

Path to hiring right

Exploratory Paper

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07, 15, 2018

This paper outline is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for election to Fellow in the American College of Medical Practice Executives.

Outline

This exploratory paper will describe vital components of a hiring process, as it relates to a medical practice or any organization, in general. The paper will delve into tools and assessments that can predict a potential employee's behavior. It will provide details of what such tools may offer, how senior managers can use them while they make hiring decisions. The paper will also include the data and research behind best practices for using background checks and drug screens in hiring decisions.

Introduction

Any hiring begins first with posting of the position. There are various platforms for this such as: Indeed, Monster, LinkedIn etc. Organizations also use professional recruiting firms, based on the type of the position to be filled. A thoughtful job posting with detailed job description is crucial as a first step. The job description must clearly communicate responsibilities and indicate the educational qualifications, credentials, skills, and attributes that underlie superior performance (Eiseman 2012). Once resumes are reviewed, the interview process begins. An initial telephone interview helps employer to determine if the candidate's qualifications, experience and salary needs are in alignment to the requirement. This is a good screening tool and saves time. During in person interview the candidate should speak for 80 percent of the time and the interviewer 20 percent (Beaver 2010). An interviewer should look for an individual's ability to be self-reflective and ways he or she can contribute to the department or organization via his or her emotional intelligence (Morris 2015). Interviewer should look for non-verbal qualities and subtleties to understand whether the interviewee's work and communication style is compatible to the organization (Sample 2014). It is important to go beyond the resume or work experience and asses overall personality.

Besides performing behavioral tests and evaluations, in order for an organization to screen and eventually hire right, it is important to perform drug testing, criminal background checks, and credit reporting on all its potential employees. The later part of the paper will discuss such good practices.

Discussion

Many businesses are trying to find ways to increase their chances of hiring or promoting the right person for the right job at the right time. Consultants and experts are increasingly turning to behavioral assessments. The costs of hiring a wrong employee can be up to 26% of his or her first year earnings (Warden, 2013). Assessments provide an objective, non-judgmental analysis developed through research and repeated validation with the purpose of helping people understand behavioral styles and personality types (Eiseman 2012). Hearing the expression “behavioral assessment” during the hiring process can be scary for a prospective employee (Morris 2015). Behavioral assessment usually generate a sense of anxiousness, fear and apprehension as people’s habits and behaviors are so ingrained, it may be impossible to comprehend what the result would be (Woerkom 2017). Behavioral assessments look at an individual’s work style, behavior, beliefs and attitudes based on his personality and situations in which he may find himself (Papay 2016). Though behavioral based evaluations were not a part of screening process for many organizations few decades ago, but fortune 500 and other larger corporations have gradually made it as a part of their standard employee screening process in pursuit to hire right (Gerxhani, 2016).

Additionally, drug testing, background checks (including criminal background check), credit reporting are procedures and practices which are used by organizations to screen individuals and hire right ones. It can help screening new and potential employees, when changing employees from one department to another, or when altering their job duties.

Review of types and advantages of tests & evaluations

1. Cognitive tests:

They test cognitive ability of a job applicant and are the best single predictor of job performance (Warden 2013). Examples include arithmetic computations, verbal analogies, reading comprehension, number series completion, and spatial relations (i.e., visualizing objects in three-dimensional space). Traditional cognitive tests are well-standardized, contain items reliably scored, and can be administered to large groups of people at one time. Examples of item formats include multiple choice, sentence completion, short answer, true-false.

2. Skills test :

These job-specific questions are specific to certain skills required for the job such as Excel Spreadsheets or PowerPoint presentations and are likely to predict job success if created and used properly (Warden 2013). They measure job-related competencies; broad ones like communication skills, or narrow ones like typing and computer skills. These are skills that candidates have picked up through their education and career histories – these skills do not necessarily reflect basic aptitude but instead reflect acquired knowledge – what the applicant already knows how to do based on previous experience. They measure specific acquired competencies such as typing speed or knowledge of specific software application.

3. Performance Simulation Test:

These ask the candidate to play out a scenario that relates to the work they will be doing (Warden 2013). The basic premise of performance simulation test is to observe the

candidate perform the actual job in a controlled environment. Candidates are put through various exercises such as group discussions or business games each involving decision making situations. An advantage of using simulation testing is that candidates are more engaged in the task and enjoy challenging themselves to solve the challenges put forth. Candidates are put through the actual work and hence if they themselves feel they are not suitable for the position they can back out saving time and money.

4. Emotional Intelligence Assessments:

It measures the ability of a person to perceive and evaluate emotions of others as well as their own (Warden 2013). Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as a type of social competence involving the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. EI is a fairly specific ability that connects a person's knowledge processes to his or her emotional processes. EI involves a set of skills or abilities that may be categorized into five domains: Self-awareness, Managing emotions, Motivating oneself, Empathy, Handling relationships. The approach to measuring EI ability involves administering a set of questions to applicants and scoring the correctness of those responses based on expert judgment (expert scoring) or consensus among a large number of people (consensus scoring).

For example, one EI ability test requires the applicant to view a series of faces and report how much of each of six emotions is present, answer questions about emotional scenarios and responses (e.g., predict how an anxious employee will react to a significantly increased workload), and solve emotional problems (e.g., decide what response is appropriate when a friend calls you upset over losing his or her job)

5. Personality Tests:

These are useful in certain situations, but they should not be used to make hiring decisions unless they have been validated specifically for hiring. They do not predict job performance but research has found them to be useful in understanding people (Warden 2013). Personality tests are designed to systematically elicit information about a person's preferences, interests, and motivations.

Personality measures can be in the form of interviews, in-basket exercises, observer ratings, or self-report inventories (i.e., questionnaires). Personality self-report inventories typically ask applicants to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements designed to measure their standing on relatively stable personality traits. This information is used to generate a profile used to predict job performance or satisfaction with certain aspects of the work.

Behavioral Assessment Traits

Behavioral assessments measure four traits (Warden 2013):

- A. Dominance (how they solve problems),
- B. Influence (how they influence others),
- C. Steadiness (how they pace themselves in their environment),
- D. Compliance (how they comply with rules and regulations set by others).

Besides DISC, other useful behavioral assessments and their measurement traits are:

1. **Hogan Assessments:**

All Hogan assessments suggest a person's natural advantages, or "edges," and their potential problem areas, or "risks" in a job or business setting. It has three main domains: VALUES ASSESSMENT- Core values and motivators for leadership roles; POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT- Strength and competencies for leadership; CHALLENGE ASSESSMENT – Derailers and Personality-Based Performance Risks. Businesses and employers use all three Hogan Assessments for high-level executives; the Value Assessment only for mid-managers and newly formed teams, the Potential for promotions and new hires, and the Challenge for performance issues (Harms 2013).

2. **Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI):**

The essence of MBTI is that seemingly random variation in the behavior is actually quite orderly and consistent, being due to basic differences in the ways individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment (Sample 2014). The MBTI instrument sorts for preferences and does not measure trait, ability, or character. The MBTI was originally developed in the 1940's by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, who thought that an understanding of personality preferences would help women who were entering the workforce for the first time to identify the sort of war-time jobs which would suit them best. By the early 1960's, the initial questionnaire had become refined into the MBTI Step I and the newly revised MBTI Step II which provides multi-dimensional insight for the user. The themes and patterns of behavior based on MBTI are:

E/I – Extraversion/Introversion

S/N – Sensing/Intuition

T/F – Thinking/Feeling

J/P – Judging/Perceiving

MBTI is recommended for individuals seeking a psychological self-analysis to gain a better understanding of how they react/respond in teams and pressure situations at work (Sample 2014).

3. **Strength Finders Assessment:**

The Strengths Finders assessment is contained in a book or software available for easy purchase by the individual and employers. Tests are taken and analyzed on-line: participants receive a customized report that lists their top five talent themes, along with action items for development and suggestions about how one can use one's talents to achieve professional and personal success. The five themes are Activator, Maximizer, Communicator, Relator, and Futurist. Strengths Quest and Strength Finder is a part of Gallup. It is recommended for individuals seeking greater personal insight and to improve their ability to select the best words and descriptors to present themselves to teams, and can be used by employers on employees when working individually or in teams (Woerkom 2017).

An interviewer can find examples of behavioral assessment tests through multiple vendors. Sample tests are available free of charge. However, better ones are available through vendor websites, with free samples and examples for limited period and number to use. Tests like DISC, Strength Finder, MBTI can be obtained via their

websites and Gallup official stores. Discounts are usually offered when purchased by organizations in bulk for their employees.

There are no wrong answers in behavioral assessments (Morris 2015). The items make the subject think about which response reflects him and his personality most accurately. Studies have shown that behavioral assessments, when properly done, reflect accurately at least 80 percent of a person's normal behavior (Eiseman 2012). Behavioral assessment is important for any organization due to costs. The fee for behavioral assessment of candidates is fraction of the cost of employee turnover, which is one of the biggest invisible cost for any company; On average, it can run anywhere from \$40,000 to \$50,000 to replace an employee (Jervis, 2007). Hence, employee turnover can be reduced by using behavioral assessments prior to making a job offer.

Advantages and Benefits of Behavioral Assessments

Behavioral assessment can match a potential employee's skills with jobs into which they can grow (Papay 2016). It can help asses a personality or talent and provide coaching or mentoring to develop it. 61 percent of new employees at companies that use behavioral assessment tools become top performers within 14 months versus just 7 percent of new hires who were hired by companies that did not use such tools (Eiseman 2012). According to a study in Harvard Business Review, when companies used job analysis and behavioral assessment surveys as part of their hiring practice, employee turnover was reduced by as much as 50 percent (Warden 2013). Other benefits of using behavioral assessments are:

- ❖ Match people with jobs where they will be successful.

- ❖ Improve employee retention and reduce unwanted turnover costs.
- ❖ Help determine which individuals are best fits for promotion and leadership roles.
- ❖ Improve morale and communication.
- ❖ Improve evaluation and coaching effectiveness to identify individual strengths and weaknesses.

Behavioral assessment software uses benchmark data from across the industry to predict if a current or potential employee may be a good fit for a position. When right candidate is placed in right environment where strengths can be capitalized, the result is higher performance with reduced turnover (Morris 2015). A behavioral assessment can be used as a smart tool for managers while conducting interviews. It can guide the interviewer about the candidate's personality. This adds a dimension of predictive analysis in the interview, making it productive and time saving. Health care recruiters can improve their services by using behavioral assessment as screening tool before presenting selected candidates to their organizations (Papay 2016).

Many healthcare systems lack great governance and leaders. Great health care leaders are intuitive, empathetic, and analytical. They are intrinsically motivated with inclusive vision. Therefore, such leaders are hard to find. A behavioral assessment is helpful in this area by identifying good traits that great leaders are known to have. For example, a recruiter or hiring manager could be looking to fill a staff position only to find one of the candidates would make an excellent health care executive. Therefore, when looking for leaders from outside, or for choosing one from within a health care system, a behavioral assessment can be a helpful tool (Sample 2014).

An increasing number of job duties can be classified as intangible, meaning ones that call for troubleshooting and project work than what might be referred to as routine daily work (Eiseman 2012). Such tasks call for trained workforce and if the selection method includes behavioral assessments, it can help finding someone who is a team player (Leonard 2011). The use of such assessments in healthcare industry is quickly growing, as they are realizing the long term importance of selecting the best fit for the job and to reduce turnover (Woerkom 2017). Once a candidate's behavioral assessment is received, results can be evaluated and compared against other employees who have taken the same assessment. The differences between the profiles will let the organization know prior to hiring as to which areas to keep an eye on. Behavioral assessments vary in terms of areas measured and cost entailed, and therefore can range from a basic small set of queries to online to intensive assessments that require a phone conversation with the person asking a multitude of questions (Harms 2014).

It is up to the employer to determine how much money or effort they want to invest in it for choosing their best fit. The cost to not develop employees, to promote the wrong individual or hire the wrong person can be up to four times an employee's annual salary and benefits (Eiseman 2012). These costs are hidden, and their impact is never analyzed or addressed by most of the organizations. Such costs are usually accepted as a cost of doing a regular business. 80 percent of turnover could be blamed on mistakes made during an employee selection and hiring process (Leonard 2011). Every employee a company hires is a considerable investment, and costs of losing one are substantial. The information which employment application provides to hiring manager is subjective, can be exaggerated, and is not always predictive (Sample 2014). Threat of lawsuits for discrimination makes it difficult to obtain complete information from an applicant's previous employers. Former employers willing to comment on an applicant rarely give

detailed reasons as to why the person left their organization. Many applicants are also skilled at being interviewed and can mask their true personality (Harms 2014).

Poor hiring practices widely impact profitability for an organization (Gerxhani 2016). For a consistent success, it is vital for a health care organization to have people who are competent and have the right behavioral fit so that the services or production is of expertise and without an issue. Behavioral assessment is the most objective way of obtaining necessary information for predicting an applicant's probability of success in any position (Warden 2013). Obviously, behavioral assessments are not to be taken as gospel. A computerized behavioral analysis is not able to properly deal with subjective information as human beings can (Jervis 2007). One should use behavioral assessments for what they are worth, but should not base their entire hiring decision on them (Woerkom 2017).

Testing

Evaluation of urine, blood or other type of biological sample to determine if the subject has been using the drug(s) is known as drug testing (Ainsley 2013). Majority of Fortune 500 companies employee drug testing (Willis 2013). The US Department of Labor has estimated that drug use in workplace costs employers up to \$100 billion dollars annually in lost work time, accidents, health care costs and workers compensation costs (Willis 2013). Pre-employment drug testing helps the employer to develop a healthier productive workforce and improve profits.

Drug Tests: Types

Analyzing a urine sample for traces of drugs is the most common drug test used by organizations (Ainsley 2013). Researchers have begun studying the testing of hair and saliva to detect alcohol and other drug use. The accuracy, reliability, and interpretation of hair testing have not yet been determined (Sanders 2014).

Breath test is the most common method of testing for alcohol (Willis 2013). It tells if the individual is under the influence of alcohol. A urine test for alcohol is accurate but is not used because it correlates poorly with blood levels when usual collection procedures are used. A blood test measures the actual amount of alcohol or other drugs in the blood at the time of the test. Employers may use a standard five-panel test of "street drugs" that includes marijuana, cocaine, PCP, opiates and amphetamine. A "Ten-Screen" test can be used which expand to include these five prescription drugs that are legal to possess and use- barbituates (Phenobarbital etc), mathaqualone (Qualuudes), benzodiazepines (tranquilizers such as Valium, Librium, Xanax) and Methadone (Ainsley 2013).

Testing Procedure

Every organization must have a written drug testing policy. A written notice of testing must be given before the applicant may be tested. Many drug and alcohol testing laws require that job applicants be notified in advance that they may be tested and under what conditions (Sanders 2014).

This is usually accomplished via an employment application given out at the first interview. In accordance with certain state laws, the applicant may need to be given a conditional job offer letter that indicates that the offer is conditional upon completion of a drug test with a negative result. The same testing program should be implemented for all applicants in a particular job category or there could be implications of discrimination (Sanders 2014). Any credible drug screening program will involve a two-step process. Initial (immunoassay) and confirmatory (gas chromatography-mass spectrometry [GC-MS]) testing are the methods most commonly utilized to test for drugs (Willis 2013). Using a combination of both tests allows a high level of sensitivity and specificity. During the laboratory evaluation, strict chain-of-custody practices and standards are followed to prevent adulteration of the sample. This legal procedure requires documentation of each person who handles the specimen through the entire phase of testing. The immunoassay is performed first and is often used as a screening method (Willis 2013).

If the result is positive, the physician will usually contact the applicant to find out if there is a medical explanation for the result. The more specific GC/MS is used as a confirmatory test on a separate portion of the biological sample to identify individual drug substances or metabolites and quantify the amount of the substance. CGC-MS (Confirmatory tests), should always be utilized prior to reporting positive drug test results (Sanders 2014).

Drug testing programs use an independent physician to review all test results. If a positive test is confirmed the candidate should have the right to pay for re-testing of their sample by another laboratory of their choice and samples of all positive tests are kept for that reason. If an applicant's tests are positive, employment is denied. Some employers will allow the applicant to reapply after a period of time (e.g., 3 months). Test results are usually available within 24 to 48 hours.

Sometimes employers require the employee to pay for the test, and if the results are negative, the employer reimburses the employee. However, mostly employers pay for the tests. If employees are expected to pay, this should be stated in the written policy. The cost of a drug test at a certified laboratory will vary depending on the services provided and the geographic location (Willis 2013). While the cost may be slightly higher than with a noncertified laboratory, the added security and accuracy will protect the employer in a court of law should a test result be challenged.

Background Checks

The intent of background checks performed by employers is to ensure tight scrutiny on potential employees, and therefore prevent potential risks or liabilities on the organization. Credit history, driving records, and court records are an open book. Some employers may even interview an applicant's neighbors and former co-workers in the course of a background check (Grabbe 2014). Background checks are requested by employers on job candidates for pre-employment screening, especially on candidates seeking a position that requires high security or a position of trust, such as in a school, hospital, airport, and government (Komando 2013). They may also be conducted as a way to further differentiate potential employees and pick the one the employer feels is best suited for the job. An employer must ask an applicant's permission to conduct a background check on a form separate from an application or other paperwork. If a

potential employer wants to talk to friends, or neighbors, they must get a separate consent for what is known as an investigative consumer report. In addition, if an employer wants to see medical records, an applicant must give specific consent (Komando 2013). Once consent is given, employers have broad latitude to inquire into the applicant's background. Most employer background checks focus on employment history, educational background, credit history, motor vehicle history and criminal background (Ward 2013). Unfortunately, there is no central, national repository of criminal records. Over 10,000 state and federal courthouses exist in the United States, located throughout approximately 3,000 jurisdictions, each with its own records file. The most relevant, up-to-date resources for criminal records are the county courthouses (Hillenbrand 2014). Therefore, most employers check records in the county, or counties, where an applicant lived or worked.

Criminal Background Checks

National Crime Information Center

The FBI and state law enforcement agencies have access to an FBI-maintained national computer database called the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a computerized index of criminal justice data that includes criminal record histories, and arrests. It is illegal for private investigators, private employers and background check companies to access the NCIC database without legal authorization (Hillenbrand 2014).

County Courts

An employer or third-party background screener will physically visit each relevant county courthouse for a job applicant - these relevant counties are the ones in which a person lived or worked. An employer typically searches the current county of

residence or the last county where the applicant spent a significant amount of time (Anderson 2013).

Types of Criminal Records

States have varying restrictions on the type of criminal records that can be included in an employment background report, as well as how far back an employer can research such records (Anderson 2013). For example, some states limit the reporting of a conviction to seven years from the date of conviction, end of parole or release from prison. Some states only allow inquiries about felonies.

Sex Offender Registries

Employers will also research applicants' names in state sexual offender registries. A more comprehensive, nationwide sex offender search is through the United States Department of Justice's Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website, which contains sex offender registries for states, U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and participating tribes. Because this is a cooperative and not required effort, a search does not include every state or district sex offender registry (Larson 2013).

Federal Courts:

An employer or background screener typically checks the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) database by name for federal criminal records (Komando 2013). Unfortunately, not every federal district court is online with PACER, which means there cannot be a true nationwide federal records search using this system.

Legalities of Criminal Background Checks

Employers want to perform a criminal background check on potential employees. It is possible for employers to lawfully administer a criminal background

check. However, one should be very careful and cognizant when conducting inquiry about criminal convictions. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), under federal law has provided guidance for employers' use of criminal background checks. EEOC ensures that the use of criminal background checks must not result in discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, and must be job related for the positions in question and consistent with business necessity, within the meaning of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Larson 2013).

A two-step process is recommended by EEOC. First step which EEOC recommends is to use a "targeted screen of criminal records" which takes into account the nature of the crime, the time elapsed, and the nature of the job. Second step which the EEOC recommends is using individualized assessment for the people who are screened out to ensure that qualified applicants were not mistakenly screened out "based on incorrect information." This step allows individuals to correct errors that may exist in their records (Larson 2013). The EEOC has also stated, however, that an individualized assessment may not be necessary as long as the employer can demonstrate that its targeted screen is always job related. That is, the screen must be very closely related to the job. Nevertheless, the EEOC has also stated that individualized assessment can help an employer avoid liability in case the employer is unable to demonstrate that its screen is always job related and in line with business necessity. Therefore, conducting an individualized assessment is wise (Larson 2013). When reviewing the results of a criminal background check to make a hiring decision, one should consider the amount of time that has elapsed since any conviction, if the applicant has been in some way rehabilitated, and if the job for which the applicant has applied has a tight nexus to the type of conviction(s) for which are being screened.

Additional Varieties of Screenings

Credit Reports

Businesses must obtain an employee's written consent before seeking an employee's credit report as per the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), (Ward 2013). If the applicant is not hired based on information in the credit report, the applicant must be provided a copy of the report and advised of his or her right to challenge the report under the FCRA. The inquiry will show up on an individual's credit report as a soft inquiry and does not affect the individual's credit score (Grabbe 2014).

Polygraph Tests

The Employee Polygraph Protection Act prohibits private employers from using lie detector tests, either for pre-employment screening or during the course of employment (Ward 2013). Even though there is no federal law specifically prohibiting an employer from using a written honesty test on job applicants, these tests frequently violate federal and state laws that protect against discrimination and violations of privacy (Anderson 2013).

Employers can either find all of this information out on their own or hire a third party. Such third parties are called consumer reporting agencies. Usually, 30 to 40 percent of information mentioned on resumes and job applications is false or misleading (Ward 2013). One study showed that 50% all reference checks done on potential employees differed between what the job applicant provided and what the source reported (Ward 2013). The goal of a company is to find out as much as they can about the skills and behaviors an applicant will bring to an organization. An employer is trying to establish whether the potential employee will be a good fit and what type of risks or liabilities he or she you may pose to the organization. These checks are used by

employers as a means of judging a candidate's past mistakes, character, fitness, and to identify hiring risks for safety reasons. However, these checks may sometimes be used for illegal purposes, such as employment discrimination, identity theft, and violation of privacy. Due to the sensitivity of the information contained in consumer reports and records, there are a many laws regulating the dissemination and legal use of this information. Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) regulates the use of information reported by third party agencies as it pertains to adverse decisions, notification to the applicant, and destruction and safekeeping of records. The Fair Credit Reporting Act put national standards in place for background checks (Ward 2013). If a company does the background check in house, it is exempt from the provisions of this act (Anderson 2013). If a consumer report is used as a factor in an adverse hiring decision, the applicant must be presented with a "pre-adverse action disclosure," a copy of the FCRA summary of rights, and a "notification of adverse action letter" (Ward 2013). Individuals are entitled to know the source of any information used against them including a credit reporting company.

Conclusion

Most organizations have set policies, and procedures to optimize the work environment, but when it comes to the evaluation, development and selection process, it is often a rushed process. Some look just to get a warm body in and hope it works out. If these same standards were applied across the organization, it would lead to a disaster. The most crucial pieces of the puzzle are the people and their ability to add success or failure to a company's bottom-line. Right people are an asset to a departmental and organizational success. Managers now face ever challenging responsibilities related to poor hiring practices and not identifying best people who will be successful in the job, and would add value to a department and organization. We are in changing and challenging times in health care, and organizations must find ways to stay profitable. As

a first step, profitability can be a byproduct of hiring right people for the right job. Regardless of the economy, there is always a need to get employees to perform effectively, promote from within and fill vacancies. Utilizing assessments plays a crucial role due to stricter economic environment. We try to be accountable and do more with less, especially when there are fewer dollars to be allocated and the evaluation, promotion and hiring cycle is always a costly process.

Behavioral assessments can be a very helpful tool to the management to identify, select and develop an ideal candidate. The amount of time, money, energy and resources allocated to employee development shows that this is an area where effectiveness needs to be maximized. In an employee development and selection process, it is money well spent to utilize behavioral assessment. The best way to hire good employees or promote them into positions of competence is by using a systematic process, including job analysis and behavioral assessment surveys, background screens and drug testing. This will ensure that prospective and current employees are perfectly matched to their job (s) at all levels.

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