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TEAM OF COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

Summary. *The article substantiates that the problem of forming competitive management teams becomes relevant in modern conditions of an unstable environment with an emphasis on the priority of immaterial resources in the management of the company. According to the results of a comparative analysis of teams and groups as forms of company employees' association, the inexpediency of their identification was noted and it was substantiated that the team of employees differs from the group in a greater degree of cohesion, self-management, a variety of necessary competencies. It is proved that the source of the team's effectiveness is the orientation of its members to achieve a common goal compared to the orientation of group members to ensure a high individual result. The features of the implementation of the development stages of the team were analyzed, these include: the forming stage, the storming stage, the norming stage, the performing stage, the adjourning stage. Based on the analysis of the features of the implementation of the stages, the team development algorithm was specified and its interpretation was provided in the context of the competency-based approach. The article substantiates that at each of the stages of team development, a certain type of relationship between the team members arises and stabilizes, the result of which is the formation of such structures: organizational structure (model of formal distribution of powers, which is determined by the goals and objectives of the team); role-based structure*

(distribution of team roles between participants, which are determined by their subjective and objective competencies); communicative structure (a set of information links between group members, which are formed on the basis of its organizational and role-based structures). It is shown that the implementation of the competency-based approach in the proposed algorithm is ensured by the rational distribution of team roles, taking into account the subjective and objective competencies of team members. It was substantiated that the sources of the high efficiency of the work of teams of company employees are the creation of effective organizational, role-based and communicative structures, which requires determining a criterion for the effectiveness of their formation.

Key words: *team, employee, competency-based approach, organizational structure, role-based structure, communicative structure, competency.*

Statement of the problem. The success of entrepreneurial activities in the post-industrial economy requires new creatively different alternatives of provisions, which led to the emergence at the end of the last century of such a powerful direction of management as team management. The problem of forming competitive teams of employees gains new relevance in modern conditions of an unstable environment and focusing on the priority of immaterial resources in the management of modern companies. The need to research a team of employees in terms of a competency-based approach to personnel management is determined by the dependence of teamwork effectiveness on the diversity and development level of competencies of its participants.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. An active hike in scientific and practical research on team building took place in the 1970s when the need to find new effective mechanisms for organizing entrepreneurial activity was due to the aggravation of competitive conditions in world markets and the growing importance of the intellectual capital of companies. Among foreign scientists, the team principle of work performance was investigated by J.

Katzenbach and D. Smith [1], J. Newstrom and K. Davis [2], J. Persson and B. Schlichter [3], E. Sundstrom [4] and others. Among native scientists, K. S. Kalynets [5], V. O. Moskalenko [6], L. M. Karamushka [7], I. V. Shulzhenko [8] and others made a contribution to the development of the theoretical foundations of team management. With the development of theoretical advances in this area and the spread of the cohesion idea as the basis for increasing the productivity of a group of employees, team management finally took shape of an independent direction of management, which includes the search for shared values, public access to the information, recognition of teamwork, cooperation and partnership, collective responsibility for work results, development of the creative group and individual potentials, adaptation of organizations to sudden changes in the external environment [5]. Collective responsibility for work results as one of the key features of a team requires its members to possess a wide range of different competencies, making the team a subject of study of personnel management theory from the point of view of the competency-based approach. The problems of using the competency-based approach in team building mostly remain beyond vision of scientists, despite a sufficient number of improvements in the field of team management, in particular in the native scientific environment.

Formulation purposes of article. The defining role of team collaboration to ensure the competitiveness of a modern company is the reason for the need to study the basic characteristics and prerequisites for the formation of effective teams of employees from the point of view of the competency-based approach.

The main material. The key category of team management is a "team". In general, the team (from the Latin word *commando* – "to entrust", "to order") in the context of managing an organization is an association of like-minded persons who are guided by a common goal [6]. A team can be described as a group of employees who are highly qualified in a certain field and they are committed to the common goal of the functioning of their team, to achieve

which they act together, mutually coordinating their work. Equation of such forms of association of employees as a team and a group is erroneous. The team, in contrast to the simple association of employees into groups, is characterized by higher productivity, since it has a higher level of cohesion and orientation towards the achievement of a common goal. Comparison of teams and groups as forms of association of company employees (see Table 1) allows us to draw the following conclusions [5; 6; 8].

Table 1

Comparative analysis of teams and groups as forms of association of company employees

Characteristics	Group	Team
Basis for efficiency	Individual contribution of participants	Individual and group contribution of participants
Performance evaluation	Individual	Individual and group
Joining efforts and resources	Contextual, temporary	Permanent, system-related
Cohesion level	Aiming for maximization of own result	Aiming for maximization of own and group result
Responsibility	Personal based on individual reporting	Personal and joint based on self-control
Desirability	Meeting of the goals	Statement, adjustment, meeting of the goals
Management intervention	Standard Complete controllability and results control	Absence or minimal involvement Self-management or partial controllability
Source of effectiveness	Desire to maximize own contribution to achieving results	High level of independence, cohesion and professionalism
Complexity of the current tasks	Simple, repetitive, algorithm-driven tasks with few decision options	Complex, non-standard, unique tasks with many decision options
Need for a diversity of opinions and approaches	Low or absent	High or necessary
Factor of time	Urgency of problem solving is more important than quality	Quality of problem solving is more important than urgency
Characteristic of the result	Standard	Unique, new
Competence requirements	Professional knowledge, skills, experience	Professional knowledge, skills, experience Teamwork skills
Environmental uncertainty	Acceptable	High
Management functions	Concentrated in one formal leader	Pass from one team member to another

Source: compiled by the author

1. Achieving results in a team depend not only on the individual work of the participants but also on their contribution to ensuring group efficiency. Accordingly, the evaluation of the team efficiency is carried out both at the individual and the group level.

2. In a group the combination of efforts and resources is temporary, contextual in nature, whereas resources in a team are used, distributed and combined on a systematic, permanent basis.

3. As mentioned above, the level of team cohesion is much higher than the level of cohesion of the group, since teamwork is focused not only and not so much on ensuring a high individual result, but on achieving a common goal of functioning.

4. Participants are personally responsible for the results of work in the group based on the individual reports, whereas in the team, the self-control of the participants plays a key role.

5. Management intervention in the team's work is minimized compared to the level of control over the group's activities.

6. Teams are created to solve unique, complex, non-standard tasks, whereas to solve simpler, algorithm-driven tasks it is more expedient to create a group. The difference between the tasks assigned to the group and the team is the need for a variety of opinions and approaches to solve problems. Evidently, the more complex and non-standard the task is, the more significant is a large number of diverse expert opinions, the analysis and generalization of which will make it possible to make the best decision. Finally, the difference between the tasks of groups and teams lies in the importance of the time factor: for tasks assigned to groups, decision-making time is a major factor of efficiency, whereas the key value for the team tasks is the quality of the solution, not urgency.

7. The complexity and level of tasks standardization pose obvious requirements on the competencies that group and team members must possess.

In the first case, it is necessary that the participants possess highly specialized professional knowledge and experience, in the second case – a wide range of competencies in related fields matters. Also, subject to the creation of the team, such specific competence as the teamwork ability becomes very important, that is, the ability to set the achievement of the total result above individual achievements, to toe the line of a team game in favor of ensuring it. This explains, among other things, such a feature of the team as the absence of a permanent leader - all of its members consistently perform its functions.

8. Finally, there is a relationship between the degree of uncertainty of decision-making conditions, which are determined by the state of the internal and external environment of the company, and the expedience of creating a group or team. The more stable the operational environment, the more it is advisable to go with the formation of a group as a simpler form of employees association. The higher the degree of uncertainty in making management decisions, the more appropriate is the integration into teams.

Summarizing the above characteristics (see Table 1), we can assume that the team of employees differs from the group at a greater level of cohesion, self-management, a variety of necessary competencies. The source of the effectiveness of the team functioning is the orientation of the participants to achieve a common goal in comparison with the orientation of the group members to ensure a high individual result. Creation of teams is justified in conditions of a high level of uncertainty of the decision-making environment. The tasks assigned to the team are characterized by a high level of complexity, a plurality of decision options and the prevalence of quality requirements over urgency. This indicates that the formation of a team as a more complex model of professional cooperation should be justified since along with the obvious advantages, the team formation has a number of obvious difficulties. Thus, the creation of a team requires the concentration of real professionals of the highest level on a narrow work front and is associated with significant timeframes for

making decisions and financial costs for motivating participants, additional training, practical courses, etc.

The provision of such a defining feature as the differentiation of roles assumes particular importance in the context of observing the competency-based approach in team building. The solution to this problem should be considered taking into account the sequence of stages that any team goes through in its development. These stages include [5; 9; 10; 11]:

- forming stage (formation / adaptation / *forming*) – characterized by a high level of uncertainty regarding the purpose of the functioning of the team, its structure and distribution of powers;
- storming stage (disturbance / grouping and cooperation / *storming*) – begins when team members achieve a certain degree of coherence in terms of their activities and begin to consider themselves as a single dynamic structure in which the contribution of each participant promotes the achievement of a common functioning goal; at the same time, resistance to control and conflicts against the background of a struggle for leadership between individual members are possible;
- norming stage (normalization / normalization of activities / *normalizing*) – provides for the final stabilization of the team, which is manifested in fence-mending and demonstrating the ability of its members to work towards the common result;
- performing stage (fulfillment of tasks / project implementation / functioning / *performing*) – consists in fulfilling the tasks for which the team was created, and is the last development stage for a permanent team and a transitional stage for the dissolution of a team that worked temporarily;
- adjourning stage (dissolution, transformation, *transforming*) – provides for wrapping up activities or reorganizing a team.

In paper [5], it is noted that the differentiation of roles, namely the determination of the role structure of the team, occurs at the stage of disturbance

(storming stage). Our understanding is that the effective functioning of a team requires the determination of several types of its structures, either of which is essential to ensure the necessary results of its activities. Namely, each of the stages of the team functioning can correspond to the formation and stabilization of a certain type of relationship between team members that correspond to its organizational, role-based and communicative structure (Fig. 1).

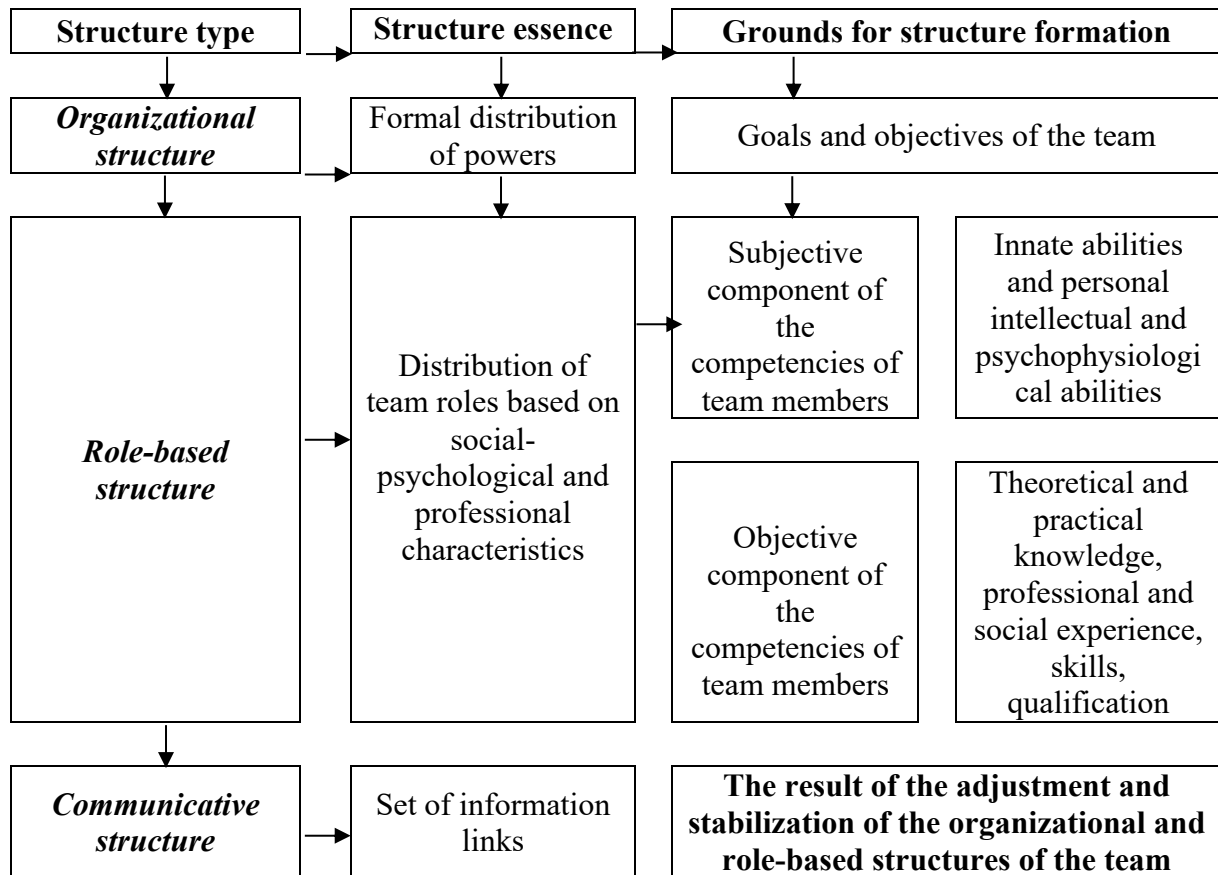


Fig. 1. Team structure in the context of competency-based approach

Source: developed by the author

The organizational management structure is traditionally understood as an ordered set of interconnected elements that are in a stable relationship with each other, ensuring their functioning and development as a whole. The structural units that form the organizational structure perform the functions of preparing, making and implementing management decisions and are hierarchically ordered in accordance with their role in the implementation of the goals of the

management system. The high-priority task is to determine the organizational structure of the team as a model of the formal distribution of powers among its members, so this determination occurs at the stage of team formation. The organizational structure of the team is formed when all members agree on the rights and obligations assigned to them from a formal point of view.

The role-based structure is no less important to ensure the effectiveness of the team than the formal organizational structure. Researchers quite reasonably note that the definition of the role-based structure is the main feature of the team and the fundamental component of its effectiveness, which is ensured when the optimal balance of roles is achieved [4; 11]. The need to determine the appropriate role-based structure is explained by the fact that not only the level of professional training of its participants is a priority in terms of achieving the goals of creating a team, but also the behavior model (team role) that they will demonstrate, its compliance with the behavioral standards of other members and the general guidelines of the team.

Team role – it is a set of targeted and interconnected behavioral acts of a person in a specific situation. The choice of the role by the team member and, accordingly, the overall role-based structure of the team depends on the definition of the social-psychological role that he/she performs. Let's pay attention to the key features of the definition of team roles by its participants.

For starters, the team role should be provided to the participant taking into account his/her social-psychological abilities, personal intellectual and psychophysiological abilities and professional characteristics. Consequently, performing the role of a leader by a participant who does not have the appropriate qualities and abilities from birth can reduce both the effectiveness of his/her activities and the effectiveness of teamwork. According to the definition of the term "competency" provided in the thesis work, it is understood as an integrated model of professional behavior, the effectiveness of which depends on a combination of subjective and objective components, we can consider that

the subjective component of his/her competence, which includes character traits, characteristics of the psychotype, settled mode of thinking, physical abilities of the employee determines the team role of the participant in large part.

In his paper, V. O. Moskalenko with good reason notes that the effectiveness of a team is determined by the compliance of its participants with both role requirements (personal skills and behavioral models) and professional standards (knowledge, experience, skills) [6, p. 83]. In terms of the competency-based approach, it can be claimed that the subjective and objective components of the participants' competencies determine the role-based structure of the team. The objective component of competencies depends on the acquired social and professional characteristics of the employee and includes theoretical and practical knowledge, professional and social experience, skills, qualifications, a value system, moral and motivational priorities, behavioural philosophy, etc.

The role-based structure, formed in accordance with the subjective and objective competencies of the participants, is the basis for the direct fulfillment of the tasks assigned to the team. If the role-based structure does not correspond to the goals and objectives of the team functioning, it is adjusted by clarifying the necessary competencies of its members, or by changing the composition of the group.

The desirability of the team roles distribution affects the effectiveness of the team's role-based structure, which is determined at the storming stage. The role-based structure of the team will be subject to adjustment if the differentiation of roles is not optimal or not all the necessary team roles are distributed. Differentiation of team roles is the basis for the differentiation of team members' competencies. But the results of the team as a form of association of employees with a high level of qualification and professionalism directly depends on their competencies.

The proper implementation of the tasks assigned to the team will be evidence of the effectiveness of the organizational and role-based structures. A

precondition for achieving this goal is the proper organization of information interaction among group members, which is expressed in the form of a communicative structure, namely the set of information links among group members. The communicative structure differs from the organizational one, since the latter shows purely formal relationships among team members, taking into account the professional responsibilities assigned to them, whereas an effective communicative structure must take into account informal ties due to the role-based structure of the team. If the team does not establish optimal interaction in terms of the number and structure of information links, the team's work will not be effective even if the competencies and roles of its participants correspond to the purpose of functioning.

As can be seen from the above, in the process of formation and functioning of a group, a sequential determination of such structures takes place:

- ***the organizational structure of the team*** – formal distribution of powers among team members, which ensures their functioning and development as a whole;
- ***the role-based structure of the team*** – distribution of team roles among participants, which are determined by their subjective and objective competencies;
- ***the communicative structure*** – the set of information links among group members, which are formed based on its organizational and role-based structures.

The above research results allow us to specify the team development algorithm and provide its interpretation in the context of the competency-based approach (Fig. 2).

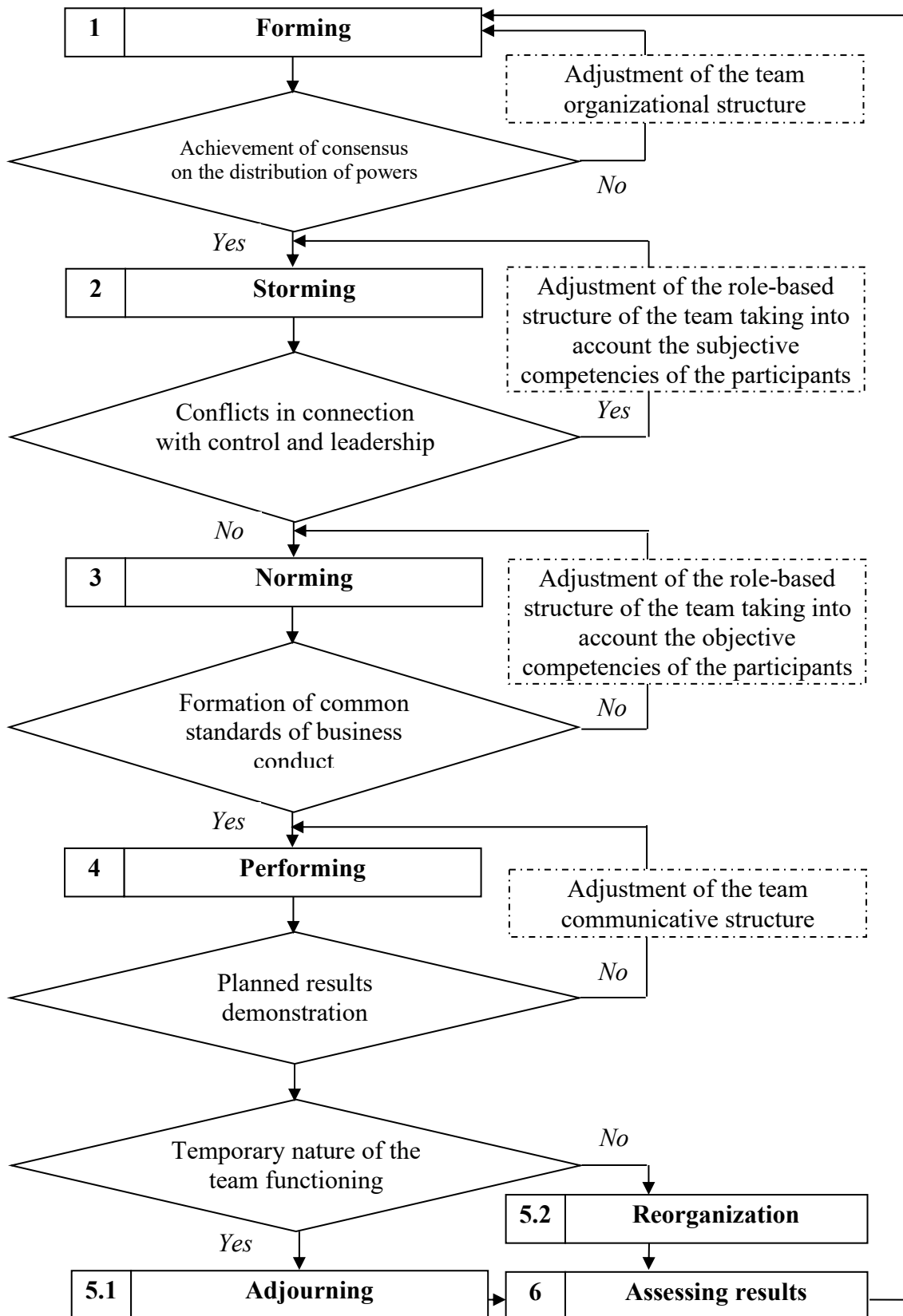


Fig. 2. Team development algorithm in the context of the competency-based approach

Source: developed by the author

In accordance with the above algorithm, a certain structure of the team or its elements stabilized at each stage of the team's development: organizational structure (forming stage); role-based structure (storming stage taking into account the subjective competencies of participants and norming stage taking into account the objective competencies of participants); communicative structure (performing stage). Inconformity of any of these structures with the goals of the team's functioning leads to the need for its adjustment.

Substantiation of the dependence of the role structure on the subjective and objective competencies of team members ensures that the defining features of the competency-based approach are taken into account in the proposed algorithm. Clarification of the traditional set of the team development stages [5; 9; 10] by adding a stage such as *assessing results* is also advisable. The decision to disband or reorganize the team can be made depending on the effectiveness of its functioning.

Insights from the study and perspectives for further research in this direction. Compliance with the competency-based approach is very important when forming teams of company employees. The team can solve complex cross-functional problems in company management and ensure the adoption of productive and timely management decisions through a combination of diverse competencies of high-quality specialists. The sources of high performance of teams of company employees are the creation of effective organizational, role-based and communicative structures. This requires the determination of a criterion for the effectiveness of their formation and determines the priorities for further scientific research in this direction.

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