Chi Minh. Asian International Education Group (GAIE) has been associated with parents, students and students for many years and honored to be trusted by society in the career of growing people.

Currently, members of GAIE have cooperation relations with prestigious universities in the world such as Suffolk University, Truman State University, Missouri University of Science and Technology - USA; James Cook University Brisbane - Australia; Ritsumeikan University and Asia Pacific University - Japan; Saxion University of Applied Sciences - The Netherlands; Buckinghamshire New University and the world's top 25 university King's College London - UK.

On September 28, 2010, the IPS Primary and AHS High School of the GAIE Asian International School became an official member of the Council of International Schools (CIS) and is implementing a quality accreditation program. education quality of CIS.

The Saigon International University (SIU) is also recognized as an educational member of the International Accreditation Council of Business Universities - IACBE (2010) and Business Teaching Development Association. AACSB - USA (2011). On April 2, 2020, the Chairman of the Council for International Accreditation of Business Universities - IACBE sent congratulatory letters to the Saigon International University on successfully implementing the process of improvement and completion. face according to IACBE's inspection standards and be assessed and recognized to be accredited by IACBE. SIU is currently the first and only university in Vietnam, one of the few universities in Asia to be accredited and certified by IACBE for the quality of education.

Building vision and brand mission

Educational Philosophy - "Vietnamese soul, world education"

Vision

Saigon International University aims to be the leading international university in Vietnam following the global education trend.

Mission

Building pioneering educational environment, respecting differences and multiculturalism, Saigon International University trains leaders and useful citizens for society, promotes research associated with reality, forging professional competencies and forging ethical principles in each student.

Core values

The school pursues academic excellence in teaching, learning, and research to serve the community, nationally and internationally.

-Academic. SIU gives students the knowledge, skills and abilities to pursue life as a global citizen; provides students with opportunities to develop physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and culturally. The school provides a professional education based on free learning while encouraging students to strive and act responsibly in the problems facing society.

-Serve the community. SIU is committed to creating a friendly, inclusive and collaborative community based on the spirit of freedom and volunteering, protecting the rights and dignity of each individual. Desiring to contribute to the development of society, SIU learns and solves problems, meets social needs in the fields related to teaching and research activities of the school. SIU encourages the school community to participate in activities that serve those in need.

-Research. SIU conducts research in the fields of science, arts, society and humanities; encourage the school community to expand the boundaries of knowledge and innovation in research to create new applications as well as solve practical problems of the contemporary world.

-Identity. SIU cherishes the heritage and traditions of the Asian International Education Group, and incorporating these core values preserves the educational philosophy and identity of Saigon International University. At the same time, respect for the identities and traditions of other

organizations, promote the common development of mankind.

Brand positioning

The main goal of positioning is to give the school's brand a separate image in relation to other universities and colleges.

The target customer that the school is a high school student in the city. Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces of the Central Highlands, the South West and the Southeast such as Dong Nai, Binh Duong, Long An, Tay Ninh provinces.

Competitors that the University is interested in are universities in the same segment in the city. Ho Chi Minh City such as: Hutech University, UEF University, Hong Bang International University. These are all prestigious universities with their own strengths.

In the current context, universities face competition in enrollment, so each school has to build its own image, Saigon International University is no exception. To attract students, the school aims to position images in the minds of customers as follows:

- Building the image of Saigon International University as a multidisciplinary training school, in which its strengths are in Economics and Language.

- Positioning based on the quality of training: the school constantly improves and improves its training program to meet the practical requirements of the society; Output students have professional qualifications, skills and qualities, which are highly appreciated by employers.

- Positioning on the differences: Saigon International University is a school belonging to an Asian international education group, so there is a system of primary, secondary and high schools with large modern facilities, regularly updated with the world's latest educational methods. This is the basis of practice and internship for students of a number of disciplines in the school. Students have the opportunity to experience practical, improve professional knowledge and career skills at these schools.

Evaluating the work of building and developing the brand

The school's branding work has achieved certain successes, as follows:

- Identify the vision and mission in line with the school's potentials and the development trend of the society, especially with the high support from members of the school.

- The school has chosen a family branding model that matches the size of the training and the actual situation of the school.

- The school's facilities are spacious and modern, creating favorable conditions for teaching and learning, scientific research and extracurricular activities of the school members.

- The training program focuses on practice and internship to help students apply the theory they have learned into practice, thereby training career skills. The Asian International School system creates opportunities for students to practice and practice.

- 98% of the university's graduates have jobs and are highly appreciated by employers for their professional qualifications as well as professional skills.

Limitations:

- The school has not carried out a methodical brand positioning. The image of Saigon International University is still quite fuzzy in the minds of customers. The cause of this problem is that the school has not determined its brand personality.

- The school's brand identity system is still incomplete, especially the lack of synchronous powerpoint. Most of the instructors design the powerpoint for the modules (assigned to teach) according to their subjective opinions. The reason is that the school's leadership has not had a close guidance on the teaching work of lecturers.

- Although the school's policy is to build an open-ended training program, some subjects are still heavy in theory, lacking practical relevance. The reason is that lecturers have not really invested in the quality of their teaching and have not caught up with the new trends of the society.

- The school has not invested properly in brand advertising activities, so many high school students in the city. Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces still do not know about the school. There are 2 main reasons leading to this situation: Firstly, the school does not have a Marketing department specializing in advertising and brand development. Second, the funding

source for brand advertising activities is still limited (the proportion of spending money on marketing activities of the school is small, less than 1.5% of the total annual revenue).

- The school has not exploited effectively the relationship with the alumni association of the school, has not taken advantage of this team to build relationships with businesses. In linking with businesses, the school has not focused on promoting its brand.

- The official website system of the school has not yet attracted the public. In addition, the operation of informal media channels such as fanpage has not been highly effective, has not attracted a large number of students, students, staff and lecturers in the school to participate. In general, the brand advertising of the Saigon International University is still too sketchy and not methodical, not creating a pervasive effect to many objects in society.

Solutions for further brand development

Forecasting higher education development in the current socio-economic context

Trend of internationalization of higher education

Internationalization of higher education is a common development trend of universities in the world and in Vietnam. This is an inevitable and developing trend, reflected in the Party and Government documents on fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training. Internationalization of higher education will contribute to improving the quality of the global learning experience, promoting the integration of Vietnamese higher education in the region and the world, thereby bringing back career potential for students. Internationalization is understood to be the highest stage in international relations between universities.

Along with the process of international cooperation, Vietnamese education also "imports" training programs in high-quality countries; using teaching - learning methods, evaluation methods and training management methods of advanced universities in the world, meeting international quality accreditation standards. The "import" of management programs, methods and technologies will contribute to creating a new transformation, overcoming 5 weaknesses of current Vietnamese

universities: the backwardness of training programs and methods. training method; backwardness and lack of facilities, especially laboratories; backwardness of management methods; the weakness in the qualifications and capacity of the faculty; lack of engagement with reality when it comes to training and scientific research.

Positive aspects of internationalization can be seen as its role in building economic and social potential through promotion and quality enhancement, helping scientific research to reach international standards. Through educational exchange programs, students will have opportunity to experience global learning, promote integration and increase employment opportunities for students.

Trend of building an open education system

Around the world, the term open education has appeared since the early twentieth century and developed strongly in the 70s. At this time, many educators feel the limitation of traditional education, wanting to change to make education more accessible to everyone. On this basis, the first open university in the world was established in 1969 in the UK (UK OU). This university works on four core principles: Open to learners, open in locations, open in methods and open in ideas.

In the context that Vietnam is integrating into the world today, together with the rapid development of science and technology, education must be renewed faster and stronger. One of the innovation directions that needs to be paid attention is the development of open education. Open education is understood to expand the accessibility to education for everyone compared to regular formal education through many training modes, with many open educational resources and different learning environments. The word "open" in open education expresses the idea of removing barriers that limit students' opportunity to attend as well as recognizing learning outcomes at educational institutions of great importance to the development of society, through which knowledge, skills, ideas and understanding are most rapidly and effectively disseminated.

Trends in higher education in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0

The world today is undergoing great unprecedented changes. Industrial revolution 4.0

has been and will continue to create strong changes, affecting all aspects of human life in the 21st century. This revolution will have a profound effect on the economy. global society, including Vietnamese education. If a university education is considered as a necessary preparation for learners to confidently enter life, the school needs to fully equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge, not just for the present because but also for the future.

For universities, industrial revolution 4.0 requires the training of human resources with new skills and higher educational levels. Thus, it can be seen that the impact of the industrial revolution 4.0 on education is very great, creating both opportunities but also increasing challenges for educational institutions.

The protracted COVID-19 pandemic, from a positive perspective, is a lever for universities to promote distance education, online training and digital transformation. During the pandemic, schools were closed, and millions of students and students were interrupted. The sudden change has put pressure on both universities, students and families, showing unprecedented situations in the past as well as opportunities to explore new shifts in education.

Solutions to enhance the construction and brand development

Implementing brand positioning

The Saigon International University needs to affirm its position as a multi-disciplinary university, training both Bachelor and Master, and some key disciplines such as Business Administration to train to Ph.D. high-quality human resources to meet the increasing demands of the society.

The school aims to build a distinctive, unique and meaningful image. For tertiary education, the self-research and learning of lecturers and learners need the support of specialized equipment. Compared to other universities in the same segment, Saigon International University is one of the schools with the best facilities in Ho Chi Minh City today. This factor needs to be broadly amplified. The group's system of elementary, middle and high schools is a strength of the school, and emphasizes promoting the image of these schools is essential.

The Saigon International University needs to position its training products with core values,

different from competitors, in order to build in the public's mind a sustainable image of the school.

Besides specialized knowledge training, the school needs to train more soft skills for students. Quality of training is the core value that universities provide for their students. Students gain knowledge through the learning process at school, and show it in practical work. Schools need to build core values based on professional knowledge, because this is a testament to the effectiveness of the school's training.

Completing the brand identity system

In the coming time, Saigon International University needs to continue strengthening and perfecting its brand identity system to increase awareness, affirm its position in society, and develop brands in a sustainable way.

Firstly, the school should shape its own personality for its brand. Providing students with a good foundation of knowledge is not enough, Saigon International University needs to create for them their own personalities, make a difference with other schools, increase job opportunities for students. graduating. Due to the characteristics of the school is to train global citizens with the heart of Vietnamese people, so the school should aim to build a passionate and creative personality. Because in a competitive economy, only truly excellent individuals are recruited and able to grow. The school needs to train students the qualities: enthusiasm for work, dare to think, dare to do, and show creativity in work. To do that, the school needs a clear direction to adjust the perceptions and actions of the faculty, staff, and students in the school.

Secondly, to increase the creation and development of typical cultural values of Saigon International University. During the integration period, the school should aim to build a culture of harmony between the traditional elements of Vietnam and the modern elements of the world. Besides, is the application of specialized and advanced knowledge of the world. The school expresses its culture through relationships within the school (internal) and outside the society (media units, businesses, educational institutions at home and abroad).

Thirdly, the school continues to build and consolidate a set of brand identity products. Saigon International University may keep its name and logo intact, but the slogan should be

changed to create a strong public attraction. The school's slogan design must ensure the following factors: short, easy to understand, meaningful and attractive. The school has built a relatively complete set of brand identity products, including: name, logo, slogan; Office publications; Training publications; Trade promotion system. The brand identity products are all printed with the school's name and logo, thus achieving high consistency. Potential customers easily recognize the SIU school brand through these logos. Currently, the faculty of the school design their own powerpoint to serve the teaching. The school needs to build a synchronous powerpoint system, on which teachers will deploy the content of the powerpoint according to the practice of the subject. To complete a set of brand identity products, to make a good impression on customers, SIU needs to be consulted and supported by prestigious design agencies.

The conditions for implementing the solutions

Leadership, faculty, staff and students in the school need to increase brand awareness, flexibly and creatively apply business principles in the field of education and training to support the public. construction and brand development of SIU.

SIU needs to improve the policies, regulations and regulations of the school scientifically and consistently at all levels, and at the same time reach the consensus of students. This is the foundation to develop the school's brand name increasingly strong. Schools need strong financial resources to implement school branding solutions. Financial resources play an important role in implementing scientific research, attracting and retaining talented people, and reinforcing and developing the brand's core values.

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SIU needs to invest more strongly in the faculty, because this is the deciding factor for the reputation and brand of the school. The faculty can only brand the school when they understand and understand the values of the brand.

The school needs to expand relationships with alumni, external training institutions, socio-economic organizations and businesses to enlist the help and support of these groups to position the image of the school in the minds of customers, thereby perfecting the construction and development of the school's brand.

Conclusion

This article clarifies the importance and impact of branding on the development of universities through providing the theory of higher education brand development. This is the basis for investigating, surveying and evaluating the status of brand building and development of Saigon International University, one of member institution of the GAIE. Based on the school's development orientation, the article proposes a number of solutions to perfect the brand building and development at the Saigon International University. These solutions are associated with the current scale and potential of the University, such as solutions to develop brand core values, including: improving teaching quality; promote scientific research; Increased relationships with units outside the school. Implementing these solutions will help teachers and students of the school have many new opportunities in the future, and at the same time contribute to the brand sustainable development of Saigon International University in particular and the whole GAIE in general.

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