

The Changing Climate of Plumbing Products

By Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

When I was growing up, it was common to hear the refrain, “never talk about religion and politics.” This sage advice – at least in part – was to establish guard rails around deeply held beliefs and to help keep conversations civil. It also had the added benefit of minimizing conflict with others who might hold different beliefs. Over the past several decades, those guard rails have largely been removed. Daily

conversations about politics, religion, and a host of other potentially divisive topics fuel the daily news, daytime talk shows, evening television punditry, and newspaper journalism across the country.

There is enormous relief when the conversations turn away from our differences to focus on solving some of our bigger, shared problems. Lead in water. Workforce development. Opportunistic pathogens. Engines of economic growth. Water and energy efficiency. Product innovation. Low flow water rates. Business risks and opportunities.

With these issues and opportunities in mind, you are invited to be part of the delegations from the plumbing products manufacturing community visiting our elected leaders on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on May 7-8, and in Sacramento, Calif., on May 13-14. We need your voice. PMI’s Legislative Forums and Fly-Ins offer you first-hand engagement with your elected officials and opportunities to talk shop with those wielding daily influence over the laws of the land. You’ll experience a half-day briefing on the issues at both events and enjoy visits in the national and California capitals under the thoughtful guidance of PMI’s skilled legislative advocates, **Stephanie Salmon** and **Jerry Desmond**. In Washington, D.C., there’s a saying that “if you aren’t at the table, then more likely you’ll be on the menu.” One of the goals of PMI’s annual pilgrimage to visit with elected leaders is to assure they hear your voice and are aware of your concerns. Nobody is better positioned to deliver the industry’s perspective than you.

As a management trade association, PMI is the beneficiary of a smart and savvy group of professionals – women and men – who volunteer their time and generously share their ideas, insights, and expertise with one another. It’s that collaboration that makes all the difference. Your association’s success in achieving key industry goals and pursuing our industry’s strategic future rely on your participation and contributions. There are opportunities aplenty to be part of the action and we welcome your engagement at whatever level suits your time, energy and interests. Speaking of opportunity, I am pleased to announce that **Michael Martinez** of Delta Faucet Company will join the PMI Board of Directors this month. Michael previously served as co-chair of the PMI Advocacy and Government Affairs Committee. We are all looking forward to his continued contributions.

Spring has been an especially busy time this year with the 2019 Kitchen and Bath Show (KBIS) and the International Builders Show (IBS) in Las Vegas, and the global ISH 2019 Exposition in Frankfurt, Germany. The three events attract over 300,000 people, 3,100 exhibitors, and hundreds of media representatives to more than 100 acres of plumbing and building products, alongside residential and commercial HVAC systems. While the scale and scope of these shows tends to be a bit overwhelming, they also excel at showcasing the latest innovations and exploring new possibilities. Whether it’s a Bluetooth-controlled shower experience, the trend of bringing the spa into everyday bathing and showering, voice-activated fittings, or the simple whimsy of show-

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Getting to Know Suzan Somo, NSF International

Current title and employer: General Manager – Water Systems Plumbing Products, NSF International

My first job: I worked at a daycare facility supervising pre-school-age children. It was a great experience engaging with such fascinating young minds. The kids definitely kept me on my toes as you never knew what they were going to do (or say) from one moment to the next!

Length of time in the plumbing products certification industry: I've been with NSF International for nearly 11 years.

My proudest career achievement: Taking on the general manager position for our plumbing products business just seven months ago has been my proudest career achievement thus far. When I started with NSF, I was an account manager in our NSF/ANSI Standard 14 (Plastic Piping System Components and Related Materials) group, handling the certification needs of our customers. I've taken on several other positions within NSF along the way, leading me to my current role. I now have the privilege to oversee the success of our plumbing products business globally. It really is a dream come true.

I started a career testing and certifying plumbing products because: I've always had an interest and passion for public health and safety. Working for an organization that has a direct impact in helping to protect food, water, consumer products and the environment aligns closely with my passions and the positive influence I hope to make in this world.

If I weren't in the plumbing products certification industry: I'd likely have a career in forensic science. I have a deep interest in both the sciences and criminal/civil law.

What do you hope to accomplish through your PMI membership and involvement? Our PMI membership allows our organization to stay on top of industry issues that directly impact the products we test and certify.

What I'm currently reading: I'm rereading the classic "To Kill a Mockingbird" by **Harper Lee**.

My hidden professional talent: I have a high degree of emotional intelligence. I believe it is key to both personal and professional success.



Suzan Somo

Best advice I ever received: Stay humble and stay true to yourself.

My favorite movie: I'm not sure that I have a favorite, but one movie that

gets to me every single time is "Beaches." My husband likes to make fun of me because I'm typically a sobbing mess by the end of it!

When I face a challenge at work (or in life): I accept that the challenge is happening, make a game plan, keep my cool, and work through the problem.

About my family: I have been married to my wonderful husband, **Wasim**, for nearly 17 years and have two beautiful children, **Aiden** (age 14) and **Estella** (age 13).

In my spare time: I love going on long hikes with my family. It's such a great time to take a step back from our busy schedules in order to reconnect and strengthen our bond.

Show Your PMI Pride! Enter the Drawing for a PMI Store Prize

By reading the April Ripple Effect and this particular article, you have qualified for the April drawing to win a \$50 credit for the PMI Store! To confirm your entry, send a brief email identifying "PMI Pride" as the drawing password to PMI Association Manager **Jodi Stuhrberg** at jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org.

You also can qualify for the drawing in these other ways:

- **Participate in a PMI committee conference call or educational offering**
- **Share or comment on a PMI social media message**
- **Join the LinkedIn PMI Group page or follow @SafePlumbing on Twitter**
- **Participate in any other kind of PMI activity**

Your participation in these activities will automatically enter you into the drawing.

Thanks for being an engaged PMI member. PMI will choose a winner every month as part of this PMI Pride Member Engagement Campaign!



Work Hard, Play Hard: 2019 PMI Conference, St. Pete's Beach

By Genevieve Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Each year, the PMI Conference is held in a beautiful location in the U.S. After enjoying the warm and sunny weather at the Wigwam Resort outside of Phoenix last year, the 2019 PMI Conference, too, will be nothing short of paradise.

To be held at the elegant Don CeSar Hotel in St. Pete's Beach, Fla., from Nov. 4–7, the 2019 PMI Conference will welcome its members and other attendees to a lovely resort city on a barrier island known for its beaches.

The legendary “Pink Palace” Don CeSar Hotel is a 1928 Gatsby-era landmark rich with glamorous history; celebrities such as **Clarence Darrow** and **F. Scott Fitzgerald** have stayed at the Don CeSar. During World War II, the U.S. Army used the hotel as a hospital, and then a center for airmen returning from the conflict.

In addition to the world-class spa and vibrant food available at the Don CeSar, there are plenty of local off-campus activities for you to enjoy before or after your conference activities. Whatever kind of activity you're looking for – be it relaxing or exhilarating – there are plenty to choose from. At night, there are craft beer bars and New York-style dance clubs. During the day, aside from exploring the city's award-winning beaches, the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum displays postcards and other artifacts in a church built in 1917. Play on one of St. Petersburg's highly



rated golf courses, and explore the area's wildlife on the area's hiking and biking trails or while snorkeling at Egmont Key.

If you enjoy walking through art galleries, consider visiting the Salvador Dali Museum. This museum houses the largest collection of Dali's works outside of Europe. Downtown, there is also the Museum of Fine Arts, which exhibits artwork spanning 4,000 years, including African art, European paintings and American photography. Once you're done exploring artwork, head over to The Sunken Gardens – four acres of botanical gardens located in the historic Old Northeast neighborhood. These gardens are one of the oldest roadside tourist attractions in the U.S., as they have existed for more than a century.

If you are considering taking a drive somewhere else nearby, there is remarkable architecture that you can enjoy along the way. The Bob Graham Sunshine Skyway Bridge – or simply “The Skyway” – is a cable-stayed bridge spanning the Lower Tampa Bay connecting St. Petersburg to Terra Ceia – the home of a 1,932-acre preserve, which also offers fishing and hiking. Last but not least, end your day in John's Pass Village, a quaint and charming historic fishing village with shops, bars and fine dining.

With so much to do in between collaborating and networking at the PMI Conference, 2019's St. Pete's Beach destination is truly exceptional. We look forward to seeing you there!



Earth Day Sets Stage to Help Protect Water Systems

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

This year's Earth Day, taking place on April 22, serves as a reminder for everyone – from individuals to large corporations – that making even small earth-friendly choices can create a big impact on protecting our water systems and the environment.

PMI and its members work daily to assure and advocate for safe drinking water from the tap. Drinking tap water can significantly reduce plastic waste from bottled water, which is on the rise. Data by Beverage Marketing Inc. showed that bottled water sales rose 7.9% in 2015, on top of a 7% increase in 2014, and a September 2018 MarketWatch article stated that bottled water consumption continues to almost double annually.

In addition, while both bottled and tap water must meet federal safety standards, bottled water sells for up to 1,000 times the price of tap water, according to research from the World Wildlife Fund International. The American Water Works Association's DrinkTap.org website provides more information about bottled and tap water.

Plastic waste a growing threat to public health

Plastic waste is a growing threat to public health, affecting the world's oceans, lakes, rivers and drinking water supplies, according to the Earth Day website. It lists the following facts about microplastics and drinking water:

- Of the tested water samples from major metropolitan areas around the world, 83% were contaminated with plastic fibers.
- About 1 million tons of tiny plastic fibers are released into wastewater every year.
- No regulatory limits exist on the levels of microplastics in bottled water.

- The Earth Day Network (EDN), the group leading Earth Day worldwide, has created a multi-year campaign to end plastic pollution with tools and resources to help:
- “Plastic Pollution Primer and Action Toolkit” tinyurl.com/y6rv6rgw.
- Plastic pollution calculator (earthday.org/plastic-calculator) to learn how many plastic items individuals and companies consume and discard every year.
- Coordination of volunteer cleanups of waterways, green spaces and urban landscapes across the U.S. for #EarthDay2019. To participate, visit the EDN “Find a Cleanup” web page (cleanup.earthday.org/findacleanup) for a listing of events in many U.S. cities.

PMI members and others also can share their individual or company plans on Earth Day social media by posting to the EDN Facebook page (facebook.com/EarthDayNetwork) and tweeting on Twitter (twitter.com/EarthDayNetwork).



In addition, Earth Day provides a great platform for plumbing manufacturing companies and other businesses to make pledges and announce their overall sustainability efforts. Activities can include collaborating on local environmental projects, voting for leaders committed to protect the public and the environment, and sharing acts of green to help educate and inspire others to join the Earth Day movement.

More than 1 billion people in 192 countries take part in Earth Day, a global annual event and the largest civic-focused day of action in the world, according to the Earth Day website. To learn more, go to earthday.org/earthday.

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erheads and faucets shaped like flowers, human lips or a dozen other geometric forms, it's all, well – much like the hundreds of voice-activated mirrors on display – very illuminating.

One of the cornerstones of PMI's strategy is improving and delivering member value. At its core, PMI's mission is to make your company – our industry – more successful and more profitable. We do that by delivering tools and resources to inform and enhance your decision-making. That's one of the reasons we

introduced the PMI Economic Impact Study, PMI On-Demand E-Learning Systems, and the new quarterly PMI Market Outlook. It's also why we re-vamped the PMI website and introduced a new framework for PMI's premier annual gathering of the members. Like this past year's event in Litchfield Park, the PMI Conference being held in St. Pete's Beach, Fla., this coming November will introduce a whole new level of innovative and dynamic presentations sure to educate, inform, entertain and enlighten. You will definitely want to be there.

New Courses, Outlook Report Boost PMI Member Benefits

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Providing valuable resources and meaningful information to members continues to be a top priority for PMI. Membership enhancements for 2019 include the recently created codes and standards online training course and the new PMI Market Outlook report. Other educational resources, including helpful online workshops and webinars, are currently being developed.

Several PMI members have participated in the first new on-demand e-learning course, “Part 1: A Primer on Standards, Regulations, Codes and Conformity Assessment.” It provides members and their teams with practical information on product standards and model codes used in the plumbing industry; various regulations that impact the industry; and conformity assessment, third-party certification agencies and marks of conformity. Members can register for the course at tinyurl.com/y2rcxxua.

As a complement to the Part 1 primer, “Part II: Standards and Topics in

Plumbing” will be available at the end of April. It is designed for those in technical plumbing manufacturing roles who have some experience and would like a deeper dive into standards and other important topics, including:

- Backflow and its causes, and the standards that pertain to backflow prevention
- Standards that regulate water temperature and the various valves used
- Minimum water quality standards and conservation requirements
- Accessible design and the fundamental provisions for design and installation
- Regulations affecting manufactured housing
- Legionella and water supply systems

Another new membership benefit, the PMI Market Outlook report (tinyurl.com/y3fhovta), is a result of collaboration between PMI members and staff that provides key economic trend indicators specific to markets in which member companies operate. The report delivers insights on business cycles, retail sales, residential and commercial building starts, building material costs, wholesale trade, and business conditions across the plumbing manufacturing industry and the U.S. economy. A recently developed webinar (tinyurl.com/yyyf3qt6) gives PMI members advice on how to use the report.

PMI members can look forward to additional value-added programs coming soon, including the PMI Member Needs Assessment, an Emerging Leaders’ Summit, more opportunities for on-demand e-learning, and enhancements to regular PMI activities, such as the PMI Conference.

Call for Abstracts Issued for 7th EWTS; Deadline Oct. 1

A call for abstracts for the 7th biannual Emerging Water Technology Symposium (EWTS), to be held from May 12-13, 2020, in San Antonio, can be downloaded from the EWTS website at tinyurl.com/y5dyfb4x. The deadline for submitting an abstract is Oct. 1, 2019.

The symposium will be co-convened by the American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE), the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE), the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), and Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI), in cooperation with the World Plumbing Council (WPC).

“Abstracts will be welcomed on topics including the water-energy nexus, water

efficiency, water quality, alternate water sources, 3-D modeling for plumbing and mechanical applications, water reuse, water infrastructure, sustainability, mitigating opportunistic pathogens, and more,” said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**, on behalf of the leadership of the four associations organizing the conference (**Billy Smith**, ASPE; **Mary Ann Dickinson**, AWE; and **GP Russ Chaney**, IAPMO). “EWTS is an international symposium and we encourage interested parties from around the globe to submit abstracts,” he emphasized.

EWTS provides an opportunity for experts to present new ideas and approaches, emerging technologies coming to market, innovative green plumbing

and mechanical concepts, and more. Professionals from the manufacturing, engineering, plumbing and mechanical, and water utility industries participate.

“Over the years, EWTS has grown into a much-anticipated forum that provides presenters with the opportunity to increase the visibility of their ideas, products, services and organizations,” Stackpole said. “PMI is looking forward to collaborating with ASPE, AWE and IAPMO to develop a program and networking event that will be beneficial to both presenters and professionals wishing to have an outstanding professional development experience.”

For further information, please contact **Jodi Stuhrberg** at (847) 481-5500 or jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org.

PMI Preps for May D.C. and Sacramento Fly-Ins

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Every year, PMI provides its members with the opportunity to be briefed on important legislative and regulatory issues, as well as the chance to schedule appointments with lawmakers representing their districts. This year, the Washington, D.C., Legislative Forum and Fly-In will happen on May 7-8, with the Sacramento Legislative Forum and Fly-In scheduled about a week later on May 13-14.

PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole** emphasizes that both meetings are open to all PMI members, not only senior executives. “Anyone from a PMI member company whose job entails having an understanding of legislative and regulatory issues or knowing the policymakers behind them will benefit from these events,” he explained. “This year will be especially interesting, given what’s on the table in Washington and Sacramento.”

D.C. experts and policymakers to provide a road map

PMI Federal Government Affairs Consultant **Stephanie Salmon** is putting the final touches on an exciting day-and-a-half program in the nation’s capital. On the afternoon of May 7, experts on the highest priority issues for



Legislative Forums and Fly-Ins



PMI members will brief them on the latest intelligence. Topics to be discussed will include tariffs, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), infrastructure, WaterSense, the upcoming revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule, status on the home building sector, workforce issues, and more.

Invited experts will come from organizations such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and others. The first day will wrap up with a rooftop reception with key allied groups, officials from the U.S. Department of Commerce and EPA’s Office of WaterSense.

On the second day, after starting the day enjoying a breakfast headlined by a member of Congress, PMI members will have scheduled appointments with representatives and staff on Capitol Hill.

Since the 116th Congress began its work earlier this year, momentum behind a comprehensive infrastructure bill has continued to build in both congressional chambers, Salmon said. House Democratic leaders have made it very clear that they want to see draft legislation by early summer. PMI members will have the opportunity to learn more about the components of the package and to highlight the importance of continued investment in water infrastructure.

She also noted that a trade agreement with China is being negotiated, with

President **Donald Trump** indicating no rush to lift the tariffs on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods, including dozens of plumbing products, until Beijing complies with any trade deal that is reached. PMI will continue to urge the administration to reach a deal with China that includes full and immediate removal of tariffs on both sides and provides clarity for American businesses and consumers.

California often a first-mover on policymaking

In California, statewide or local issues include maintaining current water-efficiency standards, the use of recycled water, the replacement of non-compliant water fixtures in commercial buildings, Proposition 65, personal information obtained by product usage, lead in school water, lead in plumbing materials, packaging reform, housing development, and more. Because California is often a first-mover on policymaking, these discussions and issues often have national relevance. The day-and-a-half agenda and events are being planned by PMI California Government Affairs Consultant **Jerry Desmond**.

Generally, the Sacramento fly-in includes meetings with policymakers involved with legislation relating to plumbing manufacturing and with staff at regulatory agencies such as California Building Standards Commission, California Department of Housing and Community Development, California Department of Water Resources, and California Energy Commission.



Register Today!

To register for either fly-in and to receive hotel recommendations, contact PMI Association Manager **Jodi Stuhrberg** at jstuhrberg@safeplumbing.org or 847-481-5500.

PMI Communications Trending Up – Here’s How You Can Help

By Ray Valek, *PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.*

A review of 2018 PMI communications analytics shows the PMI website, social media, publications and media outreach trending in the right direction. This article presents PMI members and allies with an overview of these analytics and ideas for how you can help strengthen PMI communications efforts.

Analytics overview

PMI’s safep plumbing.org website continues to attract viewers interested in issues relating to the plumbing manufacturing industry while being an improved and valuable resource for PMI members. In 2018, the website received 134,743 views, with pages relating to lead in plumbing, product markings, Ripple Effect, the importance of manufacturing, and Legionella among the most viewed.

Other popular pages – of specific interest to PMI members wishing to engage in PMI activities – included the events calendar, PMI Conference, and the members-only dashboard – a new feature in 2018. Overall, members-only pages achieved the highest number of page views ever, with more than 8,000 views.

The website has a strong “tail,” which means that the total views of pages ranking below the top 200 pages equals a higher number than the views from the top 200 pages. This means that all of the content included on pages not in the top 200 pages, such as individual calendar items and Ripple Effect stories, amount to most of the website’s viewed content. There are more than 1,800 pages on the website, per Google Analytics.

PMI’s publications – Ripple Effect and Inside My PMI – as well as emailed promotions, continue to be the best way for PMI to reach its members with participation opportunities, news and business intelligence. The PMI com-

munications team continues to refine the publications to add to their visual appeal and to address the latest trends.

PMI’s social media, particularly Twitter and LinkedIn, continue to gain followers and help the association to disperse its messages to a broad audience and build the PMI brand. PMI’s @SafePlumbing Twitter feed now has 3,000-plus followers. The PMI LinkedIn Group page has more than 2,000 members. Going forward, more reminders about members-only engagement opportunities will be posted on this page, so be sure to become a member of this group. Also, according to PMI strategy, the PMI communications team has revived the PMI Facebook page to help build the PMI brand and will be using the Safe Plumbing pages on Facebook and LinkedIn to communicate consumer-oriented content.

PMI’s media outreach. In 2018, PMI gained more than 125 significant media mentions in outlets including the Wall Street Journal, Associated Press and plumbing and water industry trade media including Water Deeply, PHCP Pros, Plumbing Engineer, PHC News, Wholesaler, Contractor, Water Quality Products, Plumbing and Mechanical, Supply House Times, Kitchen and Bath Business, Kitchen and Bath Design, Mechanical Hub, Plumbing Perspective and Water and Wastes Digest. For the first time, PMI organized a media panel for the 2018 PMI Conference that featured prominent trade and consumer media editors.

Here’s how you can help

1. Opt-in to receiving PMI email communication and encourage others within your company to register as a PMI member and to opt-in to receive PMI emails. This will help PMI push member participation deeper into our member companies. For help,

contact Jodi Stuhrberg, PMI association manager, jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org, 847-481-5500

2. Send your company’s news releases and feel free to submit stories ideas or content for Ripple Effect to Ray Valek, ray@valekco.com.
3. Follow our social media platforms and comment on, like and share our messages. Click and follow today!

- Twitter twitter.com/safep plumbing
- LinkedIn Company linkedin.com/company/plumbing-manufacturers-international
- LinkedIn PMI Group linkedin.com/groups/1812215
- LinkedIn Safe Plumbing Group linkedin.com/groups/4196725
- PMI Facebook - facebook.com/pmihome
- Safe Plumbing Facebook facebook.com/SafePlumbing
- YouTube youtube.com/user/SafePlumbing

More than ever, successful communication is two-way. Your participation in social media and other PMI communications initiatives makes both your association and your company more visible in the marketplace of ideas.

Shiny and New Employees: How Educators Are Meeting Industry Demand

By Genevieve Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

It is no news to those working in the manufacturing field that there is a shortage of talent. To attract the next generation of workers needed to fill production-level jobs to the executive positions spearheading manufacturing companies, the word needs to be spread regarding the abundance of careers available in the manufacturing industry.

When thinking of manufacturing, the untrained mind tends to go toward factory labor and other less “flashy” jobs. However, manufacturing has a much greater diversity of occupations, and many people don’t know that.

Luckily, higher and secondary educators are becoming more aware of just how misunderstood the manufacturing field is. To coincide with existing positions in the workforce, the field is beginning to benefit from increased interest from students. And some major additions and overhauls to existing programs and facilities have taken place in the past several months as educators works with manufacturers to re-invent the field and encourage individuals looking for career opportunities to enter it.

LIXIL Americas supports a four-year apprenticeship program for high school students

One major question many companies are asking is, “What is the best way we can attract new talent?” PMI member LIXIL Americas is supporting a four-year apprenticeship program for high school students interested in plumbing careers. The program is offered through the Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School (SCVTS) in Bridgewater Township, N.J., Contractor magazine reports (tinyurl.com/y24wuazh).



Read More Online

Read the rest of this article on our new PMI@Work blog: safeplumbing.org/communications/pmiblog

PMI@Work explores efforts to develop the manufacturing workforce for the future, particularly among PMI members. If you’d like to submit a post for consideration, send a brief synopsis of what you’d like to write about to PMI communications team member **Ray Valek** at ray@valekco.com.



Completing this program puts students on a fast-track to applying for a Master Plumber license, which yields an earning potential of \$115,000 for a plumber in New Jersey. SCVTS is just one of the seven vocational and technical schools LIXIL has supported in New Jersey over the past year. LIXIL also regularly hosts groups of local STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) students at its Research and Design Center in Piscataway, where they receive a full day of mentorship, the Contractor article said.

Support of the apprenticeship program is part of a larger effort by LIXIL Americas to create awareness of the importance of plumbers, and how their contributions ensure safe drinking water and proper sanitation to communities across America.

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