

AYOUB'S PULSE

Internal Newsletter

BUILDING CONSISTENCY AND ELEVATING EXECUTION

FOCUS, COACHING, AND EXECUTION

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

NAVIGATING TRANSITION AND MAINTAINING CONTROL



Ayoub's president Amir Hosh was recognized among BIV's Forty Under 40 honourees at the awards gala on February 19, 2026, at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

To my team,

In the last edition, I asked you to pay attention to the Pocketbook. Since then, I've added an additional concept that I believe is essential to it. A new version is coming to you soon — Pocket Code 2.0 — and the new concept is called Magnetic Presence.

I've been thinking a lot about why some stores do great even when a few operational pieces aren't perfect. The more I reflect on the stores I've seen — ours and many others in retail — the more I see one powerful common factor: the energy of the store.

Stores that keep improving have Magnetic Presence. You feel it the second you walk in. The team is smiling, the pace is strong, and the atmosphere feels alive — like people genuinely want to be there. Customers feel it instantly, and it becomes a reason they return again and again.

And we've all experienced the opposite too: a retail experience where it feels like the staff want to be anywhere but there — angry faces, low energy, no warmth. Personally, I hate going to places like that, and I avoid them even if it means driving farther. That will never be who we are.

This is why I believe something very clearly: any leader in our company must be able to create Magnetic Presence wherever they go — not only when things are easy, but especially when they're hard.

Many of you carry this naturally. Hamza and Iqra, Adel and Zaid are great examples — and there are many more of you who bring this spark consistently.



The real question is: how do we teach it to others, and how do we protect it in the toughest moments? I believe it starts with one core ingredient: warmth.

In her book *The Charisma Myth*, Olivia Fox Cabane explains that warmth is a foundation of charisma — and one of the drivers of warmth is self-compassion. That caught my attention because for years I struggled with it myself. I worked myself to the bone and beat myself up for not doing enough or for making mistakes. That “never enough” feeling pushed me forward — but the consequence was an unhealthy version of drive.

Later, I learned something that changed everything: you can play at a high level, stay hungry, and stay driven — without putting yourself through emotional torture. For me, that shift started with self-compassion.

This is only our second edition of the newsletter, and in this one I want to bring attention to self-compassion.

Continued on 03

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Continued from 02

In the Pocketbook, we talk about compassion as a value — but we don't talk enough about self-compassion.

And the truth is: if we don't respect and care for ourselves, what we project — even unconsciously — won't be our best. Self-compassion strengthens warmth. Warmth strengthens leadership. And leadership sets the tone for the entire store.

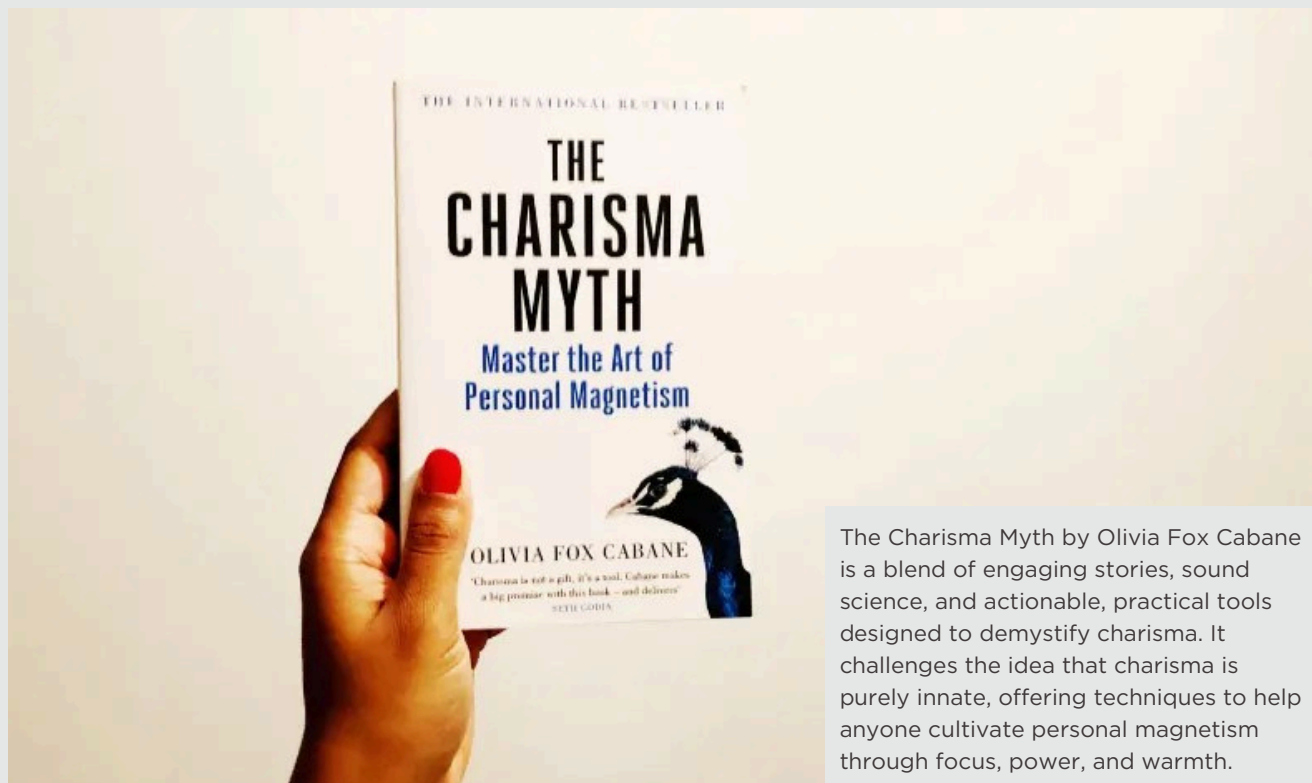
For many of us, this will be a journey, not a destination. I want all of you to reflect on it this quarter. I can't wait to see your growth — and to hear the stories that come from it in the months and years ahead.

This quarter, we'll also be working on exciting priorities. We'll get ourselves ready to execute the Nutribowl project, we'll double down on chocolate production, and we'll keep pushing toward our vision of becoming the Starbucks of nuts — by staying committed to personal and professional growth.

And at the same time, we're facing major challenges: a weakening economy, supply issues, and interruptions across the supply chain. Many food businesses are failing but we are thriving. Make no mistake — these are not ordinary times. But we are no ordinary company. We've proven, time and time again, our resilience and our ability to get through tough periods — not as a business trying to survive, but as a company building something bigger: a small business with the mindset and discipline to become a major player.

The journey never stops — and neither do we.

AMIR HOSH



The Charisma Myth by Olivia Fox Cabane is a blend of engaging stories, sound science, and actionable, practical tools designed to demystify charisma. It challenges the idea that charisma is purely innate, offering techniques to help anyone cultivate personal magnetism through focus, power, and warmth.

CORRESPONDENCE



ALAN SALIH



GILLIAN BRADY



EDYTA ALFAWICKA



KAY MENDEZ

This issue of Ayoub's Pulse was shaped by insights and reporting from teams across the business. The perspectives shared here reflect ongoing work in operations, marketing, merchandising, inventory, and leadership.

NAVIGATING TRANSITION AND MAINTAINING CONTROL

How operations balanced cost discipline, growth pockets, and supply uncertainty.

BY ALAN SALIH



December and the start of Q1 reflected both external pressure and internal transition across the business.

“Lots of macro events are happening locally in Canada and internationally. We are navigating the market to see how we can focus on the key areas and make sure it’s not affecting us.”

Across the store network, performance remained steady overall, with variation by location.

“When it comes to specific metrics, we focus on overall sales and sales compared to last year, while also looking at targets to see how we’re performing. Overall, we finished pretty much flat compared to last year as a company.”

Some locations outperformed the broader trend.

“We had some really good stories — Park Royal saw double-digit growth, and we also saw good growth at our Denman and Kitsilano locations.”



KEY METRICS THAT MATTERED

Overall sales finished flat year-over-year across the company, with stronger performance in select locations. Park Royal delivered double-digit growth, while Denman and Kitsilano also saw positive gains. Bakery performance stood out, with sales growing nearly 7% compared to the same period last year.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES IN PRACTICE

The shift from Q4 into Q1 brought a reset in operational discipline, particularly around inventory and ordering.

“Operationally, we went through a transition — moving back to leading our own inventory ordering, which was adjusted during Q4 for the Christmas period.”

Teams returned to tighter control over purchasing and stock levels.

“We are very careful with how much we order. We’re not over-ordering and not sitting on too much product.”

Cost control was a central focus, supported by more disciplined ordering behavior.

“We did not over-order during February, which we historically do. This helped us manage cost of goods and keep it aligned with our cash flow targets.”

EXECUTION UNDER PRESSURE

Despite external uncertainty, teams adapted quickly during key seasonal moments.

“During Persian New Year, we had a decent week — about 10 days — even with a lot of uncertainty from the macro events we mentioned earlier. The teams really pulled it together last minute.”

Execution required rapid coordination across functions.

“We had a lot of last-minute deliveries and emergency shipments. The bakery worked double shifts for a couple of days to make sure we could produce and push more items.”

Performance did not fully match last year but remained strong given the conditions.

“We were slightly down compared to last year, but overall it was still a success.”

Customer response to bakery remained a positive signal.

“Our bakery grew almost 7% compared to last year, which is a strong indicator of customer demand and our position in the market.”



“

THE NOWRUZ POP-UP IN ACTION, TESTING FORMAT, STORYTELLING, AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT.

INITIATIVES AND TESTING

The team tested new formats through a Nowruz pop-up.

“We had a successful pop-up led by Nana, with support from Karla, Hamza, Edyta, Zaid, and other team members.”

Held at Holt Renfrew at Pacific Centre from March 20 to 22, the activation introduced customers to the Nowruz experience and provided exposure in a new retail environment.

“It was a good opportunity to see what that type of event looks like for us, and we received good feedback from both the organizers and customers.”

SOP UPDATES AND STANDARDIZATION

Work is underway to improve consistency across store execution through SOP updates.

“We are reviewing our SOPs, especially the training manual, and updating them as we go.”

A key initiative focuses on standardizing in-store communication materials.

“We are in the process of unifying all price tags across retail stores and centralizing them through head office.”

The goal is consistency in presentation.

“This will improve consistency in layout, wording, and how price tags look across all stores.”

STORE-LEVEL EXECUTION HIGHLIGHT

One team stood out for initiative and execution early in the quarter.

“Huge shoutout to Coquitlam, and specifically **Mohammad**. He joined us late February or early March and immediately came in with strong initiative and clear targets.”

Impact was immediate across multiple areas.

“He reorganized resources and made a strong impact on merchandising and overall execution.”

COST PERFORMANCE AND SUPPLY CHAIN NOTES

Cost control improved compared to last year, supported by more disciplined purchasing.

“We have very strong control over cost of goods compared to last year.”

Supply chain risk remains an active area of focus.

“With the situation happening in Iraq, we are re-evaluating options in case we cannot bring products from Iran, even in the short term.”

Product sourcing is already shifting in response.

“We are transitioning to California pistachios as we run out of our current stock from Iran.”

FOCUS, COACHING, AND EXECUTION

BY ALAN SALIH

Leadership this quarter was structured around clear monthly focus areas, with managers aligned through regular assessments and applied execution in-store. “During our monthly meetings we basically create an area we highlight where we can focus on, and we do an assessment with all the managers.”

One of the primary areas of focus was sampling strategy, where teams tested two distinct approaches.

“In the first quarter the areas that we put a focus on was sampling strategy, basically between two different variations — one of them strategic sampling and the second option was open sampling.”

The objective was to measure impact on customer engagement and conversion.

“We can assume the results and see which gives us a better conversion on the samples given out.”

Alongside this, leadership development also focused on improving margin awareness and profitability at the store level.

“We did one of our training assessments to see if we had to increase margin and profitability in our stores, where that would come from.”

This work helped guide managers toward more intentional product and merchandising decisions.

“This helps to focus management on which products have higher margins, which products they can move more, and how they can use merchandising strategies to place products in areas where it can increase sales.”

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

One leader stood out for their impact on team development and onboarding.

“I want to give a highlight to **Hamza** — he onboarded two brand new sales associates and did fairly good in their onboarding.”

The impact was visible early in performance and engagement.

“He did an excellent job enriching them with the company values and culture and what we are focusing on.”

Even as new team members, both associates quickly aligned with key priorities.

“You can see their energy and commitment to executing areas where we have a focus on such as Google review and loyalty sign-up — even though they are brand new associates they are excelling at those.”

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

The next phase of leadership development will include a shift toward more structured, in-person training.



“We are going to our first in-person management meeting on April 21st.”

The session will take place at the warehouse and focus on deeper training and alignment.

“This will be at our warehouse in Langley, which will be a really good opportunity — a six-hour session that will be longer and more focused.”

Beyond training, the session will also provide broader operational visibility.

“It’s also an opportunity for us to all get together and for the management team to see the warehouse and the back-end operations.”

The team is also evolving with new additions at the leadership level. Nader has joined as VP of Revenue, and Navid has joined as Purchasing Manager, following Kay’s departure. These additions are expected to support continued operational and customer experience improvements.

BEHAVIOURAL FOCUS FOR THE MONTH

As traffic begins to slow, leadership focus shifts toward elevating customer experience.

“We are transitioning to the slower season in the next couple of months, which means we need to really elevate our customer experience expectations and delivery.”

Leaders are expected to reinforce fundamentals through active coaching.

“This is a chance for everyone — whether you’re new or have been with us for one or two years — to revisit training, do role plays, assess strengths and weaknesses, and retrain on weaker areas.”

The goal is to maximize every interaction.

“So we can really improve that and optimize every single customer that walks in.”

There will also be a renewed emphasis on outdoor sampling execution as conditions shift.

“We need to focus on setting up outdoor sampling as the weather is getting nicer and there is more traffic on the streets, specifically during peak hours on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.”

MARKETING: DRIVING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS CHANNELS

BY GILLIAN BRADY

Marketing this period focused on maintaining engagement across both in-store and online channels, with an emphasis on repeat visits, product discovery, and seasonal relevance during a slower post-holiday period.

Email remained a primary driver, with campaigns structured around targeted sends and follow-ups to engaged non-openers, helping extend reach and improve conversion across key initiatives.

CAMPAIGNS AND PERFORMANCE

Several campaigns contributed to both in-store traffic and online revenue:

Nuts & Nibbles (In-Store Reminder - Email)

A targeted email campaign to in-store subscribers reminded customers of the Nuts & Nibbles assortment, supported by a follow-up to engaged non-openers.

January In-Store Promotion (Email)

A January promotion campaign supported foot traffic during the post-holiday slowdown, helping maintain in-store engagement and incremental revenue while keeping Ayoub's top of mind.

New Arrivals (Online Campaign)

An online campaign introducing new products with strong engagement from welcome and active subscriber segments.

Nuts & Nibbles (Online Launch - Email)

The online launch of Nuts & Nibbles, successfully translated an in-store concept into a strong digital performer.

SEASONAL CAMPAIGNS

Seasonal marketing focused on Valentine's Day gifting and product launches, driving timely engagement.

Valentine's Campaign (Online - Email)

A campaign introducing seasonal gifting products, supported by follow-up sends to extend reach and maintain momentum.

Valentine's Product Launch (Online - WhatsApp)

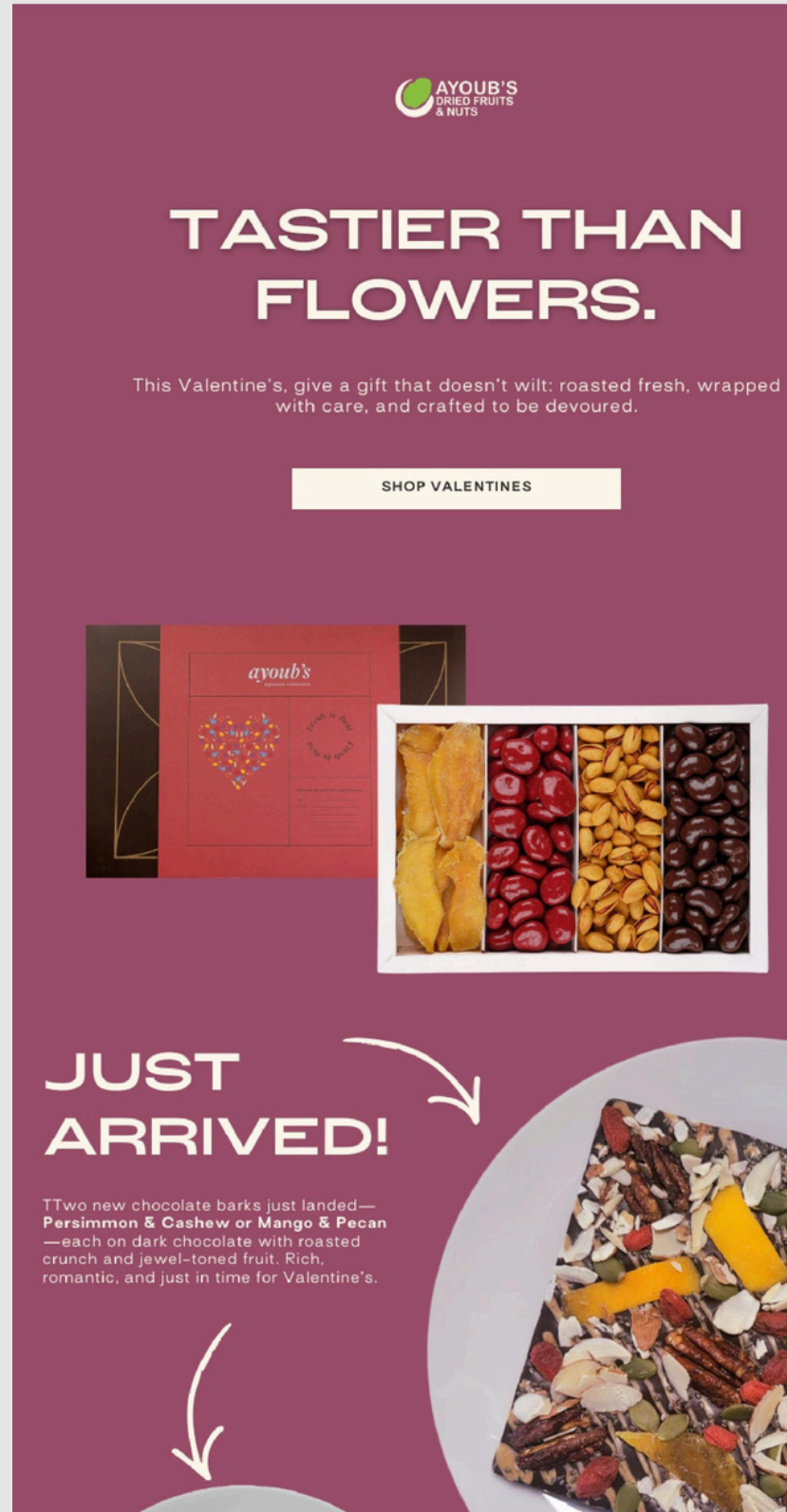
A WhatsApp message is planned to support the launch of a new Valentine's product and drive gifting interest.

CONTINUITY AND FOLLOW-UPS

Ongoing campaign optimization continued through reminder and follow-up sends.

NUTS & NIBBLES ONLINE REMINDER (EMAIL)

A reminder campaign supported continued product awareness and early online engagement through targeted follow-ups.



AYOUB'S
DRIED FRUITS
& NUTS

TASTIER THAN FLOWERS.

This Valentine's, give a gift that doesn't wilt: roasted fresh, wrapped with care, and crafted to be devoured.

[SHOP VALENTINES](#)



JUST ARRIVED!

Two new chocolate barks just landed—**Persimmon & Cashew** or **Mango & Pecan**—each on dark chocolate with roasted crunch and jewel-toned fruit. Rich, romantic, and just in time for Valentine's.

MERCHANDISING: BUILDING CONSISTENCY AND ELEVATING EXECUTION

BY EDYTA ALFAWICKA



Merchandising this quarter focused on building consistency across locations, supported by the development of a Master Visual Merchandising Guideline (MVMG). The guideline outlines merchandising standards, seasonal planning, and product presentation, serving as an evolving tool for store execution. In parallel, updates at the Coquitlam location improved layout and displays, creating a more elevated in-store experience.

SEASONAL EXECUTION

Seasonal campaigns reflected progress toward greater consistency and brand alignment.

Valentine's Day marked a step forward, with more unified merchandising and window displays across all locations. For Nowruz, teams delivered more understated but refined presentations, featuring bakery items and traditional sweets while maintaining cultural authenticity.

The Holt Renfrew pop-up was another key highlight, with a focused and elevated product presentation that translated well into a premium retail environment.

TOOLS AND STANDARDIZATION

To support execution at the store level, a Visual Merchandising Checklist was introduced.

The tool provides clear guidance for maintaining:

- Brand consistency
- High presentation standards
- Sales-driven merchandising practices

It is designed as a practical reference for daily use and ongoing store optimization.

LOOKING AHEAD AND FOCUS

Work will continue on store enhancements, with a focus on improving layout, accessibility, and overall customer experience, alongside ongoing product development and packaging initiatives aligned with seasonal moments.

Store teams are expected to maintain clean, fully stocked, and impactful displays, while strengthening cross-merchandising across key categories. Feature displays should align with seasonal promotions, with all promotional areas remaining consistent and easy to shop.

With Mother's Day and Father's Day approaching, emphasis will be placed on presentation, gifting solutions, and cohesive storytelling to support engagement and sales.

INVENTORY: SUPPLY PRESSURES AND SOURCING SHIFTS

KAY MENDEZ

Inventory this month reflected external pressure following Persian New Year, with ongoing supply challenges tied to geopolitical conditions.

“After the Persian New Year and with the current political situation we are out of stock and tight on many items that we import from Iran.”

Several key products are currently unavailable, including Persian figs, prompting a shift toward alternative sourcing.

“We are out of stock of Persian figs and I have been looking at other countries who have a similar fig to the Persian one. I have requested samples that I will get this week.”

Efforts are underway to identify replacement suppliers, though progress has been limited.

“We are currently looking at other countries for some of the products that we usually bring from Iran but it has been hard.”

TOP-SELLING PRODUCTS

Despite supply challenges, several categories continued to perform strongly.

“Persian figs was the top seller from the dried fruit category. Sunflower seeds and all the nuts. From the sweet category Baslogh was a top seller.”

STOCKOUTS AND SUPPLY GAPS

Shortages are concentrated across imported Persian products.

“All Persian products, some are out of stock and some are super low.”

The root cause remains supply disruption linked to import constraints and availability from Iran.

OVERSTOCK AND QUALITY NOTES

One product category has seen slower movement due to quality concerns.

“Organic Spanish almonds have not moved much. The quality is not good.”

PRIORITIES AHEAD

The immediate focus is on securing replacement supply for key items.

“Finding Persian figs is a top priority this month. Waiting on samples to place an order asap.”



Supply & Stock Overview

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: CELEBRATING SUCCESS

ZAID CHARANI

**Department / Store:**

Ayoub's Denman Store Manager

Recognition highlight:

Zaid joined as an assistant manager in August 2025 and stepped into the acting store manager role during the busiest quarter of the year. He maintained strong energy and initiative through Q4 and into Q1, helping elevate operations, strengthen team culture, and improve overall store execution.

Leadership note:

Zaid brings consistent energy and a positive mindset that carries across the team, contributing to a more engaged and high-performing store environment.

EACH QUARTER, WE RECOGNIZE A TEAM MEMBER WHOSE WORK REFLECTS OUR STANDARDS, VALUES, AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

Internal Newsletter



**EACH ISSUE BRINGS TOGETHER THE WORK, INSIGHTS, AND PRIORITIES
SHAPING AYOUB'S ONGOING PERFORMANCE. FOR FEEDBACK OR
SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO HAMID@AYOUBS.CA**

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