



How
to Write a
Winning Résumé



GIA
GEMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA®

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Introduction

Your résumé is the most useful tool for introducing yourself to a potential employer. You can use your résumé to respond to an advertised job vacancy, to accompany a blind inquiry to companies you've researched, to present at an interview, to reinforce a contact you've made with a prospective employer, or to accompany your request for a letter of recommendation.

Writing a successful résumé takes care, thought, and planning. This handbook provides the information and tools you need to prepare a quality résumé. Remember, first impressions count. This handbook can help you create a résumé that represents you to your full advantage.

How to Begin

Your résumé is a written snapshot of your background and skills. It should support your career goals and address the position you're applying for.

In reality, many résumés are not read — they're scanned for key information. Your résumé should be a brief summary of your job-related experience rather than a comprehensive data sheet.

Five Steps to Developing a Résumé

Your résumé must be attractive, informative, professional, and well organized. These steps will help you fine-tune and organize your information:

1. Analyze the job description for required skills and abilities. Every job requires certain skills, attributes, and knowledge. By carefully reviewing job descriptions, you may determine what the employer is looking for, and you can prepare your résumé accordingly.
2. Create a list of your accomplishments. Take some time to think about your accomplishments and identify the personal strengths and skills that helped you attain them. Include education, training, volunteer work, jobs — anything that illustrates personal and professional achievement.
3. Review your experience for relevant skills. Ninety percent of those interviewed cannot identify their skills, and many overlook skills they acquired in other professions. Take a personal inventory of what you can do, and identify the things that would make you an ideal applicant.
4. Write short, descriptive phrases to describe your achievements and job responsibilities. Use action words whenever possible. Be concise and specific. Make sure verb tenses and punctuation are consistent. Then arrange the phrases in order of relevance to the job.
5. Choose a format for your résumé. It should present your background, qualifications, assets, and abilities to your best advantage. There is no perfect résumé format. Later in this handbook, you'll find three formats you can tailor to meet your specific needs.

Examples of Action Words and Phrases

achieved	formulated	pioneered
advised	generated	prepared
assisted	handled	produced
clarified	implemented	provided
conducted	increased	purchased
consulted	innovated	reduced
contracted	installed	reported
correlated	integrated	served
delegated	invented	sold
designed	justified	succeeded
developed	licensed	supported
directed	managed	taught
earned	mediated	transformed
effected	motivated	updated
established	nominated	was awarded
exceeded	ordered	wrote
expanded	originated	
financed	participated	

How to Organize Your Information

Be sure to put the strongest information first and the weakest last. Organize the content of each section in a similar way, with industry-related items first. For example, you might have a lot of education, but not much work experience. In this case, you would list your education toward the top of the résumé. Or, if you have some outstanding skills or qualifications, you can highlight them by placing them first.

The Basic Elements

Although résumés vary from person to person, these elements are required no matter what style you use.

Name

Put it in a prominent location at the top of the page. Use bold type that's about two points larger than the rest of the type on the page. Use caps and lowercase. It is easier to read than all caps.

Contact Information

Include your complete permanent address and also your temporary address if you have one, along with phone and fax numbers as well as your email address.

Employment History

Start with your current or most recent employer. For each listing, include the company name, location, and dates of employment. List your job title and provide a brief, bulleted description of your responsibilities. In addition to your paid work history, you can include internships, volunteer work, and military experience.

Education

List your most recent degrees, diplomas, and certificates first, along with dates awarded. Include college, trade school, or other specialized training. Omit high school unless it's your only education.

Accomplishments

List anything that demonstrates your aptitude and skills for the position you seek. These can include special projects or commendations. If you have industry-related honors, awards, or memberships, you can include them here. Here are a few examples:

- Reorganized the workflow of the office, increasing output by 50 percent
- Designed and implemented an innovative inventory system
- WJA Diva Design Award Semifinalist 2005
- Sales Associate of the Month, January 2006

Optional Sections

Once the basic elements are in place, you can make creative choices. Here are some examples of optional sections:

Objective

An objective is a brief statement that targets your professional goals and states what you can do for the company. You must be specific about the type of employment you seek. Although optional, a well-crafted objective can lend organization and focus to your résumé. See page 12 for details.

Summary

A summary is a brief statement about who you are and what you can offer the company. It can include an overview of your experience and your strongest skills.

Skills

This section lets you state your specialized training and education or outline personality traits that would benefit your prospective employer. This section can also be called Profile, Strengths, Qualifications, or Capabilities. See page 13 for examples.

Associations

You can include memberships in trade associations, professional societies, alumni groups, and volunteer groups.

Hobbies and Activities

This information may be more relevant than you think. It can reveal talents or personality traits an employer might find desirable, like teamwork, patience, or dedication. Do not include odd or incompatible hobbies that might eliminate you from further consideration.

What to Leave Out

A résumé should never include your:

- Social Security number
- Personal biography or pictures
- Age
- Health problems
- Marital status

Design and Appearance

The way your résumé looks says a lot about who you are. It reflects your attention to detail and your ability to synthesize information in a logical way and to communicate it effectively. Your résumé should be one or two pages long, and it must be typed. It should be neat and uncluttered with plenty of white space. The layout should be balanced, with margins at least one to one and a half inches wide.

A few dos and don'ts:

- Do use at least 10 point type for the text. Choose typefaces that are easy to read and conservative in style. Don't get fancy. Use only one or two different styles of type. For example, you might use a sans serif typeface for the headings and a serif typeface for the text.
- Don't use sentences or paragraphs. Present your information in bulleted lists.
- Do strive for structure and consistency.
- Do print your résumé on high-quality bond paper that's a light, neutral color. Use matching envelopes and matching paper for cover letters and reference sheets.
- Do test your résumé to be sure you can fax and email it. If you plan to email your résumé, eliminate all type formatting. See pages 19-21 for details.
- Do save an electronic file of your work for easy updating.
- Don't cross out or write over your finished product.
- Do check your résumé for clarity, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and typos.
- Proof, proof, proof, and proof again. Then ask a friend to proof your résumé after you have. Nothing undermines your credibility more than a typo!

Résumé Styles

No single résumé style or format is perfect for everyone. Choose the format that best displays your unique assets and abilities and best suits your background. Here are three popular résumé styles:

Chronological

The chronological résumé organizes information by its date of occurrence, with the most recent data first. Preferred by most recruiters and employers, this format highlights consistent work histories and recent accomplishments. Its shortcoming is that it exposes short terms of employment or gaps in your work history. This format is especially appropriate if you've been in the jewelry industry a long time, have good contacts, and want to emphasize those strengths.

Functional

The functional résumé highlights your most valuable skill areas and emphasizes professional growth while downplaying irrelevant work experience. This format works well if your experience is not directly related to your career goal, or if you're entering the job market for the first time. Because this format lets you focus on transferable skills — skills you might have learned in another field — it's a good format if you're making a career change.

Combination or Linear

This is becoming the most widely used résumé format. It follows the basic form of the chronological résumé, but it also highlights skills and abilities line by line under each job listing. This type of résumé uses a summary that accents your qualifications and most marketable skills.

A combination résumé quickly identifies your strengths and abilities to an employer. It's easy to read and tends to be well-organized. It also emphasizes job continuity and can highlight past employers. However, because this type of résumé contains no objective statement, it might leave the reader uncertain about the position you're seeking. This format also tends to call attention to employment gaps or frequent job changes.

■ Chronological Résumé Sample

Jane Jones, G.G.

Temporary address until May 2006 graduation:

Any Drive, Apt. 12
Carlsbad, CA 92008
Phone: 760-777-7777
Fax: 760-777-7778

Permanent address:

1890 Every Road
Burlington, VT 08093
Phone: 802-555-5555
Fax: 802-555-5556
Email: joneo@hotmail.com

Objective

Entry-level sales position specializing in estate and vintage jewelry, leading to marketing or sales management in this area of the jewelry business.

Education

May 2006, graduation

Gemological Institute of America, Carlsbad, CA
Graduate Gemologist diploma in on-campus program
Graduate Diamonds diploma
Graduate Colored Stones diploma

1980-1984

University of Santa Fe, NM
International Relations program

Employment

1990-2003

Desert Moon Jewelry Company, Santa Fe, NM
Manager—International Sales
Responsible for the daily operation of a 10-person department
Developed and implemented marketing/sales promotions

1984-1990

ABC Jewelry Company, Santa Fe, NM
Customer Service Representative
Quality control, conflict resolution, and customer service
Hiring, scheduling, terminations, and performance evaluations
Led the department to a 30 percent increase in productivity

Achievements

WJA Diva Design Award, 2001
Apex Award for productivity increase

Memberships

GIA Alumni Association
Women's Jewelry Association

References available upon request

■ Functional Résumé Sample

Alice Miller, A.J.P.
101 Asphalt Lane
Alamo, NM 87345
Phone and fax: 505-333-3333
Email: amiller06@yahoo.com

Profile

- Accredited Jewelry Professional dedicated to a career in fine jewelry sales and service
- Highly self-motivated graduate who worked throughout high school and college to assist with expenses
- Accepts new challenges and responsibilities, consistently and rapidly rising to the highest levels of job performance
- Strong customer service orientation, emphasizing satisfaction, quality, and service

Education

Gemological Institute of America—Carlsbad, CA
Accredited Jewelry Professional diploma—2006

Lane Community College—Eugene, OR
Liberal Arts Program

Accomplishments

- Completed comprehensive training in diamond, colored stone, and fine jewelry sales
- Received national and regional recognition as college track athlete
- Computer literate: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel

Professional Experience

Smith's Jewelers—Springfield, OR 1997-2005
Assistant Manager

Smith's Jewelers—Eugene, OR Summer 1995
Sales Associate

Gold's Gym—Eugene, OR 1992-93
Sales Associate

Hand's Country Farm—Grand Junction, OR 1988-93
Farm Cashier

Memberships

Gemological Institute of America—Alumni Association

Functional Résumé Sample

Ed Lawson, G.G., G.J.

62 Concrete Street
Denver, CO 80724
Phone: 720-222-2222
Fax: 720-222-2223
Email: Eded@yahoo.com

Strengths

- Highly skilled in design concepts, renderings, and fabrication of fine jewelry
- In-depth knowledge of diamonds and colored stones
- Proven record of refined work in 18K gold and platinum
- Able to give accurate, detailed written appraisals of estate and antique jewelry
- Thorough understanding of manufacturing processes: waxes, casting, finishing
- Proven ability as manager and team player
- Documented success during 25 years of progressive experience and responsibility
- Effective hiring, training, evaluating, and supervision skills
- Able to break down a large project into smaller pieces, prioritize goals, and work under short deadlines without sacrificing quality

Education

- Gemological Institute of America—Carlsbad, CA 2005-2006
Graduate Gemologist Diploma
Graduate Jeweler Diploma
Comprehensive Wax Techniques Certificate
- Cornell University—Ithaca, NY 1976-1980
Bachelor of Science Degree in Kinesiology

Employment

- Carnegie Foundation of Estate Jewelry—Pittsburgh, PA 1996-2005
Researched and developed appraisal guidelines for Edwardian era jewelry
Developed and implemented raised rendering techniques
Co-authored Edwardian Jewelry Revival book under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation
- Many Faceted Jewels Inc.—Lake George, NY 1992-1996
Specialized in 18K and 22K gold and platinum custom manufacturing
- Cornell University Kinesiology Department 1981-1992
Chairperson of Interpretive Dance Division
Specialized in dance from Edwardian court life

Accomplishments

Keynote Speaker, "Antique Jewelry Workshop," 2002
1989 Platinum Guild of America Fabrication Award
Edwardian Jewelry Revival book has sold over 100,000 copies to date

Professional Memberships

GIA Alumni Association
Society of Antique and Estate Jewelry Ltd.
International Society of Appraisers

■ Combination or Linear Résumé Sample

Tom Thomas, G.J., G.G.

66 Macadam Road
Springfield, MO 54321
(417) 444-4444
tomtom@hotmail.com

Summary

To be a member of a team where my 12 years of experience in jewelry manufacturing, operations, and office systems management will be a positive asset.

Employment

Gem Jeweler Manufacturers, Schenectady, NY
Manufacturing Manager, 1999-present

Responsible for all manufacturing processes, quality control, and employee relations. Processes include all design, wax casting, and finishing needed to turn precious metals into fine jewelry.

- Supervised staff of 35
- Increased employee productivity by 17 percent
- Served as liaison between the jewelry department and customers
- Responsible for employee meetings and department operations

Smith's Gem Center, Albany, NY
Jewelry Supervisor, 1994-1999

- Supervised 12 employees
- Restructured jewelry department work flow
- Computerized department
- Improved repair turnaround time by 20 percent

Education

Gemological Institute of America, Carlsbad, California
Graduate Gemologist diploma
Graduate Jeweler diploma
Applied Jewelry Arts diploma

New York College of Jewelry Arts, Albany, NY
Jewelry Manufacturing Associate Degree

Skills

- JA Certified Master Bench Jeweler
- Strong jewelry knowledge
- Understanding of fine jewelry manufacturing from design to finished product
- Ability to communicate well with others
- Proven employee relations skills
- Excellent customer service skills

Associations

Manufacturing Jewelers and Suppliers of America
GIA Alumni Association

Stating Your Objective

An objective is a brief statement that targets your professional goals. When properly written, it is the most effective and powerful statement in your résumé. The other elements in your résumé should be in agreement with your stated objective.

Your objective is very useful to you and prospective employers. It identifies your professional goals. It helps employers quickly determine if your goals are compatible with their needs.

A well-written objective targets your opportunities and speeds your search. Don't generalize. Define the opportunity you're looking for in one to three sentences. Remember you should adjust the objective according to the job opportunity.

Examples of Objective Statements:

An entry-level position as a sales associate leading to administrative and management responsibility.

A position as a gemologist working with estate jewelry in an auction house. Eager to travel.

An entry-level bench jeweler position leading to master jeweler working with gold and platinum.

A position as a bench jeweler with emphasis on wax carving, stone setting, or mold making.

A position as a sorter or grader leading to buyer. Willing to travel.

A position as a staff gemologist in an accredited gem lab or appraisal business.

Stating Your Skills

On some résumés, this category might also be called strengths, qualifications, capabilities, or professional profile. Your skills statements should be brief, specific phrases about what you can do. Draw from your paid or unpaid work experience and education, keeping in mind the characteristics of the position you hope to fill.



Examples of Skills Statements:

Able to give detailed and accurate written appraisals of jewelry and precious gems

Comprehensive knowledge of diamonds and gemstones with the ability to grade the quality of both

Thorough understanding of bench jewelry work

Hands-on experience in all aspects of the manufacturing process including waxes, casting, and finishing of product

Excellent sales closure skills

In-depth product knowledge of gold and precious metals, and their use in the jewelry industry

Proven ability to communicate highly technical information in an accurate and customer-friendly way

Excellent verbal and written communication skills

Dedicated and meticulous — high level of accuracy and attention to detail

Fluent in English, Spanish, and Japanese

Skilled in Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Quark, Portfolio, and PhotoShop



Stating Your References

You should have at least three professional references. Don't include personal references in this category unless you've never been employed. If you don't have employment references, contact colleagues with knowledge about your volunteer work.

Make sure you have the current titles and addresses of your references, and request their permission before listing them.

Always include a phone number and email where that person can be reached, preferably during regular business hours. This is the time that employers will call.

Print references on your personalized letterhead. Use the same format and paper as your résumé.

Get permission to use the name of each reference and confirm he or she will speak favorably of you.

Send each reference a copy of your résumé.

■ Sample Reference List

James Black
100 Gravel Road
Whiting, NJ 07110
Phone & fax: 201-001-0001
Email: jamblack@hotmail.com

Professional References

Ms. Melissa Noone, Owner
Sunday's Child Jewelry
1234 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10010
212-212-2121
m.noone@sundaysjlry.com

Mr. Sam Round, Director of Operations
Baubles, Bangles, & Beads
987 Blue River Road
Indigo, ME 03902
207-121-1212
sam.round@baubles.com

Mr. Daniel Green, Director, Fine Jewelry Department
Nonpareil Products
6565 Violet Way
Ketchum, ID 81020
208-456-7890
daniel.green@nonpariel.com

Cover Letter

A cover letter initiates your relationship with a prospective employer and lets you communicate in a friendly and personal manner that is generally not possible in a résumé. The letter should be brief, courteous, and to the point. Before composing your letter, be sure to carefully read the ad or job description so you can tailor the letter accordingly. Don't simply restate the contents of your résumé in the letter. Use the letter to tell an employer why you're an ideal candidate and to convince him or her to choose you for an interview.

The letter should contain your name, address, and daytime contact information, and should be addressed to the intended recipient by name. Make sure to get the spelling right.

Basic Structure:

Paragraph 1: State the position you're applying for and where you learned about it.

Paragraph 2: Describe your qualifications and why you should be considered for employment. Choose specifics from your education, work experience, and personality that make you particularly qualified for the position.

Paragraph 3: State when you're available for an interview and how you can be reached. Also — this is important — end your letter politely.

■ Sample Cover Letter

May 12, 2006

Howard Hand
6705 25th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90405
Phone: 314-555-1234
Fax: 314-555-3334

Ms. Holly Light
Lucky Stars Inc.
222 West Weston Road
St. Louis, MO 63131

Dear Ms. Light,

Ms. Kendall in Career Services at the Gemological Institute of America told me you have a retail sales position available. As a graduate of the gemologist program at GIA in Carlsbad, California, I am qualified for and interested in employment with Lucky Stars.

Having completed six months of study with an emphasis on subjects like grading and identifying diamonds and colored stones, I know I can be of value to your company. I also have experience in the retail industry buying and selling diamonds and colored stones. I love dealing with people face to face, so I'm a perfect fit for retail.

I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Lucky Stars retail sales opening. I am available to interview at your earliest convenience. You can reach me at 314-555-1234.

My résumé is enclosed. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Howard Hand

Enclosure

Thank-you Letter

A thank-you letter, sent to the interviewer immediately after your interview, is more than an act of courtesy. It demonstrates your ability to follow through and serves as a reminder of who you are. It also gives you a chance to mention anything you might have forgotten in the interview. This letter is less formal than a cover letter and can be typed or neatly handwritten.

Sample Thank-you Letter

May 29, 2006

Dear Mr. Dillard,

I enjoyed meeting with you on Monday and learning more about the operations of Dillard's Diamonds. I am very interested in the diamond setter position and would like to join your company.

You have an excellent reputation and track record in the jewelry industry. I know I can be a valuable part of your team and look forward to growing with your company.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Crown

Electronic Résumés

Electronic résumés should be composed with the same care and attention to detail as printed résumés. As with all résumés, the most important information should be toward the top of the page. This is especially important for e-résumés, since employers might print only a screen shot and not the entire document. You should send a cover letter with your e-résumé.

When sending your résumé via email, be sure the recipient will be able to read your résumé regardless of the email system, Web browser, or scanner he or she might use. The résumé should be a plain text document and should use only traditional characters, such as those found on a typewriter, that translate smoothly between computer systems. Plain text format, or ASCII, is the best way to ensure this, and most word processing software will let you save an existing document as a plain text document.

Your Résumé as a Plain Text Document

Avoid using bold characters, italics, underlined letters, borders, shading, bullets, or other inserted objects like clip art or graphics. Items like these must be converted to appropriate ASCII characters. For example, bullets should be changed to asterisks or dashes. If you used columns or tables in your original résumé, make sure its still logically arranged and attractive without them.

When you finish revising your résumé, send it to yourself or a friend to evaluate how the finished product transmits electronically.

Sending Your Résumé via Email

Use a standard, non-decorative 10- to 14-point typeface. Use the job title and/or job reference number as the subject of the email message.

It's best to send your résumé and cover letter embedded in one email message, instead of as attachments, just in case the employer's email system does not accommodate attachments. Also, some employers are cautious about opening attachments because they can contain viruses. If you're certain that it's OK to send attachments, it's still preferable to send all documents as one file — for example, by pasting the cover letter above the résumé.

Most email programs accommodate 72 characters per line. After that, additional characters wrap to the next line. Limit each line of your résumé to 72 characters, including spaces. This will keep your résumé from losing its formatting when you send it.

Research the company you're sending to, and use the style or format recommended by their human resources department or web site.

Interview Tips

Before the Interview

- If you're expecting phone calls from potential employers, be sure you have a professional-sounding greeting on your answering machine.
- Research the company.
- Prepare questions you would like to ask the potential employer, and anticipate questions you will likely be asked.
- Contact all references you will be using to let them know they might be contacted.
- Review company literature, including their web site.

The Day of the Interview

- Give yourself plenty of time so you arrive on time. The location might be unfamiliar to you, or it might be difficult to find. Assume that you will encounter heavy traffic. Try to anticipate all possible contingencies.
- Dress professionally, and pay close attention to grooming details.

What to take with you:

- Several copies of your résumé
- Samples of your work, if appropriate
- A typed list of references — personal and professional references are extremely important in the jewelry industry. However, it's not appropriate to hand out references unless you're asked.
- A pen and paper

When You Arrive

- Arrive on time, preferably a few minutes early so you will be relaxed and have time to fill out an application if asked.
- Treat everyone you meet, including the receptionist, with respect and courtesy.
- Review company literature on-site to show interest.

At the Interview

- Get the interviewer's name — use it and say it correctly.
- Be enthusiastic — show that you really want the job.
- Think before answering questions.
- Be a good listener.
- Ask questions about the position and the company.
- Take notes, but ask permission before doing so.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.
- Be prepared to answer questions, with examples, about:
 - Your previous job experiences — relate them to the job you're applying for
 - Your career goals
 - Your strengths and weaknesses
 - How you handle pressure and deadlines
 - How you get along with co-workers — do you like to work alone or in a team?
 - Your education
 - Your willingness to work overtime or on weekends, and to travel or relocate (if appropriate)
 - Your salary requirements
 - Reasons for leaving past jobs

After the Interview

Send a thank-you letter to the interviewer that is specific to the job you applied for. Highlight why you're right for the job, and add anything you forgot to mention during the interview.

Special Interview Tips

- At the end of the interview, ask if there's anything keeping you from getting the job. This gives you an opportunity to address any unresolved issues before you leave.
- Eighty percent of hiring decisions are based on whether or not the employer likes you, so have a good attitude and reaffirm your abilities.

GIA Career Services

The gem and jewelry industry offers many rich and rewarding career opportunities for those with the training and talent to take advantage of them. Our goal in Career Services is to help GIA students and graduates turn their goals and ambitions into realities and to provide industry employers with the very best possible job candidates.

We offer

- A nationwide database of available positions
- Personal résumé reviews
- Interviewing tips
- Assistance with cover letters and thank-you letters
- GIA's annual Career Fair, the largest recruiting event in the gem and jewelry industry

Visit our Web site at www.gia.edu to view regular updates to the job database, FAQ and Career Preparation Tips. Contact us by email at careerservices@gia.edu or phone at 800-421-7250, ext. 4195. Good luck with your job search!

The GIA Jewelry Industry Career Fair

There's no better setting for finding the career of your dreams than at GIA's annual Career Fair. This daylong recruiting event lets job seekers meet some of the industry's finest employers, attend career preparation seminars and workshops, get personalized career coaching, and network with industry experts. Free to job seekers, Career Fair is held in New York, NY and at the Carlsbad, CA campus, once yearly in each location. Visit the GIA Career Fair Web site at www.gia.edu for current dates and more information.



About GIA

Founded in 1931, GIA is internationally recognized as the world's foremost authority in gemology™. The institute translates its expert knowledge of diamonds and colored stones into the most highly regarded education available in the gem and jewelry industry. GIA instructors are known and respected in their fields. Former managers and store owners, gifted craftsmen and designers, and experts in diamonds and colored stones, these dedicated educators pass on their expertise as well as their love and enthusiasm for gemstones and jewelry to students all over the world.

As educators to the world's jewelry industry, GIA has more than 300,000 graduates. Yet GIA is much more than a school. It's the only gemological research center of its kind. Its laboratory serves as an independent third party, offering grading and identification services that are the most highly regarded in the gem and jewelry industry. GIA created the diamond grading standard—the International Diamond Grading System™—used by virtually every professional jeweler and diamantaire around the world.

For more information about GIA—its education, laboratory services, instruments, and publications—visit www.gia.edu

For a list of industry positions available—visit www.gia.edu/careers

Or call us at 800-421-7250 ext. 4001



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