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- Jason: Now don't get me wrong. You can get a lot of leads. I'm just saying, what's the quickest path in order to increase your business?
- Male Speaker: Welcome to *Marketing in the Know*, the premier podcast to help you leap ahead of the marketing curve so you can grow your business. Now get ready, set and grow with your host and tour guide through the marketing jungle, Buckley Barlow.
- Buckley: Hello, hello insiders and welcome to *Marketing in the Know*. Today I'm really excited to have a conversation with a man after my own heart, a **digitalpreneur**. He runs jasonswenk.com, which pretty much gives his introduction away. Jason Swenk, thanks so much for coming on today and having a chat with me.
- Jason: Yeah man, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here.
- Buckley: Well, cool. It's exciting to have someone like you come on, especially from a personal level. I think we have a lot of synergy; we have a lot of overlap. And I know we want to try to cover a lot of material today so are you ready to do this?
- Jason: Yeah. You sent me a list. I'm like: oh my gosh, that's a lot. But let's go through it.
- Buckley: Well, you've got a lot of stuff to offer as far as nuggets of wisdom, so I'm excited about it. So before we jump in with both feet to talk about all things digital, could you give us a little bit of background on you and what you currently do now?
- Jason: Yeah. So I jumped into this – really one of the coolest industries about – gosh – 18 years ago, maybe? And really built up and grew and really successful digital agency over 12 years and positioned it to sell, and sold it. And then, like every entrepreneur that sells their business, you kind of flounder for a couple years trying to figure out what the heck you want to do next. I was lucky enough that the agency world kind of pulled me back in, where I actually do consulting and just help them get to the next level where they can scale. And it's one of the coolest things I've ever done, so.
- Buckley: You know, talking about digital and it going back 18 years ago, so much has changed in the last five years alone, I would imagine from where you began to what it looks like today, it's extremely different. With the advent of all mobile, which pretty much was fostered by increased data speeds like 4G, you've got some pretty cool experience there.
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Jason: Yeah, I mean when we started, it was in '99 and I remember just going through the Yellow Pages when that existed, and literally going: oh, they don't have a website listed. And I literally cold called them and said, "Hey, you want a website?" That was my sales experience back then. I didn't even know what an invoice was when my first client asked me to send him an invoice. I had to ask my dad for it because there was no Google on. It was a lot of fun and there's a lot of learning curves.

Buckley: Oh, that's funny. Like what? What's an invoice?

Jason: Yeah, I was like: what is this?

Buckley: Well, cool. We had a chance to kind of converse a little bit before we hit the record button. We've had a couple of emails go back and forth. But one of the things that stuck out to me is your mindset. You're always thinking growth, and you have a very entrepreneurial spirit about you, which I love. Will you tell me a little bit about what you've discovered about how mindset really does create change, and then how easy or difficult it has been to instill in your clients?

Jason: Yeah, you know it really all stems to what's between the ears, right? And we're always sabotaging ourselves. And I don't know if that's maybe kind of the way we've always been growing up. Because you know, like if you remember kind of like probably your parents as well as my parents told me: hey, save and always really research things before you jump in, and don't take too many risks; always be conservative and work for a job for 20 years. It's kind of like that middle class mindset versus having the mindset of going: I can create anything and I can be anything that I want to create, right? And there's no boundaries.

I mean really, if people started looking – like the great people like Steve Jobs or astronauts or whoever; if they started putting boundaries, we would still not be on the moon or we'd still not have computers or whatever, right? And so so many of us are putting boundaries around. So whenever I look at doing anything, I never look at the boundaries. I don't care about how I'm going to get there; I just know I have a mindset of where do I want to be, and then I'll figure out how after that.

Buckley: That's cool. Well, as an agency owner, obviously trying to convert people to that mindset has probably been a little difficult. But over

time, I'm sure that they just come to you and they say: hey, how do I get more business? Which kind of segues into our next discussion here, and that is lead generation. So let's get down and dirty and talk about lead generation because that is a pain point for so many businesses today. There are so many ways to tackle it. But what's working for you and your clients today?

Jason: Yeah, you know the thing that I always hear all the time, whenever I ask people how are they generating leads or how are they generating business, they say referrals. And if you fall under that vote, that's just not scalable, right? And you're depending on someone else. And you should have some kind of system that basically on autopilot starts building up your pipeline for you. And really where you need to start off with is kind of two areas. You need to figure out who you're going to target and what you're specializing in, and what you're going to offer to them first.

Those two things are the most important. And so many of us, they just say: I'm gonna target anybody and anybody that's gonna give me money. And then they lead with their core service, which is basically pitching marriage to someone before you even went on the first date. Of course they're gonna say no.

Buckley: Yeah, pitching the what? Here's what I do.

Jason: Yeah. And what's really worked for me is trying to help first, right? So if you notice, if you went to the jasonswenk.com website, there's only one thing that you could buy out of eight things that I sell, right, from the scene here. And that's the proposal template. It's like \$99.00. So that's just kind of like: hey, just give you value really quick, low cost. But you know, then you have all the other programs that you have to opt in for. They're built for the launches and different things like that.

And the reason why I do that is I want to make sure that people are serious; that anybody who are going to buy my programs or engage with me, that they're action takers. And I want to make sure that they have trust in me, first, and I build authority with them before I ever ask them for a dime.

Buckley: Let's talk about that; asking for the dime. I mean speaking of leads and then being able to actually convert those leads into happy customers, your primary client is pretty much a business, right? So it's all about B2B sales conversion. How the heck have you had

such a high conversion rate for your B2B proposals? How have you done that?

Jason: It's about knowing your audience and knowing what their biggest problem is, or their biggest desire, okay? And you talk to them differently. You know, so many of us – let's say you picked a broad market, right? Well, if you develop a particular page, or you start developing content or a particular landing page and you're trying to reach everybody, it's gonna reach nobody, right, other than your close family and friends, and in my case – back in the day – it was my mom. She was the only one that would opt into my stuff. Versus if I say some of the material that I put out there is like: hey, how to convert 80 percent of your marketing proposals with clients like LegalZoom and Atachi.

Of course I'm going to have a high conversion rate and a lot of people are going to want that. And then you could even kind of take it a step further and say: are you a digital agency owner that would like to increase conversion rate to 80 percent with clients like LegalZoom and Atachi? So what I'm doing, there, is I'm being specific on the audience, I'm being specific on the result that they'll get, and I'm also doing social proof by using a couple big names that they've heard of. And so that's kind of step one. It's kind of like – you know, I look at lead generation almost like fishing, okay? So you have to have the right bait. But in order to have that fish bite the bait, you have to have the right location.

So you have to know where they're at. And so many of us are starting out fishing in the wrong locations, right? And they don't even know who they're fishing for. So if you're fishing for, like, a blue marlin which are in the Gulf of Mexico and you have to troll and go a hundred miles out by the weed line, it's totally different than if you want to catch grouper, which is a bottom feeder. Still in the Gulf of Mexico, but there are gonna be different outcomes. So if you start looking at it that way, of going: all right, who am I fishing for; what kind of bait would interest them? And then once you have the bait and they bite; so so many people develop those eBooks.

And oh, I cannot stand eBooks. They are just a waste of time. Because it's kind of like, let's say a fish bites your hook and you just yank on this thing as fast as you can and you rip it right out of their mouth. They don't have time to digest it. Like an eBook takes a long time to digest. And you want someone to have that “aha” moment and build trust, and go: “Man, that worked; I want

more. I want to go back to Jason's site and go see that." And so you have to know kind of like how hard to pull back on it, and then you have to know the tension.

And so there are so many different things that go into lead generation. But if you break it down into like the fishing analogy, it'll start being easier for you to really think about how do I really catch these people? And then obviously, have caught actions of everything.

Buckley: Now, you know, you're making it sound really easy. And of course for marketers, marketers get this – at least advanced marketers really get creating content at each stage that they're in and creating this value. But why do you think small businesses are having such a hard time because of this very issue? They're having a hard time adding that value. What have you seen out there with small business where you explain this to them, and then all of a sudden the light bulb goes on? And it doesn't go on for a lot of them, right?

Jason: Yeah. Oh, yeah. It takes a good bit of banging over the head and kicks in the butt in order to get them going. But you know, they just want to reach everybody. They keep thinking of – you know, I think a lot of times people get into business for the wrong reasons, right? They want to be entrepreneurs and start a business to make a lot of money and have a lot of time off. In the very beginning, before you have any systems like that, you know, it's the complete opposite. And you're almost a kind of a prisoner until you set up the right systems.

And so what they start thinking is: well, I need to make a million dollars this year, and in order to do that, I don't want to kind of laser focus down into a particular niche because I'm going to scare people away.

Buckley: Yeah. It's scary to get that niche for a lot of people.

Jason: Oh, yeah. But you know, the cool thing of what you can do now with technology is you create these little landing pages, use Facebook marketing, and test out different industries to see which ones you're gonna be the most successful on. And then once it works in that particular industry, then you can adjust your website. Or, what other people do – like the small business owners do wrong – is they just try to produce so much content. I mean literally. And they're producing content that's generic.

And they're spending all their time on creating content versus promoting it. Kind of you need to do kind of the 80/20 rule, right? 20 percent on creating content; 80 percent on promoting it.

Buckley: I couldn't agree more. Well, with that in mind, I think one of the other issues that small business owners have is they're just so busy running a business. I've been there; you've been there, right? You're working in the business, you're just moving along and there are so many cool technologies and platforms and systems out there that they just don't know about. And they don't take the time. And I couldn't help but notice you're a big fan of Periscope, which you think is the next big thing. I'd love to know why you think it. And for those out there who don't know what Periscope is, perhaps you could give our insiders a quick summary of the tool.

Jason: Yeah. What Periscope is, is the live video streaming, okay? And Periscope is, right now, going to be the next big thing. But I think if something replaces Periscope, it's really the live streaming video. That's really the next big thing. Facebook has Mentions coming out, and so a couple things there. But the really cool thing is a lot of people are doing webinars and workshops online, and they struggle with getting 75 percent show-up rate. They're like literally 75 percent of the people are just not showing up. And it's planned out. On Periscope, literally it's unplanned, and everybody gets notified when you go on, if they're following you.

And literally like instantly, I've seen people; they'll go instantly live and have 100, 500,000 people in that room watching them. Now, where people go wrong is they take too long to get to giving value and giving them something worth actually showing up; not just me petting my cat, right? The other thing, too, people are doing wrong on Periscope or these kind of ads, is the Periscope video dies after 24 hours. And so they're not multipurposing this content into other channels. So I have a podcast. It's called the Smart Agency Master Class. I do a weekly show. It's hard to produce, just kind of like what you're doing here, right?

You have to get a guest, or do your own, and you have to put it up and all this kind of stuff. And so I started going: let me do this experiment. Let me get on live on Periscope, tell everybody I'm doing this, and then I'm gonna take the recording from Periscope – I'm gonna record it in an HD video so I can use it on YouTube, I can upload it natively to Facebook, I can extract out the audio and

put it on iTunes, as well as write a blog post on my website where I have the video and the blog post.

So right away – and it literally takes me ten minutes to shoot it, and then it literally takes me about ten minutes to do all the other stuff. So now I have a piece of content that's really good, that is distributed in five different places, and so now I'm just building my ecosystem of the reach that I can reach people.

Buckley: Yeah, hey, that's cool. And I'm a big believer in Periscope, as well. I'm gonna kind of deviate here. I want you to brainstorm with me for just a second. I have a friend who owns an automotive business. And he's in the luxury car business. And so we're talking some really beautiful cars. And I suggested to him to use Periscope. He could use it in so many different creative ways, right?

Jason: Yeah, I love it. I would do it based on the maintenance of these cars.

Buckley: Good.

Jason: Like how to clean the seats if you've got a stain, or what to check for, or I'm a member of a motorsports park where I can take my car anytime and go racing. And so it would be kind of cool if they actually went up there and showed how their cars were doing, and did it live and had people interact. Obviously, you have a passenger holding the phone disclaimer. But you know, there's so many different ways. Because it instantly connects with people, and people can engage with you. So people can ask questions. It took me – so I started doing it about two weeks ago. Every time I get on, I probably walk away with a thousand dollar bill in some way. Because I'm giving value to people.

And then maybe sometimes I'll do an offer at the end. But most of the time, people just reach out to me saying: hey, that was really cool and can you help me out here? And then I'll recommend one of my programs to them, or I have actually got a speaking gig from it where they want me to speak at their event and they'll pay me for that. So it just shows you that you're an authority. And it really kind of separates a lot of other people that – because there are some people that you've probably noticed on Periscope that have really good YouTube channels.

I mean their videos are really spot on. But they get on Periscope and they are so boring. And you really kind of see people's personality. Because people want to do business with people that they relate to. And so it allows you to really connect.

Buckley: Well, that's cool. I love that. Thanks for brainstorming with me. I'm actually going to make sure I send him this link to this podcast and say: come on, you gotta do some crazy things out there to actually gain attention in a noisy world. And I think this is one way to break up the monotony. Before we dive into the case study of how you created a seven figure business in 11 months, which I can't wait to hear, I want to discuss what's not working out there so our insiders don't waste time and money on dead ends.

I mean I realize what may not work for one client may actually work for another; I get that. But if you were to give advice that would universally apply to most businesses out there, what kind of things have you tried that are just not working any longer?

Jason: That's a great question. AdWords is really starting to kind of take a hit, right? And so let me kind of explain. So if you looked at kind of a pie of 100 percent, there's always like maybe 10 percent of the world actively looking for what you do right now; so it's a small percent. And a lot of people utilize search engine marketing and pay per click in order to do this. Where people are actually searching for a term and then finding you. So like back in the old days, we used to use like Atlanta Web Design or Atlanta Web Development, and then Solar Velocity would come up. And then there's about, let's say out of the other pieces of the pie, there's 30 percent that will never, ever do business with you.

And then there's a huge chunk in the middle that maybe are not ready for you, they don't know that they have a problem yet, or they don't know that you exist. And so you can work them in by educating them and being on mediums like Facebook, or Linked-In, or forums where you basically kind of bait them in to doing that. So short answer is don't worry so much of what the search engines are ranking you, or what you're paying pay per click on AdWords. Because that's going after a small percentage versus going after bigger pieces of the pie that you can reach.

Buckley: That's awesome.

Jason: The next thing I would tell you, if I'm not stumbling over my tongue, is doing content marketing in order to do lead generation.

I think that's a mistake. But let me kind of rephrase that. I think you should use landing pages in like Facebook, Pay per Click and other mediums of your ecosystem to drive to a landing page in order to gather the leads. And then walk them through a campaign that provides them value with a call to action.

And then, only after they go through all your campaigns that you set up or you bolt on, then add them to the blog where you're constantly sending them the weekly insights or your podcasts or any of that after they've gone through the campaigns. And use that as an excuse to reach back out to them.

Buckley: Wow. That's an interesting way of looking at it. Because I think most people just think: hey, people want content and they're doing a lot more research on their own today. I think the recent statistic shows that 62 percent of buyers are making up their minds to even buy from a company before they actually contact them. And so we obviously know there's tons of value out there in producing content. But I like that insight into making it even that much better.

Jason: Yeah. Now, don't get me wrong. You can get a lot of leads. I'm just saying what's the quickest path in order to increase your business, right? So you will get lead generation. I do get lead generation from my blog posts because they all have call to actions on it and all that. But it takes awhile for the search engines and people to find you. So it's literally like a six to 12 month investment in your time to see if it's going to work. Versus a week investment, or a couple day investment, in order to see if this particular content resonates and converts. And then you can start producing content after that.

Buckley: Yeah, that's awesome. That's a great insight. So all right, Jase. I'm excited to know how in the heck did you create a seven figure business in just 11 months while working less than 100 hours. We talked about this before and I'm excited to know how you did it. I'd love for you to get as specific as you would like to. But I gotta hear how you did it.

Jason: Yeah. Well, it's all about creating the rights systems, okay? So I'm a true believer that systems outperform talent all day long, right? It's not because I'm smarter, have more experience or any of that. You know, the biggest difference between, like, a seven figure, eight figure, nine figure business owner is really the systems that they have in place. And I'm not just talking about

technology. I'm talking about process, I'm talking about team, how they hire, how they fire, how they deliver their work, market; all that kind of different things.

It all comes down to the right system. And so I can go through some of the systems now. So really the first system, and a lot of us – especially when I jumped into being an agency owner, I kind of got pulled into it. So I didn't have that clarity of where I wanted to take it. I didn't know that I wanted to sell it one day. I didn't know what my clients looked like. I didn't know anything. I was just like reacting to the market. And I think a lot of us get into business where we just don't know what the end goal looks like. Or we didn't even know what the year goal looks like because we're reactive. And so you need to get that clarity. And you need to create kind of those short term goals that you can make decisions really quick on.

So like, let me give you an example. So every 90 days I come up with new 90 day goals. Goals on revenue, things I want to produce, things I want to hit, other things; tangible things I can say yes or no. Not like subjective, like I want to grow my company. Really? How do you know? You grew 1 percent. Are you happy versus 1,000 percent? And so you need to be specific there. Because then you can create your no list. Because this is one of the most important things: know what to say no to. Because if you say no to the wrong thing, you're saying no to the right thing. Because you can't do so much.

We can't manufacturer time and we'll never get time back. We don't have a time machine; I wish we did. So having that clarity of where you want to go, what you're going to hit, and then being able to adjust it really quick. So like every day, I look at it and go: does this get me closer to my 90 day goal? If yes, I do it. If no, I say no. And then the other thing, too, that I do, I structure my week into these kind of categories. So one day I'll have like a build and discover day – or like a discovery day, where I'm basically listening to people's podcasts, watching videos, I'm reading books – the little books that I read. I'm just trying to discover new things and stay ahead of the curve; so be proactive.

The other days I have are build days. This is where I'm building relationships, I'm building content. And then I have profit days. And the profit days are – and these are the majority of the week. So like Mondays are usually kind of build/discovery days. And then Tuesday through Thursday are profit days where I'm

promoting, I'm selling, I'm talking to people, I'm consulting with people; all that kind of stuff. And then Fridays are free days. I don't really do anything; and same with the weekends, right? And so it's kind of having that structure.

And that's all within kind of that clarity system. So that's kind of the first system, and that's kind of the foundation in order to move in the next level. And the next system I think everybody needs is to know what you're gonna specialize in. Because if you don't specialize in something or have a particular niche, how are you going to market to them? How are you going to create content? How are you going to do messaging? How can you become the authority? So when I started this, I said: look, I know digital agencies better than really anybody else out there, and I can give you actionable advice that's working and that kind of stuff. And so I said I'm going to specialize in this.

And I was able to quickly leverage kind of the success in the past and really go well past the competition that was already there. Specializing is key. And that's the other part of the foundation after you know the clarity. And then it all goes down to attacking the market. Knowing how do I reach these people? Where are they hanging out? What do I need to give to them? Who else can I partner with in order to leverage those relationships?

Buckley: And of course everything you're doing, your mindset is creating a system for everything so you can actually scale.

Jason: Exactly. Yeah. This is the only way to scale. There's a formula to it, and it's basically creating systems that work without you. But those two things are the foundation. And then you can come into, like, what's my system for creating content? I've kind of walked you through it, now. I have a really good system and that's been the past system for the past couple weeks. Now, as technology changes, I'll keep morphing on it. Like I literally – I would do the podcast. And I used to do my own show notes, which was crazy, right? I'm not the best writer.

And I said: dude, I can outsource that. And I found someone that I paid \$30.00 to do one show. I was like: this is awesome. Then I had an issue with getting more guests on. I was like: man. But I wanted to produce more content because at that time, I was producing a lot of content versus promoting.

Buckley: Yeah, of course.

Jason: There needs to be a better way. So I started recording my voice into my iPhone and sending that person a recording and saying: hey, treat this like a podcast and write it up and then I'll approve it, and then we'll promote it. So basically I created with a system that way. And then I started looking at how do I build this system? And so then I started looking at how do I build that ecosystem, both internal and external? What channels do I control and own; what channels do I not? And which channels do I need to be in? Like what Linked-In groups, or what Linked-In groups do I need to create? So I'm building that system around bringing people in. And then it all goes down to kind of delivery, right?

So how am I delivering it? How do I make sure I systemize this? And so when we were running the agency, we had a really good process, right? From onboarding new clients, like what happens, who else can do that. And I always asked myself: I don't want to do any of this so how can I use technology or delegate. And so right now, currently I'm using Infusionsoft. And that's a really good system that I use that enables me to deliver for the things that people buy as well as nurture people along. And that's probably one of the best tools that I've used that allowed me to work less than 80 hours a month.

But you know, in order to get there, you have to have all these systems set up. And then you need to know how you can help people. Like I think if you guys go to my site, and hopefully you guys – while I'm here, I will help people out no matter what, right? And my whole goal is to be significant, where I'm helping other people be successful. My goal is not to be successful. Success is just one way. That's just for me. But I want to make other people successful. And how I got into this business was I remember an agency owner. She was actually a competitor, a pretty big competitor.

And when I sold it, she reached out to me and she said: hey, I'm having troubles here; now you can help me that you've sold. I helped her out. She had great big success and I felt so significant and so happy, it's contagious. And I think if you guys do that, versus just trying to sell people what you think you can sell them, versus selling someone something that they actually need. I think that's a big part of how I was quickly able to grow.

And then the other part that almost everybody leaves off is take action.

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- Buckley: Yeah, you've actually got to hustle, huh?
- Jason: You gotta do it. There's not many people that can out-action me. So one of my mottos is: actions leads to trends in action. So when I know I need to do something, I literally will not stop until it is freakin' done.
- Buckley: Well, that's great insight, my friend. I really appreciate you sharing that with us. Now, if you were to create an agency all over again, and you had to hire just one person on your growth or marketing team, what would you be looking for today in them, and why?
- Jason: So for me, it's a little different. So whenever I would hire someone, it was based on who could complement my personality and my benefits and disadvantages, right? And so you gotta kind of really look at what you're really good at and what you're really bad at. So I was always really good at being a visionary and knowing where to go, and taking action there. But I was always really bad at attention to detail and follow up, and that kind of stuff. So if I had to do it all over again, I would hire a PM. Like my first employee I hired at the agency was a designer.
- And if I could do it over again, it would be a project manager because I really wanted that attention to detail and that follow up that that particular person would do. And so it really depends. Because every entrepreneur is different. Every person is different. So you've got to figure out what you're really good at and what you're really bad at, or what you don't really want to do and then hire that person for that. You don't have to hire your twin. If you hire your twin, you're screwed.
- Buckley: Yeah, exactly. Well Jase, a final question, would you mind leaving us with your best growth or marketing tip or piece of advice summed up in a sentence?
- Jason: That one word: action. That's really it. You cannot make a mistake taking action. Yes, some things may work better than others. But you've learned, right? So I always looked at kind of success and failure as success, you'll be happy for a short term; failure, you'll actually be smarter. And you'll never know either if you don't take action.
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Buckley: Well Jase, awesome conversation. I have a nasty habit of shortening people's names; I hope you don't mind.

Jason: A lot of people do.

Buckley: Yeah, I think there are a lot of great insights that you packed in here today, especially for agency owners or people looking to start a consulting company around digital marketing. So if you want to learn more about Jason's proving formula for literally growing this kind of business, a seven to eight figure agencies or consulting business and to generate leads, head on over to jasonswenk.com. And that's Swenk, S-W-E-N-K dot com. Or for a free video course or understanding how to generate leads every single day, go to generateleadseveryday.com.

He's gonna teach you that over the past 12 months, how he has helped his clients generate 25-plus leads per day, and convert 20 percent of the leads and opportunities to revenue. And that's a serious value, there. So Jason, I really appreciate you coming on today and sharing.

Jason: Definitely, man. Thanks for having me.

Buckley: All right, insiders. That is a wrap. Thank you so much for joining us on *Marketing in the Know* today. Now, head on over to beintheknow.co for the links and the show notes for this podcast. And while you're over there, grab the free version of my guide, *Ready, Set, Grow*. It took me a long time to pull together all this information, and I spent a pretty penny getting the look and feel just right. But feel free to grab your free copy. There's also an upgraded copy where it's the full version. Be happy if you downloaded that, as well. Thanks again, insiders, and I'll see you next Tuesday.

Male Speaker: We appreciate you joining us for this episode of *Marketing in the Know*. For show notes and a free version of *Ready, Set, Grow*, visit beintheknow.co. Thanks again, and we'll see you next Tuesday here on *Marketing in the Know*.

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