

Principles of Marketing
MKG 300
Section 009

PERSONAL PRODUCT: RESEARCH AND POTENTIAL

rapaulsen@bsu.edu

Due: Friday, April 11, 2008
Submitted: Saturday, April 11, 2008




EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper details my findings about the workings and employment potential for three companies: Adobe Systems Inc., *The Politico*, and *The Las Vegas Sun*. The research covers a variety of topics including basic company information and history, types of potential jobs, location(s), and financial stability.

To judge these characteristics I used a number of sources from publications and web sites that analyzed certain aspects of the companies. Adobe was the easiest to learn about, because it is a large corporation with a worldwide presence. The two publications are very localized and proved difficult to find information about. This led me to turn to alternative sources, including blogs and a informational interview video to help me analyze their business models.

The Politico and *The Las Vegas Sun* are potential candidates for the internship that I am required to complete within the next two years for my major. The inclusion of Adobe serves merely to allow me to experience researching a large corporation, because I have no desire to work at such an impersonal business.

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INTRODUCTION

Every company has its strengths and weaknesses. This project will attempt to analyze those traits by leveraging reports from employees and external sources to gain an overview of a company's potential for employment.

Background

The three businesses that I chose to investigate were Adobe Systems Inc., the worldwide leader of digital media creation software, *The Politico*, a Washington, D.C. based political news organization that covers government activity, and *The Las Vegas Sun*, a small division of the Greenspun media company that publishes a tabloid-sized paper distributed inside *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

These companies appeal to me for a number of reasons, and they all apply the skills and techniques that I am learning in my BSU majors: Journalism Graphics and Graphic Arts Management.

A job at Adobe would be a dream for the far off future; my job there could influence the development of some of the software that millions of people use each day. Both of the publications are mainly based in hard news and politics, which appeal to me more than entertainment news. I would work as a part of the design, graphics, or web team at both of these newspapers.

Method

To objectively evaluate each company, it was important that external sources be used for the majority of the subjective tests. A corporate website is often a great source for facts, figures and general information about the company, but corporate sites tend to present themselves only in a favorable light.

Some companies are easier to find information about, as I found out. Larger, historically established corporations, like Adobe, are much more accessible on the web. Adobe's market dominance has caused its software to become a household name, even to people who have never used their products before.

Smaller and newer businesses, like *The Politico* and *The Sun* are usually only known within their market segment, and finding reviews about them was much harder. The small niches that their physical publications serve are geographically isolated. I have never seen a printed copy of either of the papers, and am only aware of them through their web presence.

I used following sources to judge each company:

- **Company websites**
- **An email interview with an employee from The Sun**
- **Objective employer and corporation review websites**
- **Wikipedia for general information**
- **Business Source Premiere academic database articles (Courtesy Bracken Library)**

Mission Statement/Company Purpose

“Adobe revolutionizes how the world engages with ideas and information. For 25 years, the company’s award-winning software and technologies have redefined business, entertainment, and personal communications by setting new standards for producing and delivering content that engages people virtually anywhere at anytime. From rich images in print, video, and film to dynamic digital content for a variety of media, the impact of Adobe solutions is evident across industries and felt by anyone who creates, views, and interacts with information. With a reputation for excellence and a portfolio of many of the most respected and recognizable software brands, Adobe is one of the world’s largest and most diversified software companies.”

Company Overview

Industry Standing

Adobe is the world’s leading developer of media software. Since its acquisition of Macromedia, its largest competitor, in 2005, Adobe has been uncontested in nearly every one of its product areas.

Size

Adobe employs more than 6,500 employees on three continents. Its main office is in San Jose, California, and other offices are as far away as India. Revenue in 2007 was \$3.158 billion.

Products



Creative Suite® 3 Design Premium
All of Adobe’s print media programs



Flash® CS3 Professional
Web animation and programming



Acrobat® 8 Professional
Business document creation and display



After Effects® CS3 Professional
Motion Graphics and Compositing



Illustrator® CS3
Graphic illustration and text



Photoshop® Lightroom®
Streamlined Professional Photo Editing



Creative Suite 3 Master Collection
All of Adobe's print, web, and video tools



Premiere® Pro CS3
Professional video editing



Photoshop CS3 Extended
Professional image and graphic editing



InDesign® CS3
Print design and layout



Dreamweaver® CS3
Website and web application creation



Photoshop Elements 6
Consumer and amateur photo editing

Target Market(s)

The software products created by Adobe are used across the world by creative professionals and amateurs to create digital media. Adobe Acrobat and its PDF format are used extensively in the business world as a standard document format. Finished products created by Adobe software affect the daily lives of all web consumers in some way, but the technologies and products are mainly targeted to technical users and content creators.

Timeline of Activity

Past

Adobe was founded in 1982 by Chuck Geschke and John Warnock. They left their jobs as computer imaging researchers at Xerox to produce and release PostScript, the first page description language. PostScript allows computers to print documents that look exactly the same as they do on the computer screen. This innovation, combined with other software of the day, set off a revolution in the printing and publishing industry.

In the mid to late 80s, the company developed a number of products. PostScript led to the creation of a new type of font technology and was integrated into a number of products. Illustrator and Photoshop gained market share for the company and it rose to become the industry standard for several software categories.

In the mid-nineties, Adobe expanded its products to include digital video editing and compositing (special effects). This drove the development of new techniques and video styles that the public has only been beginning to see in the past few years.

In 2002, in response to the lack of competition and innovation in the desktop publishing industry, Adobe released InDesign to compete with Quark XPress, and subsequently took over the entire publishing market. This allowed small businesses and publications to create their products in-house.

Present

Adobe acquired its main competitor, Macromedia, in 2005, effectively doubling its market share. The purchase transferred responsibility for Macromedia's Flash popular web development technology to Adobe.

Web video technology has grown exponentially since the acquisition, and Adobe is currently seeing its products fueling the spread of digital video and animation in online formats.

Future Pursuits

With the recent revision of the ActionScript programming language that Adobe Flash is based on, Adobe has expanded its future vision of the web. New technologies like Flex and Apollo are based on allowing users to easily create interfaces for web applications and programs, and do not require extensive programming experience.

Employment

Applicable Hierarchy

Adobe is a very large company and thus has a very long chain of command. The business is divided under the CEO, Shantanu Narayen, and several vice-presidents. After this division it gets very complicated as work is split amongst some 6,000 employees.

Current Opportunities

There are hundreds of job opportunities at Adobe, and the responsibilities are widely varied. They have need for everything from C++ Developers to Marketing staff and User Experience Designers to Web Presence Coordinators.

The large majority of their jobs, as expected, are for computer programmers who would be working to develop future software products for the company. They do make a point on their website to address this, but still encourage non-technical majors to apply. A bachelor's degree is the minimum requirement for every available position.

Internships

Adobe offers several internships for college students; however, most of them are only accessible to very advanced computer science students.

While searching through their employment database, I came upon the perfect internship for me. This job would allow me to apply my software and design skills in an interface prototyping job. I still have two years before I can even think of applying for an internship like this, but I will definitely look into this when the time comes:

Experience Designer Intern

Instructional communication design (work with design, user research, and instructional communication to develop videos, charts, and documentation that quickly and effectively express core concepts and workflows of some Adobe authoring products)

General production (take existing artwork and quickly convert it to flash prototypes, create detailed visual specifications (including pixel-perfect annotation), and have a general level of writing competence for helping with design specifications)

Icon design (create icons for use in Adobe products; should be a visual designer and illustrator)

Web/Desktop application layout & design (using Fireworks, Photoshop & Illustrator to create UI mockups and prototypes of Flex/Flash or AIR applications)

Advancement Potential

Adobe has so many job listings that it would be impossible not to be able to move up at some point. After working in one department and learning about how the company works, entire other careers may open up as possibilities.

Workplace**Physical State**

Adobe, as well as several other Silicon Valley companies are known for being experimental in their workplaces. The business's offices are arranged in a campus setting in most locations and

Employee Treatment

Adobe offers all kinds of accommodations for its employees, including flexible schedules and even aerobic classes. They are a Fortune 500 company and have been on Fortune's list of best companies to work for since 1995.

Benefits

The employees at Adobe receive numerous benefits alongside of their salaries. Employees are entitled to health care, vision, life insurance, paid time off, and stock options. Adobe provides up to \$10,000 each year in tuition reimbursement for learning additional computer and management skills. They also provide free all-you-can-eat food and refreshments at each office.

Location(s)



Office(s)

San Jose, California

Arden Hills, Minnesota

McLean, Virginia

Newton, Massachusetts

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

San Francisco, California

Seattle, Washington

Bucharest, Romania

Dublin, Ireland

Edinburgh, Scotland

Hamburg, Germany

Kista, Sweden

London, England

Paris, France

Bangalore, India

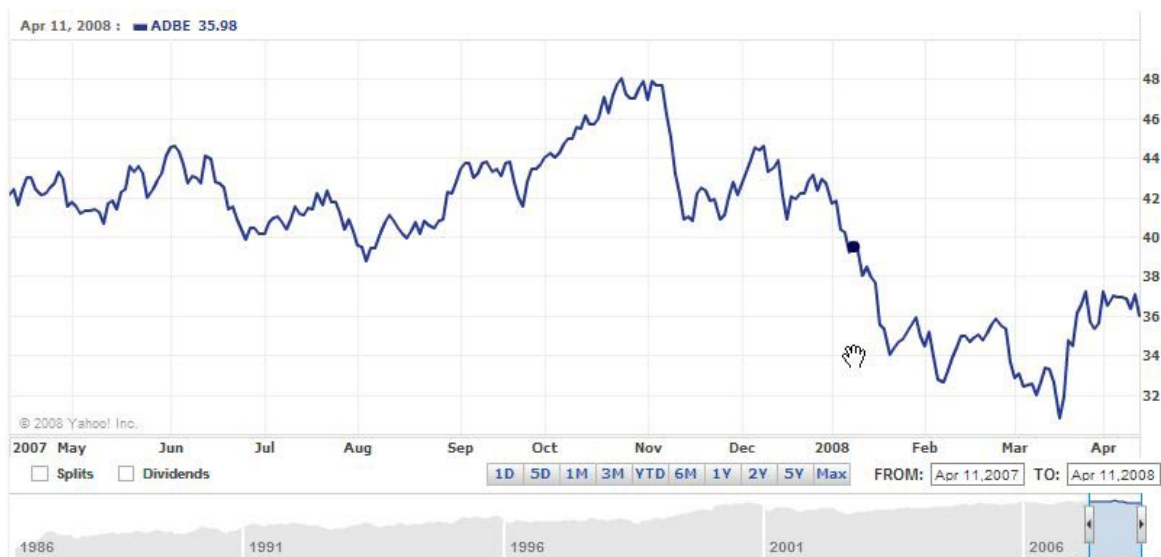
Noida, India

Tokyo, Japan

I would feel most comfortable working at one of the North American offices, though working in India or Japan would be an interesting experience. Most of Adobe's programming work is done in India, while the managerial/marketing focus is based in California.

Financial Stability

Current Market Position



The recent decline in Adobe's stock price can be attributed to the drop in the value of the American dollar and the overall stock market decline. They are also reaching the end of a product cycle

Potential Threats

The only threat that even seems possible is simply a decline in the profitability of the software. As digital media becomes more popular and more average consumers become involved, consumers will be less willing to pay as much for Adobe's expensive software.

Globalization

Adobe is taking advantage of India's high-level technology skills and has grounded its international offices there to produce Multilanguage software. People from all different countries and languages have depended on Adobe's products for years, so globalization of the rest of the world will not affect Adobe as much as it may other companies.

Strengths/Weaknesses

Product Diversity

Adobe is very sound in their product market. Their software programs are literally integral to making most of visual computing around the world possible. Nearly everything that is printed or goes on a movie screen goes through an Adobe product at some time. Their web presence is expanding drastically as broadband internet is becoming more available. There should be no foreseeable threat to the company at any time in the future, especially after their absorption of Macromedia.

Number of Customers/Clients

Everyone in the world that uses a computer will come in contact with at least one of Adobe's products at some time. There is no accurate way to judge the amount of people that use the programs to produce multimedia content. A good example would be the estimate that says 90 percent of all imaging professionals in the world have Adobe's flagship product, Photoshop, installed on their work machines.

Industry Stability

As computers expand their reach into the even the poorer parts of the world, there will be an ever increasing need for visual media for them to display. Adobe's new ActionScript, Flex, Apollo, and AIR products will be what drives the push toward the next variant of the web. The Semantic Web will rely on Adobe's software to provide the foundation for the presentation of the data that will revolutionize the way that companies will view research and numbers.

The entire printing industry is not going away either...

Mission Statement/Company Purpose

"The Politico's goals are simple. Over the past several weeks, we set out to assemble the most talented and interesting collection of journalists -- established names as well as promising young people -- that we could find. Now, we will turn these reporters loose on the subject we love: national politics.

We will focus on three arenas. The first is Congress and the constant flow of agendas, personalities and power struggles that define daily life on Capitol Hill. The second is the 2008 presidential campaign, a race already churning and one likely to shape history in ways far beyond the typical election. The third is lobbying and advocacy, a part of the capital economy undergoing rapid growth and change. It is a business alive with interesting and influential characters whose impact is dimly understood and insufficiently covered."

Company Overview

Industry Standing

Although it is fairly new, *The Politico* is setting itself up to become the Washington, D.C. area's premier source of in-depth political news. Journalists who work there left their jobs at publications like *Time* magazine, *The New York Times*, *National Public Radio*, *Roll Call* and *The Hill*, *Bloomberg News Service*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *USA Today* and *The Washington Post* to be a part of the new newspaper. The prestige of these employees alone indicates that company is serious about covering politics, as does the publication schedule. During sessions of Congress, the paper goes out only three times a week. This allows reporters to focus on long well researched stories that cover a wide variety of topics.

Size

The current size of the publication's staff is nearly 80. This is small for a news organization with a readership as large as *The Politico*, but the lighter distribution schedule eases the pressure.

It is unknown whether the staff will increase or decrease after the 2008 elections. If the paper catches on and enough people remain subscribed, despite the slowdown in election news that will take place, there is certainly room for expansion. However, if readership begins to decline after the election, cutbacks may be necessary.

Products



Publication



Website

Target Market(s)

The main audience members for the printed publication are citizens of Washington, D.C. The paper's circulation is approximately 25,000 people. Advertising in this area is the main source of income for the company.

The Politico's website reaches a much larger audience outside of Washington, with some reports of nearly 14 million hits a day.

Timeline of Activity

Past

The Politico was founded by John F. Harris and Jim VandeHei in January 2007. Their goal was to bring together several seasoned political journalists to write and investigate Washington politics. The tone of the publication was designed to be informal, like "talking with the reporter over a sandwich or a beer." This would require reporters to be very familiar and comfortable with the subject, and as a result, only very experienced reporters were scouted.

Last year's big scandals regarding Washington lobbyists were covered from the inside, as were the beginnings of the 2008 primaries. One notable error came when Clinton supporter, reporter Ben Smith, posted incorrectly on his Politico blog that John Edwards would drop out of the race due to his wife's cancer diagnosis. The mistake garnered media attention and a personal apology to Edwards by Smith.

Present

As the 2008 election approaches, the staff members of *The Politico* are covering every aspect of each candidate's campaign. The main method for doing this is through the blogs of its reporters, which are the main attraction of the company's web site. They have also spent extensive time covering the disputes between President Bush and the Democratic controlled Congress.

Future Pursuits

The Politico will be covering the presidential election, and will hopefully continue at its current level after November. As the new administration takes control of the government, *The Politico* may have to expand its coverage in order to keep up with other publications. Larger staffed papers will be able to report on many more topics, and with the shift to online news, *The Politico's* small staff may not be able to compete.

Employment

Applicable Hierarchy

Most news companies are built upon the same basic management structure. *The Politico* has a Publisher (financial support), a President/CEO, an Editor-in-Chief, and a Managing Editor. The reporters, photographers, designers, and web staff fall under several departmental editors.

Current Opportunities

The Politico is in desperate need of designers, from a consumer point of view. Their publication is plain and could really use some work to complement the excellent articles that are contained inside.

Open positions include:

National Account Executive

Designer

Staff Writer

Copy editor

Video Producer

Staff Accountant

Special Projects Assistant

Weekend Editor

Internships

The Politico's website has no information about available internships. I suspect that an internship here would not be practical because the political news business demands so much previous experience to have an understanding of all of the topics.

Advancement Potential

The staff of *The Politico* consists of a small group of highly experienced journalists. Everyone working there has been covering politics for many years of their previous careers. This makes me expect that it would be very difficult to move up in the organization without significant experience or luck. Journalism is not a very physically taxing job, so employees tend to stay reporting for many years. The contacts that most of the current employees have established throughout the political world are also invaluable to securing story information, so the reporters may be kept around just to keep up the publication's social network.

Workplace

Physical State

The newsroom at *The Politico* appears to be a typical cubicle-based newsroom. A YouTube video shows two employees walking around the low-tech office discussing the 2008 primaries. I expected the newsroom to be more multimedia capable, but because their focus is on in-depth stories, new media features at the site may only be an afterthought.

Employee Treatment

I was unable to get in touch with anyone from the company, because every time that I tried to email any of several employees, the message was refused by the system due to "inappropriate language" in my message.

I was unable to find any reports of anyone leaving the company in the year that *The Politico* has been in business.

Location(s)



Office(s)

The Politico is still in its infancy and only has only one office in Washington, D.C.

Financial Stability

Current Market Position

The Politico is financed by the Robert Allbritton, founder of the Allbritton Communications Company. It is a private company paid for solely by ads and the financing of Allbritton. The paper is free of charge to the residents of Washington, D.C., so finances are not an issue for the company.

Potential Threats

Larger newspapers that cover politics are *The Politico's* largest competitors, including *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. *The Politico* has them beat by a wide margin in the quality of their online political coverage.

Globalization

The Politico is a localized publication, and all of its worldwide demand is taken care of by its website. If the company would ever expand, there might be a shift in coverage towards worldwide politics coverage at some point.

Strengths/Weaknesses

Product Diversity

Politico is producing unique content by having its senior reporters blog on a daily basis about their subjects. This has temporarily caught the rest of the industry off-guard and will allow them to capture an initial market that may carry through and continue consuming after the 2008 election.

Number of Customers/Clients

Politico is effectively appealing to both print and web consumers, but more could be done with video and interactive media to draw audiences from larger news organizations.

Industry Stability

The U.S. Government shows no current signs of collapsing, so *The Politico* will always have plenty of scandals and strategically campaign tactics to cover.

Mission Statement/Company Purpose

"No person is too big or too mighty to be immune from criticism if he deserves censure by Sun editorial writers or the publisher. Throughout its history, the Sun has taken on the IRS, CIA, FBI and Howard Hughes.

As the Sun exposed local government and police corruption, its reputation for in-depth reporting grew, as did its influence in political matters. The newspaper also became involved in community projects originated and directed by staff members."

Company Overview

Industry Standing

The Las Vegas Sun is seen by many in news design as an innovator. Their news web site is designed by hand every day, unlike most publications that use static templates. They are pioneering new ways of using digital media to tell stories.

Size

The Sun is a very small publication, typically running 8 pages daily. It is distributed inside of the larger Las Vegas Review Journal as a part of a Joint Operating Agreement.

Products

Publication

Website

Target Market(s)

The daily edition is seen by close to 175,000 people and Sunday editions reach approximately 230,000 subscribers in Las Vegas. Their online site is currently targeting technology savvy young adults and tourists. The site began offering High Definition video stories and iPod downloads last year to further draw an audience.

Timeline of Activity

Past

The Las Vegas Sun was founded in 1950 after union disputes with the other paper, the Review-Journal. The printing union turned to Hank Greenspun to help with the financing of the paper. The new paper focused fighting for the consumer and exposing corruption in the city.

Hank Greenspun died in 1989, but his family continues to own and operate *The Sun*.

Present

The Sun has recently been covering the 2008 primary and will later cover the November election. The paper is known to have a slight social-liberal bias and endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. They are also fighting to make the public aware of the problems that Yucca Mountain, a proposed government nuclear waste dump site, will create.

Future Pursuits

The Sun is already in the future in terms of its online coverage of events in Las Vegas. Other publications in the industry are scrambling to catch up with the new technologies that *The Sun* has been using for nearly two years now.

The company is now planning to continue integrating every new type of multimedia that is available into their web coverage, in hopes of bringing the technology generations back into the daily news tradition.

Employment

Applicable Hierarchy

The Sun has a very small staff at the moment, with under 30 employees. The company is family owned, so the Publisher and President are both members of the Greenspun family. This means that most of the available positions to outsiders are in reporting, graphics, or web development.

Current Opportunities

There are currently no job openings at *The Sun*, because the web team was just filled by industry professionals from across the country.

Internships

Internships are currently in development, but will not be available for a few more years, according to Rachel Perkins, a news designer for *The Sun*.

Advancement Potential

Perkins feels that there would be plenty of room for an employee to jump around in the Greenspun family's numerous media holdings. She also says that they typically try to hire from within the company first.

Workplace

Physical State

According to Perkins, "the office is a pretty typical cubicle office." There are plans for expansion for the new web team which include a recreation room and gym.

Employee Treatment

The Sun encourages its employees to exercise as a group by going on 30-minute walks every Wednesday. The company even provides the fitness clothes, tennis shoes, and a pedometer.

Benefits

Perkins says that the benefits at the Sun are excellent – health, dental and vision. She says they also have a 401k where Greenspun matches 50 cents on the dollar.

Location(s)



Office(s)

The Sun is located in a university-like complex in Las Vegas. The staff crams into the third floor of their building, with no plans or intention of moving. This leads to a group work environment that Perkins feels challenges the staff to work better together in the fast-paced environment.

Financial Stability

Current Market Position

The Las Vegas Sun is in a unique position in the news industry. The Greenspun family that finances the publication firmly believe that the future of news is the web and that a web presence will boost print sales. This relieves *The Sun* from any financial responsibility and allows their web site to refrain from containing ads. This approach is fresh and a new take on a news company's web presence.

Potential Threats

The only threat that could bring a downfall to *The Sun* would be the loss of the Greenspun family's financial support. They are protected from competition and being forced out of business by the Joint Operating Agreement.

Globalization

Las Vegas has a number of tourists from around the world, but *The Sun* has committed to covering only in-depth local news and national politics. The comments received by Perkins and on the web site both indicate that this approach is being well received by the community.

Strengths/Weaknesses

Product Diversity

The Las Vegas Sun's web presence considered by many to be the best in the industry. They are integrating several new technologies from 360° panoramic pictures of news events to music-synchronized casino demolition videos. Even a short term internship at this company would be a lifelong boost to a resume.

Number of Customers/Clients

The Sun currently reaches its customers by means of the Joint Operating Agreement, which is not the friendliest situation for the companies, but is legally binding. The large amount of web viewers that are visiting the site daily may provide a means for the company to leave the print business and the JOA entirely.

Industry Stability

Something is always happening in Las Vegas, whether it be a new entertainment show or the government proposed construction of a nuclear waste dump (Yucca Mountain) in the middle of the desert, so there will always be new and interesting news to cover. *The Sun* is setting itself up for a long presence as the frontrunner for Las Vegas news coverage and as a model for online newspapers everywhere.

CONCLUSION

When I began this project, I understood what its purpose was: teaching students how to research companies. But as I went along and got further and further into the inner workings of each of the three companies, I started to appreciate it as a real life application as well. I now know how I could potentially fit into each of these businesses and what I might do in the future to pursue careers with them.

Adobe has always been a long shot, dream job that seemed unattainable because I have not had time to devote myself to learning enough programming on the side as I should have. After I found the mentioned internship that perfectly fits my skills and abilities, I am much more seriously considering giving it a shot after my senior year. Now that I know about the company and what it requires and is looking for, I can work on strengthening those skills in preparation to give myself a chance to earn the internship.

The Politico seemed like it would be an easily approachable company before this project, because it was just starting up, and needed employees. I now feel like I would not consider it, simply because of the complex prior knowledge required and the fierce competition I would face from industry professionals.

The best part of this project was having my eyes opened to *The Las Vegas Sun*. I saw Perkins give a presentation at Ball State about the paper earlier this year, but I simply set it aside with many of the other publications. This project has left me desperately wanting to intern there after my Junior year. The quality of the publication is so much higher than others across the country, that it would be professionally foolish to pass it by.

Finally, I also learned that I much prefer a more open work environment. The thought of working at Adobe, while appealing, is terrifying, because of the intense pressure that would be placed on my every move. Both of the papers are in a relaxed setting and seem like they would accommodate my learning and creative style much better.

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