

Liberating Your Soul:

Accessing Intuition and Creativity

By Richard Barrett

Ask any group of savvy CEO's to tell you the most valuable piece of information they could have, and they will say, "How to unleash innovation and creativity in my work place?" In a world where change is growing exponentially, fortunes are increasingly being won or lost on the ability of companies to anticipate trends and create products to meet these demands. But, in the 21st century unleashing innovation and creativity will not be sufficient to guarantee success. In the next century success will also hinge on whether, in the eyes of its employees and society-at-large, the company is a trusted member of the community, and a good global citizen.

Who you are is becoming just as important as what you sell. The values that corporations stand for are increasingly affecting their ability to hire the best people, and sell their products. There is an awakening awareness that there is a causal link between the rapidly escalating environmental and social issues and the philosophy of business. Governments and communities are recognizing that the pursuit of self-interest is not only destroying the planet's life support systems, but also the social fabric of society. The era of corporate autocracy is coming to an end. There is too much at stake for it to be otherwise.

Successful business leaders in the 21st century will need to find a dynamic balance between the interests of the corporation, the interest of the workers, and the interests of society as a whole. To achieve this goal they will need to take account of the shift in values that is taking place in society, and the growing demand for people to find meaning and purpose in their work. This calls for open, more transparent forms of corporate governance where individuals are encouraged and rewarded for developing their potential and making contributions that impact on the good of the whole. Such cultures can only be based on trust.

For the majority of organizations, developing such a culture will involve both personal and corporate transformation. Corporate cultures closely reflect the personalities of the chief executives or founders of a company. A shift in culture necessitates a shift in the personality of the leader. The two are inseparable. Corporate transformation is about personal transformation. It is about the willingness of the leadership to shift its philosophy from what's it for me to what's best for the common good. Taken to its full conclusion, such a shift produces a values-driven culture that liberates the corporate soul.

As the turn of the century approaches, we are beginning to see that values-driven organizations are topping the profitability and popularity polls. People are clamoring to work for organizations that care for them as a whole person, and give meaning and purpose to their lives by allowing them to express their creativity.

Research shows that we all have the ability to be exceptionally creative but the socialization process of parenting, school, and work drives this ability underground. Tests given to groups of children at ages 3-5, five years later at ages 8-10, and again, five years later at ages 13-15 showed that 98% of the 3-5 year olds scored in the genius category.

Five years later only 32% of these same children scored that high. Five years later it was down to 10%. The same test given to 200,000 adults over the age of 25 showed only 2% had genius level creativity. Our proficiency in expressing our own creativity drops when we learn to accept other peoples opinions, evaluations, and beliefs. The five- year-old creative genius is still lurking inside of every one of us, just waiting to break free.

The main reason that organizations are unable to mine the creative potential of their employees is that they fail to understand the importance of linking the well-being and survival of their employees to the well-being and survival of the company. When the link between effort and reward is severed, and you are paid to do, rather than think, there is no incentive to achieve optimal performance. It is only when people feel a direct link between their own contribution, the success of the company, and their personal reward, that they assume responsibility for the whole. When this happens they feel encouraged to fulfill their potential.

The challenge for corporations in the 21st century is to recognize that their greatest asset is their human capital and to create the type of nurturing environment that invites people to express their full creative potential. A precondition for this to happen will be sense of ownership and a shared vision and values. If people are going to contribute their deepest selves to their work, they will want to be stakeholders in the future of the organization. In other words, moral and economic democracy are essential components of a culture that nurtures innovation and creativity, and taps human potential.

Creativity and Survival

At a very basic level, history shows us that the most successful species on the planet have been those that have been able to continuously adapt to their changing environment.

Survival and expansion are about responding to the demands of the surrounding environment and adjusting accordingly. Evolution is not an exercise in planning, but a series of continuing adjustments, based on a constant and sensitive awareness to all the factors that affect survival. Being able to anticipate future changes in the external environment gives an organism an enormous advantage. At the human level, the most successful tribes, nations, and organizations-those that were able to survive and expand – have always been those that were open to new ideas, willing to experiment, and could anticipate trends. If we look back in history, we see a very clear link between innovation and creativity, and survival and expansion. This link becomes particularly important when competition is strongest.

When humanity was composed of hunter gatherers, innovation and creativity were limited. Innovation was concerned with survival-making spears, clubs, and bows and

arrows for killing animals and for protection, and tools for making clothing and cooking. When people settled the land, innovation and creativity shifted to farming techniques, irrigation, and the raising of livestock. For tens of thousands of years humanity existed with only the simplest of technologies.

Things began to change in the 14th and 15th centuries, when gunpowder was introduced into Europe and the printing press was invented. Both these technologies brought new dimensions to the art of survival and expansion. However, it was not until the industrial revolution that innovation and creativity really began to flourish. The inventions of this period (1750-1850), first in agricultural production, and then in industrial production, created dramatic changes in the social and economic structure. It marked the transition from a stable agricultural and trading society to a continuously changing industrial society. Advances in sanitation, technology and food distribution fueled a population explosion. Innovation and creativity followed suit.

The pace of change in innovation is clearly shown in the field of transportation. For thousands of years the wheel represented the most advanced form of engineering—the horse drawn cart, and the sailing boat represented the zenith of transportation innovation.

In the short span of 150 years we moved from horse drawn carriages, to railway steam engines and steam driven boats, to automobiles with internal combustion engines, to jetpropelled airplanes and space vehicles, and nuclear driven submarines.

The industrial revolution also marked a significant watershed in the mode of survival. Prior to this period, survival for the majority of the population was dependent on ownership or access to land. The vast majority of people grew their own food and livestock, and bartered, or traded, with others who did the same. Banks existed only for the few very rich. During the industrial revolution conditions for survival shifted from access to land to access to money. Hundreds of thousands of people left the land to work in factories in urban areas. It was quickly recognized that innovation and creativity were valuable assets in a consumer-based economy. Education became the springboard for technological innovation and creativity. Competition for survival in the industrial economy was no longer a question how many crops you could grow, but of how much knowledge you could bring to the work place. Survival shifted from manual skill to mind skill. Everyone was competing with one another for the mostly highly paid jobs. The most successful people were those who were educated and could use their minds. The ability to channel creativity into value producing initiatives was an important asset.

During World War II, survival in Europe and North America became everyone's concern. A new spate of creativity was unleashed that spawned a host of new technologies for the war effort, including radar, and new weapons and communications systems. During the two decades following the war, competition in the industrial economy was mostly national. Subsequently, in the 1970's improvements in transportation and communications technologies enabled companies from different countries to compete with one another in international markets.

By 1980, competition was becoming global. Survival was no longer a local issue. Workers in the USA were competing for jobs with workers in Mexico and China. And, workers in the United Kingdom were competing with workers in Europe and Japan. As competition for economic survival stepped up from national to international, and international to global, new depths of creativity and innovation were unleashed. As a consequence, we have seen more change in the last 50 years of western civilization than in the whole of the previous history of humanity.

Fostering innovation and creativity is now the number one business issue. In the words of Peter Drucker: "Every organization needs one core competence: innovation." Richard Gurin, president and CEO of Binney & Smith, Inc. agrees with Drucker: "After a long business career, I have become increasingly concerned that the basic problem gripping the American workplace is ... the crisis of creativity." Walt Disney considered creativity to be so important that in the late 1920's he paid his creative staff more than he paid himself.

So far, we have been talking about innovation and creativity in the context of survival. Creativity also shows up throughout history as a medium of expression of beauty, passion, and joy. A vast amount of people's creative energy goes into art, music and dance. Those who are not talented in these traditional areas, bring their creative potential to work with them. Unfortunately, it is hardly ever drawn upon. Due to pervasive control cultures that operate on the assumption that the boss knows best, businesses rarely recognize the creative potential of their staff. Only when people are given the freedom to express themselves in their work can this resource be tapped. This will be the number one challenge for business in the 21st century-to find ways of nurturing innovation and creativity of staff. In a world of intensified global competition, innovation, knowledge, and creativity will become the most sought after of business commodities. Every worker has these abilities, but they only fully exploit them when they find meaning in their work.

Creativity and Trust

Just as there is a direct relationship between survival, and innovation, there is also a direct relationship between trust and creativity. The opposite of trust is control. As shown in figure 2, creativity can only blossom in a culture of trust and freedom. A culture of control stifles innovation and creativity through fear. When there is fear in the work place, people are reluctant to speak up. They are not willing to express their wild ideas in a critical environment. When fear abounds, creativity shuts down. The work place needs creativity and people need to express their creativity if they are to feel good about themselves. John Kao, a long-term lecturer on creativity and entrepreneurship at Harvard Business School says, "the choice for the future is stark-create or fail."

There is another aspect to developing creativity which goes beyond trust, rewards, and well-being. It is the aspect of soul. Creativity is one of the most important modes of expression of the soul. Intuition is another. When people work for companies that have values they resonate with, and are given work which excites them to the core of their being, they tap into the deepest levels of their creativity. They are accessing the wisdom

and intuition of their soul. Work at this level feels like play, and rewards become secondary considerations. Your work becomes your mission and your life fills with meaning and purpose. Rarely do we find corporations that understand and cultivate this level of commitment from their staff. Those that do will become the visionary companies of the future. They will be unleashing a potential for creativity that cannot be surpassed. Thomas J. Watson, Jr., former IBM Chief Executive writes in his 1963 booklet, *A Business and its Beliefs*: "I believe the real difference between success and failure in a corporation can be very often traced to the question of how well the organization brings out the great energies and talents of its people."

We have reached a point where hundreds of millions of people are no longer content with work that only satisfies their material needs. They want work that also satisfies their spiritual needs. When this balance does not exist, people become disaffected by their jobs. More and more people are finding themselves in that situation. According to a recent survey of more than 800 mid-career executives, unhappiness and dissatisfaction with work is at a 40-year high. Four out of ten of those interviewed hated what they do. This proportion is double that surveyed four decades ago. When people are as disenfranchised as this with their work, they do the minimum. They are not prepared to voluntarily go the extra mile, because their hearts and souls are not in what they do.

Successful organizations in the 21st century will have very different cultures to those of the 20th century. They will be values-driven. They will pursue a broad range of goals that support the economic, mental, social/emotional and spiritual health of the organization and its employees. They will encourage employees to take personal responsibility for the success of the business. They will create a working environment that nurtures innovation and creativity. They will encourage employees to develop their natural talents. And, above all, they will be in competition with other companies to become trusted members of the community and the best global citizens. They will be doing all these things because this is what it will take to achieve long lasting financial success.

Seven Levels of Corporate Consciousness

Corporate cultures can be categorized into seven levels.

- o **Survival consciousness:** Totally focused on profits. An autocratic, uncaring and fear- driven culture that attempts to control everything. (corporate survival).
- o **Relationship consciousness:** Benevolent paternalistic culture that values control, order, discipline and prestige/image. Loyalty between workers is stronger than company loyalty. Lacking in flexibility and entrepreneurship.
- o **Self-esteem consciousness:** Desire to be the biggest or the best. Hierarchical power structure. Search for order, efficiency, competition, productivity, quality and excellence (corporate fitness). A strong results orientation.
- o **Transformation:** Self-discovery, vision, mission, and awareness of values.

- Beginning of a focus on equality and diversity, participation and empowerment, and need to develop a balanced needs scorecard. Shift from control to trust, fear to truth, privilege to equality, and fragmentation to unity.
- o **Organization consciousness:** Focus on integrity, trust, creativity, intuition, innovation, freedom, flexibility and generosity. Search to create conditions for cohesion, community spirit, and mutual accountability. Recognition of the importance of strategic alliances with suppliers and customers.(corporate well being) .
 - o **Community consciousness:** Voluntary environmental and social audits. Support to local community and local businesses. Search for long-term sustainability. Concern over becoming a strong member of the community. (community relations)
 - o **Global/Society consciousness:** Contribution to resolving social, human rights, and environmental issues beyond local community. Focus on ethics. Search for truth and wisdom (global/society contribution).

Transformation

Successful organizations in the 21st century will be those that complete their transformation and live out values that support the common good (three higher states of consciousness). Corporations that cannot move beyond self-interest (three lower states of consciousness) will find themselves struggling to survive. The transformation from the lower to the higher states of consciousness involves liberating the corporate soul. It demands enlightened leadership-CEOs and executives who have completed their own transformation.

The fundamental change that occurs during corporate transformation is a shift in attitude from "What's in it for us (me)?" to "What's best for the common good?"-a shift from "self-esteem consciousness" to "organizational" consciousness. This involves moving from an exclusive focus on the pursuit of profit to the broader pursuit of a group of objectives that are instrumental in meeting shareholder, worker, customer, supplier, community, and societal needs. In order to measure progress in all these areas, I have developed a balanced needs scorecard based on the seven levels of corporate consciousness.

Balance and Values in Practice

In their book *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras identify eighteen visionary companies that achieved a growth in shareholder value 15 times greater than the general market between 1926 and 1990. Their research shows that all these companies had a strong core ideology (values + purpose), and that contrary to business school doctrine, "maximizing shareholder wealth" was not the dominant driving force of these visionary companies.

They have tended to pursue a cluster of objectives, of which making money is only one and not necessarily the primary one. Visionary companies had objectives that transcended purely economic considerations. Their visionary companies include: 3M, American Express, Boeing, Citicorp, Ford, General Electric, Hewlett Packard, IBM,

Johnson & Johnson, Marriott, Merck, Motorola, Nordstrom, Philip Morris, Proctor & Gamble, Sony, Wal-Mart, and Walt Disney.

When I analyzed the mission statements of the eighteen visionary companies in *Built to Last*, I found that sixteen had three or more objectives. The majority of their objectives (44%) concerned well-being, and only 20% concerned corporate fitness. Surprisingly only 6% of the objectives mentioned corporate survival (profits or shareholder value).

What is remarkable is that all 18 companies had objectives concerning corporate wellbeing, whereas 13 had objectives relating to corporate fitness, and only 6 to corporate survival.

The conclusion I reach, indeed, one of the main messages of my new book, *Liberating the Corporate Soul*, is that an organization's performance is directly related to its ability to tap into its human potential. For the average person, work is one of the most important ways he or she gives expression to who they are, and find their fulfillment. When a group of people are committed to a common purpose, are given responsibility, and at the same time feel supported and trusted, then, and only then, will they tap their deepest potential. Emotional energy, not mental energy, is the true motivator of the creativity of the human spirit.

Emotional energy has its source in what people believe and value. Values give meaning to people's lives. When there is an alignment between an organization's values and its employees values then people respond by fulfilling their potential and tapping their deepest levels of creativity.

Mind Productivity

There is an important difference between how organizations in the lower and upper hierarchy view productivity. The distinction lies between the corporate body (physical productivity and efficiency) and the corporate mind (mind productivity and efficiency). Productivity in the lower hierarchy is measured by corporate fitness-state of the body whereas, productivity in the upper hierarchy is measured by corporate well-being-state of the mind. Corporate fitness focuses on creating conditions that improve the performance of the corporate body-reduced costs, increased speed, and improved quality. Corporate well-being focuses on creating conditions that improve the performance of the corporate mind. This is currently the most neglected part of organizational performance.

Before the industrial revolution the majority of people earned their living from physical labor in agriculture. Only a very small educated minority earned their living by using their minds. As the industrial revolution took hold, automation rapidly reduced the need for farm laborers. Between 1880 and 1920 the number of man hours needed to harvest an acre of wheatland fell from more than 20 to 6. Many of those displaced from the farms took their labor to the growing number of factories. As factories became more and more automated a new breed workers was required-those with technology skills, who

could use their minds. The advent of computer technology also increased the demand for knowledge workers. As we reach the end of the 20th century, very few people in the USA earn their living from pure physical labor. Many jobs now demand a greater level of mind skill than body skill. After thousands of years of measuring productivity in terms of direct physical labor-man hours-we have switched in less than one hundred years to measuring work in terms of physical/technology labor. The 20 man hours that went into harvesting an acre of wheat in 1880 was pure physical energy. The 6 man hours needed to harvest the wheatfield in 1920 involved a mixture of physical, technological, and mental energy.

We are moving out of the age of physical productivity, into the age of mind productivity. This shift is being driven by technology, and higher levels of competition. Innovation, creativity, and intuition, are rapidly becoming more sort after than pure intelligence or learning. The major difference between physical/technological productivity, and mind productivity is that the physical/technological productivity can be easily purchased in the market place, and is relatively independent on the culture of the environment in which the work takes place.

Mind productivity, on the other hand, is highly conditioned by the culture of the work place, the vision and purpose of the work, the alignment of personal and corporate values, and the meaning the work brings to the individual's life. Mind productivity is also conditioned by what is taking place in an individual's life outside of work. When an individual is preoccupied with family issues or changes that are taking place in their life, such as a divorce or a death in the family, mind productivity goes down. Mind productivity is also affected by constant meetings or travel. Long quiet moments are needed for the mind to switch into its full potential.

Organizations that recognize the importance of innovation, creativity, and intuition create environments where the conditions for mind productivity are optimized. They create work places based on trust with a community spirit, they care for and nurture their employees by providing free or low cost, health and medical facilities, kindergartens, and the services of social workers and chaplains. Some even go so far as employing people to do necessary errands and chores for employees. Why do all these things matter?

They matter because of energy. Every person has a certain amount of energy available to them every day. They can spend that energy externally on being physically productive (going to meetings, making presentations etc.), or internally on being mentally productive. When people are worried, overly stressed or fearful about their futures or their families, the amount of internal energy they devote to mind productivity, decreases. Corporate well-being is about caring for and nurturing workers, so that mind productivity is maximized-that is the goal. When a person's inner motivations align with their work, and their values align with the corporation's, then they can achieve high levels of innovation, creativity, and intuition.

These benefits are more difficult to attain if the consciousness of a worker falls in the lower hierarchy of consciousness. They can become so preoccupied with satisfying their survival, relationship, or self-esteem needs that they are never able to fully realize mind

productivity. Much of their energies in the work place are wasted on seeking political advantage, trying to find satisfying relationships, or living in fear. For this reason, it is important for organizations to offer to their staff courses in personal growth and development. Those that successfully complete such courses are potential sources of further mind productivity. Ideally, an organization would benefit from employing only workers that have completed their personal transformation and have achieved a state of consciousness where their primary concern is for the common good.

The Problems of Hierarchy

The traditional hierarchical model of management was conceived in an era where the work force was regarded as machines. Staff were not paid to think-that was the prerogative of management-they were paid for their labor. This attitude is exemplified in the following story.

One of the greatest conundrums for early seafarers was how to measure longitude. Travels north and south could easily be measured by the position of the sun and stars. Travels east and west were more difficult to measure. They depended on time and volatile factors, such as winds, currents and tides. In 1714, the British Parliament passed the Longitude Act offering a prize of a king's ransom for a practicable and useful means of determining longitude. One night in 1707, returning from naval skirmishes with the French Mediterranean force, Admiral Sir Cloudisley, found his fleet trapped in fog. Fearing the ships might founder on coastal rocks he asked his navigators to do their best to estimate where they were. A consensus was reached that they were safely west of Île d'Ouessant, off the Brittany peninsula. To their horror they found they had misplaced their longitude. They found themselves heading straight onto the rocky shores of the Scilly Isles. At least four warships immediately foundered and were lost. Only two men survived. One of them was Sir Cloudisley.

The night before, he had been approached by a sailor who claimed to have kept his own reckoning of the fleet's location during the whole of the difficult voyage. It took great courage for the seaman to come forth with this information since subversive navigation by an inferior was forbidden in the Royal Navy. He was so sure of his point, however, that he was ready to risk his neck. And, that is what he did. Sir Cloudisley had him hanged on the spot. If the Admiral had listened the shipwreck might have been avoided. Whilst the hanging of subordinates is no longer tolerated, the story has significant relevance to the current state of our organizations.

The basis of the hierarchical model is that management thinks and workers perform. The corporate body is split in two separate parts, but the workers are not-everyone comes to work with a body and a mind. However, only a very small number of workers are allowed to use their minds-these are the managers. The rest of the workers are asked to perform tasks with their bodies, with as little use as possible of their minds. The tasks that involve the mind are strictly controlled by procedures and rules. Everything is done to make sure the worker doesn't have to think. The use of the mind for the purpose of innovation and creativity is the reserved privilege of the managers. The only real purpose this serves is to feed the egos of the managers-the more you are reliant on your

mind to earn your living the more respect you earn. The higher you get in the system, the more minds you control. This is the true meaning of power-being able to have control over people's minds. Only in the case of the hierarchical model of business the control is negative. The majority of our business systems are set up to prevent people from using their minds. They become unconscious processes that control what we do by setting limits and prescribing standardized ways of doing things-it is called bureaucracy, and is the opposite of entrepreneurship. The result is boredom, frustration, and lack of commitment. The problem is simple-people are not being asked to use their minds.

Engaging the Soul

When you engage people's minds you open up the possibility of also engaging their souls.

Soul is the deepest aspect of mind and the part from which creativity, intuition, caring, compassion, meaning and purpose flow. When the soul is engaged the passion and vitality of spirit is released.

Successful organizations in the 21st century will be the one's that understand how to tap the minds, bodies and spirits of their staff. They will be inventing free form flexible organizational structures that value participation and empower people to think. Without traditional hierarchies academic qualifications will become less and less important. What will be important, is your ability to tap into your own creativity and to support the common good. The majority of innovations and creative solutions will come from the workers rather than the managers. The managers main role will be to mine the potential of the minds of the workers. Senior managers will be tasked with providing a working environment that nurtures and cares for the minds, bodies, and spirits of staff.

Most individuals believe that they are not truly creative. The truth is just the opposite. We are all have the capacity to lead truly creative lives. We just have to learn how to tap into it. Here are six principles that will enable you experience the power of opening to your own unique creativity.

Accept your inherent creativity: we are all born with amazing creative talents. All you have to do is uncover them.

- o **Connect with your soul:** it from this deep level of consciousness that your creativity and intuition spring.
- o **Find your passion:** know what it is that brings you your greatest joy. Whatever excites you, and gives your life a sense of meaning, is where you need to be focusing your energies. In "A Guide to Liberating Your Soul," I describe the gift in the following way:
"Every soul brings a unique gift. The [gift] is often called the soul's purpose. The scope of the purpose may be large or small; it may involve supporting another human being, or assisting thousands. Whatever it is, it will involve some form of service to the human race or planet Earth. You may not be specifically aware of your soul's purpose, but you will probably recognize that there are certain activities from which you derive immense satisfaction. If you want to find out your soul's purpose, search out those experiences that give

you the most satisfaction. Whatever it is that gives you an inner sense of fulfillment will be closely linked to your soul's purpose. Very often we know our soul's purpose, but do not want to acknowledge it. This is because it does not correspond with our chosen career, or the identity we have carefully cultivated for ourselves. For those well established in their careers, the pathway to soul consciousness can sometimes mean making painful choices. You may feel the need to give up your career and start anew. The form and size of the gift you bring is not important. What is important is that you give your gift unconditionally. The offering of this gift is the service you bring to humanity."

- o **Let go of all "limitations" from the past:** the only thing stopping you from fulfilling your potential are your fear-based beliefs that you accepted as true when you were growing up. Let go of knowledge-be open and commit to learning. Make your life an open canvas and begin to paint.
- o **Focus on the vision for your future:** your vision of the future is at the same time the your direction of travel, and your destination. Make it bold and great. Accept in your mind that it is totally possible.
- o **Commit to the vision and your purpose:** This beautiful quote by Goethe describes what happens when you commit to your vision and purpose: "Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no [human] could have dreamed would have come his way."

Finding your soul purpose, and living it out, is the greatest gift you can give yourself. Choosing to follow your passion floods your life with meaning. Once you discover this new way of being, you become totally self-motivated. You no longer have a career. Your work becomes your mission. There is nothing else for you to do. You never retire from your mission, once you have discovered it, it is with you always. You are driven by your intuition-the knowledge of the soul. When you listen to your intuition and commit to fulfilling your purpose, you unleash creative and synchronistic energies that move you forward on your mission.

I can attest, from several years of experience, to the truth of this statement. So much so, that I learned to eliminate the word "impossible" from my life. Once I committed to being an Architect of Global Transformation, all manner of unforeseen circumstances and unplanned meetings have moved me forward. The recognition of this unseen support brings a deep sense of meaning and connectedness to my life. Kahlil Gibran, the Prophet, summarized it beautifully when he wrote, "Work is love made visible." If you have not already done so, it is time for you to get in touch with your purpose and your inherent creativity and make your work, your love made visible.

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