

# The Hard Thing About Hard Things Building A

The Hard Thing About Hard Things Building A The hard thing about hard things building a Building a successful organization, startup, or any substantial venture is often portrayed as an exciting journey filled with innovation, growth, and accomplishment. However, beneath this glossy exterior lies a series of formidable challenges that test the resilience, adaptability, and leadership of those involved. The phrase “the hard thing about hard things” encapsulates the reality that navigating the complexities of building a venture is far from easy; it involves confronting unpredictable obstacles, making difficult decisions, and enduring periods of uncertainty and doubt. This article explores the multifaceted nature of these challenges, shedding light on why building something meaningful is inherently hard and offering insights into how entrepreneurs and leaders can effectively manage these difficulties. Understanding the Nature of Hard Things in Building The Complexity of Scaling One of the primary hurdles in building a successful organization is scaling effectively. While starting small and testing ideas is manageable, expanding operations introduces a host of new challenges: Maintaining company culture amidst rapid growth Ensuring quality control as production increases Managing a larger, more diverse team Securing additional resources and capital Implementing scalable processes without losing agility Scaling often exposes weaknesses in organizational structure and strategy, requiring leaders to adapt quickly and make tough choices about resource allocation and priorities. Dealing with Uncertainty and Ambiguity Building something new invariably involves venturing into uncharted territory. Entrepreneurs face ambiguity in market reception, technological feasibility, and competitive responses: Predicting customer needs that are not yet articulated Responding to unforeseen technological hurdles Adapting to shifting market dynamics and competitors' moves Making decisions with incomplete or conflicting

information The inability to predict outcomes with certainty can lead to anxiety and hesitation, but 2 resilience and decisive action are crucial in such environments. The Emotional and Psychological Toll The journey of building a venture is emotionally taxing. Leaders often face loneliness at the top, stress from high stakes, and fear of failure: Dealing with setbacks and failures that threaten morale Handling personal doubts and fears of inadequacy Balancing work-life pressures and maintaining mental health Managing the expectations of investors, employees, and customers Understanding that these emotional challenges are part of the process helps entrepreneurs develop resilience and seek support when needed. The Core Challenges in Building a Sustainable Business Creating and Communicating a Clear Vision A compelling vision serves as a guiding star, aligning team efforts and motivating stakeholders. However, articulating and maintaining that vision during turbulent times is difficult: Ensuring the vision evolves without losing core purpose Communicating effectively across diverse teams and stakeholders Inspiring confidence during periods of doubt and crisis Leaders must strike a balance between steadfastness and flexibility, continuously reinforcing their vision while adapting to changing circumstances. Building and Leading a High-Performing Team Assembling a talented team is vital, but retaining and motivating that team is even more challenging: Hiring individuals aligned with the company's values and culture Fostering collaboration and innovation Providing growth opportunities and recognition Managing conflicts and navigating differing perspectives Leadership is tested in how well one can cultivate an environment of trust and accountability. 3 Managing Cash Flow and Financial Stability Financial management is often cited as the backbone of a sustainable venture. Common difficulties include: Securing sufficient funding during early stages Controlling burn rate and managing runway Making strategic investments versus cost-cutting Preparing for economic downturns or unforeseen expenses Financial discipline combined with strategic foresight is critical to survive the inevitable financial storms. Overcoming the Hard Things: Strategies and Mindsets Embracing the Reality of Difficulty One of the most important mindsets for building through hard times is acceptance: Recognize that challenges are inherent and unavoidable1. View obstacles as opportunities for growth

and learning<sup>2</sup>. Maintain a long-term perspective despite short-term setbacks<sup>3</sup>. Acceptance enables leaders to approach problems with clarity rather than denial or despair. Prioritizing and Focusing Given limited resources, leaders must identify what matters most: Focus on high-impact activities that align with core goals Learn to say no to distractions and less critical initiatives Maintain discipline to avoid spreading efforts too thin Focusing helps ensure efforts are directed toward initiatives that move the organization forward. Building Resilience and Mental Toughness Resilience is the capacity to recover from setbacks. Strategies include: Maintaining a support network of mentors, peers, and advisors Practicing self-care and stress management techniques Developing a growth mindset that views failures as learning opportunities Celebrating small wins to maintain motivation <sup>4</sup> Resilience does not mean the absence of difficulty but the ability to persist despite it. Adapting and Pivoting Flexibility is often necessary to survive hard times: Being willing to pivot business models or strategies when evidence suggests it's needed Gathering feedback from customers and team members Iterating solutions rapidly to respond to changing conditions The capacity to adapt quickly can mean the difference between failure and eventual success. The Role of Leadership in Navigating Hard Things Leading with Empathy and Transparency Transparent communication fosters trust, especially during crises: Share both good and bad news honestly Listen actively to concerns and ideas from team members Show empathy and understanding of individual struggles Empathy and transparency create a resilient organizational culture that can withstand tough times. Making Tough Decisions with Courage Leaders often face choices that involve significant trade-offs: Letting go of underperforming team members Cutting costs or delaying growth initiatives Pivoting away from original visions or ideas Courageous decision-making requires balancing emotion, data, and long-term vision. Maintaining Hope and Motivation In adversity, hope becomes a vital driver: Reinforcing the organization's purpose and mission Celebrating incremental progress Encouraging a sense of shared ownership and optimism Leaders must inspire their teams to stay committed even when the path is arduous. <sup>5</sup> Conclusion: The Reward of Overcoming Hard Things Building something meaningful is inherently hard because it involves navigating a

landscape fraught with uncertainties, setbacks, emotional challenges, and complex decisions. The hard thing about hard things is not merely the obstacles themselves but how individuals and organizations respond to them. Those who accept the difficulty, focus on priorities, build resilience, and lead with courage and empathy often emerge stronger, wiser, and more capable of creating lasting impact. Ultimately, the journey of building is a test of character as much as it is of strategy and skill. Embracing the hard truths and challenges along the way paves the way for extraordinary achievements that are well worth the effort.

QuestionAnswer What are the main challenges faced when building 'The Hard Thing About Hard Things' into a successful business? Key challenges include managing uncertainty, making tough leadership decisions, maintaining team morale during crises, and navigating rapid growth while preserving company culture. How does 'The Hard Thing About Hard Things' suggest founders should handle inevitable failures? The book advocates embracing failure as a learning opportunity, maintaining transparency with stakeholders, and quickly pivoting or adjusting strategies to overcome setbacks. What leadership qualities are emphasized in building a resilient company according to 'The Hard Thing About Hard Things'? Resilience, honesty, decisiveness, humility, and the ability to communicate effectively during tough times are highlighted as crucial leadership qualities. How important is company culture in overcoming the hard challenges discussed in the book? Company culture is vital; a strong, adaptable culture helps teams navigate crises, stay aligned with core values, and sustain motivation during difficult periods. What strategies does 'The Hard Thing About Hard Things' recommend for managing rapid growth and scaling a business? Strategies include building a solid leadership team, establishing scalable processes early, maintaining clear communication, and staying adaptable to change. How does the book address the emotional toll of entrepreneurship and leadership during hard times? It emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, seeking support, maintaining mental resilience, and embracing vulnerability as part of effective leadership. What role does transparency play in building trust when facing tough decisions, according to 'The Hard Thing About Hard Things'? Transparency fosters trust, helps align teams, reduces uncertainty, and creates a culture where challenges are addressed

openly and collaboratively. 6 Are there practical tips in the book for handling layoffs and tough personnel decisions? Yes, the book advises approaching layoffs with honesty, compassion, clarity, and ensuring communication is respectful and transparent to maintain dignity and trust. The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Resilient Startup in a Challenging World Starting and scaling a business is often romanticized as a journey of innovation, passion, and success. However, the reality is far more complex and demanding. Ben Horowitz's book, The Hard Thing About Hard Things, dives deep into the gritty, often uncomfortable truths of building a company from the ground up. It offers invaluable insights for entrepreneurs, leaders, and anyone navigating the turbulent waters of startup life. In this comprehensive review, we explore the core themes, lessons, and practical advice from Horowitz's work, emphasizing the profound challenges and how to confront them head-on. --- The Nature of Hard Things in Building a Business Understanding What Makes Things Hard The first step to tackling the hard things is recognizing what they truly are. Horowitz emphasizes that the hardest problems in business are rarely technical or strategic; rather, they are human, emotional, and psychological. These include: - Making tough personnel decisions - Managing crises and failures - Maintaining morale during tough times - Navigating uncertainty and change - Staying resilient amidst setbacks Unlike technical challenges, these issues lack clear, formulaic solutions. They demand emotional intelligence, judgment, and grit. The Myth of the Smooth Growth Curve Many entrepreneurs expect their startups to grow steadily, but Horowitz counters that the path is often non-linear, fraught with setbacks, pivots, and crises. Recognizing this truth prepares founders for the inevitable rough patches and helps foster resilience. --- Leadership in the Face of Adversity Leading When You Don't Have All the Answers One of the central themes is that leadership isn't about having all the answers but about making decisions with limited information. During crises, leaders must: - Make rapid, sometimes unpopular decisions - Accept that mistakes are inevitable - Communicate transparently and empathetically - Keep the team aligned and motivated Horowitz advocates for "wartime CEO" mentality—being decisive and resilient during tough times, even when uncertainty looms large. The Hard Thing About Hard

Things Building A 7 Handling Layoffs and Tough Personnel Decisions One of the most dreaded aspects of leadership is firing employees, especially talented ones. Horowitz offers candid advice:

- Prepare thoroughly before making the decision
- Be direct, honest, and compassionate
- Communicate clearly about the reasons
- Recognize the emotional toll on all parties involved
- Use layoffs as a last resort but understand that sometimes they are necessary for the company's survival

Effective handling of such situations can preserve dignity and maintain the organization's integrity. Building and Maintaining Company Culture Under Stress During turbulent times, culture can either be a source of strength or a liability.

Leaders must:

- Reinforce core values continuously
- Lead by example—demonstrate resilience and transparency
- Foster trust through consistent actions and communication
- Keep the team focused on the mission, even amid chaos

A strong, adaptable culture helps the organization weather storms more effectively.

--- Operational Challenges and Strategic Decision-Making Dealing with Unexpected Crises Horowitz highlights that crises are inevitable and often unpredictable.

Examples include product failures, market shifts, or leadership scandals. To navigate these:

- Stay calm and assess the situation objectively
- Prioritize transparency with stakeholders
- Act swiftly to contain damage
- Communicate a clear plan of action

Preparedness, both mental and operational, is critical.

Scaling Challenges and Maintaining Quality Scaling a startup introduces new complexities:

- Ensuring operational processes keep pace with growth
- Maintaining product quality

- Managing a larger, more diverse team
- Delegating effectively without losing control

Horowitz emphasizes the importance of disciplined execution and continuous iteration.

Strategic Flexibility and Pivots Markets evolve, and startups often need to pivot. Key considerations include:

- Recognizing when the current strategy isn't working
- Gathering customer feedback and market data
- Being willing to change direction without losing momentum
- Communicating pivots clearly to team and investors

Flexibility, paired with decisive action, is vital.

--- The Hard Thing About Hard Things Building A 8 Building Resilience and Mental Toughness The Psychological Toll of Building a Business Horowitz candidly discusses the emotional strain entrepreneurs face, including:

- Anxiety and fear of failure
- Loneliness at the top
- Stress from high stakes

decisions - Burnout risks Acknowledging these feelings and developing coping strategies is essential. Developing Resilience To persevere through adversity, founders should: - Cultivate a growth mindset - Maintain humility and openness to feedback - Build a support network of mentors and peers - Practice self-care and stress management techniques Resilience isn't innate; it's cultivated through experience and mindset. Learning from Failures Failures are inevitable, but they can be powerful learning tools. Horowitz advises: - Analyzing mistakes objectively - Avoiding blame culture - Applying lessons learned to future challenges - Embracing failure as an integral part of growth This mindset fosters continuous improvement and emotional strength. --- Practical Lessons and Advice from The Hard Thing About Hard Things Key Takeaways for Entrepreneurs 1. Embrace the Struggle: Accept that building a company is inherently difficult, and resilience is more critical than talent alone. 2. Be Comfortable with Uncertainty: Decisions often need to be made without perfect information. 3. Lead by Example: Demonstrate calm, decisive action, and integrity. 4. Prioritize Communication: Keep stakeholders informed and engaged. 5. Hire and Fire Carefully: Build a strong team aligned with your values; don't hesitate to make tough personnel decisions. 6. Focus on Culture: A strong, adaptable culture can be the backbone during turbulent times. 7. Stay Customer-Centric: Always remember that customer needs drive success. 8. Prepare for the Worst: Contingency planning and crisis readiness are vital. 9. Maintain Mental Toughness: Cultivate resilience, humility, and self-awareness. 10. Learn Continuously: Every setback is an opportunity to learn and grow. Myths Debunked by Horowitz - Myth: Successful entrepreneurs have a smooth ride. - Reality: Success often involves The Hard Thing About Hard Things Building A 9 overcoming failures, crises, and self-doubt. - Myth: Leaders should always have all the answers. - Reality: Leaders must make decisions with limited information and accept uncertainty. - Myth: Growth is linear. - Reality: Growth is often unpredictable, with ups and downs. --- Conclusion: Building Resilience in the Face of Hard Things Ben Horowitz's The Hard Thing About Hard Things is an unflinching look at the realities of entrepreneurship. It emphasizes that the core challenge isn't just building a product or finding customers—it's navigating the human, emotional, and strategic complexities

that come with leading a company through uncertainty and adversity. Success in building a resilient startup hinges on mental toughness, honest communication, decisive leadership, and a culture that can withstand storms. While there's no silver bullet for the hard things, being prepared for them, learning from mistakes, and maintaining unwavering resilience are the keys to thriving in the long run. This book serves as both a wake-up call and a guidebook—an essential resource for anyone committed to building something meaningful in a challenging world. Embracing the hard things, rather than avoiding them, is what ultimately separates successful entrepreneurs from those who give up when faced with adversity. startup, leadership, entrepreneurship, management, growth, challenges, success, innovation, scaling, resilience

The Hard Thing About Hard Things by Ben Horowitz - A 30-minute Summary & Analysis  
The Hard Thing About Hard ThingsSUMMARY - The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building A Business When There Are No Easy Answers By Ben Horowitz  
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please note this is a summary of the book and not the original book the hard thing about hard things by ben horowitz a 30 minute summary analysis inside this instaread summary overview of the entire book introduction to the important people in the book summary and analysis of all the chapters in the book key takeaways of the book a reader s perspective preview of this summary introduction ben explains that every time he reads a self help or management book he thinks about the fact that it didn t really address the hard things like laying people off or having good people start demanding unreasonable things the problem with self help books is that they try to provide a recipe for dealing with difficult dynamic situations challenging situations can not be solved with a formula instead of using a formula in this book the author presents his story as he progressed from an entrepreneur to ceo to venture capitalist he shares some of the lessons he has learned along the way he explains that although circumstances may differ patterns and lessons resonate with each experience for the last several years he has shared lessons learned on his popular blog many people have emailed him to ask about the stories behind the lessons ben shares that he has been inspired along the way by many family members friends and advisers who have helped him hip hop rap music has also inspired him because these artists aspire to be both great and successful he also admires that rappers see themselves as entrepreneurs 1 from communist to venture capitalist

ben s grandparents were card carrying communists his dad grew up indoctrinated in the communist philosophy ben s family moved to berkeley california in 1968 his dad then became the editor of the famous new left magazine ramparts when ben was five his family moved to bonita avenue a middle class berkeley neighborhood one day a friend of ben s older brother roger pointed to an african american kid down the block who happened to be riding in a red wagon roger dared ben to go tell the kid to give him his wagon and if he refused to spit in his face and call him a racial epithet roger wasn t a racist and did not come from a bad family ben later found out that he had schizophrenia he had wanted to see a fight ben was afraid of roger and his demand put him in a very tough situation he thought roger would beat him up if he didn t do what he told him to do he was also afraid to ask for the wagon he walked toward the boy and when he got near enough he said can i ride in your wagon the boy joel clark jr said sure ben turned to look at roger and saw that he was gone ben went on to play with joel all day and they have been best friends ever since that experience taught ben that being scared didn t mean he was gutless he learned that what he did mattered and determined whether he would be a hero or a coward if he had completely followed roger s order he would have never met his best friend he also learned not to judge things by appearance alone if a

ben horowitz cofounder of andreessen horowitz and one of silicon valley s most respected and experienced entrepreneurs offers essential advice on building and running a startup practical wisdom for managing the toughest problems business school doesn t cover based on his popular ben s blog while many people talk about how great it is to start a business very few are honest about how difficult it is to run one ben horowitz analyzes the problems that confront leaders every day sharing the insights he s gained developing managing selling buying investing in and supervising technology companies a lifelong rap fanatic he amplifies business lessons with lyrics from his favorite songs telling it straight about everything from firing friends to poaching competitors cultivating and sustaining a ceo mentality to knowing the right time to cash in filled with his trademark humor and straight talk the hard thing about hard things is invaluable for veteran entrepreneurs as well as those aspiring to their own new ventures drawing from horowitz s personal and often humbling experiences

our summary is short simple and pragmatic it allows you to have the essential ideas of a big book in less than 30 minutes as you read this summary you will discover that starting and running a business is not always the source of fulfillment you had hoped for many obstacles stand in your way and the daily life of a ceo is littered with difficult decisions ben horowitz has experienced this and presents in this book the means he used to face them you will also discover that the most difficult problems encountered by a ceo do not have a perfect solution that being a ceo requires a lot of courage and perseverance that all problems grow and multiply as you succeed and your company grows in this book ben horowitz discusses the difficulties you encounter when starting a business setting and achieving ambitious goals is nothing compared to having to fire your team if you fail hiring and finding talent is much less difficult than having to manage them when their behavior becomes intolerable there is no miracle recipe you have to learn how to become a manager and a ceo and that learning is difficult buy now the summary of this book for the modest price of a cup of coffee

this is a summary of ben horowitz s the hard thing about hard things building a business when there are no easy answersben horowitz cofounder of andreessen horowitz and one of silicon valley s most respected and experienced entrepreneurs offers essential advice on building and running a startup practical wisdom for managing the toughest problems business school doesn t cover while many people talk about how great it is to start a business very few are honest about how difficult it is to run one ben horowitz analyzes the problems that confront leaders every day sharing the insights he s gained developing managing selling buying investing in and supervising technology companies a lifelong rap fanatic he amplifies business lessons with lyrics from his favorite songs telling it straight about everything from firing friends to poaching competitors cultivating and sustaining a ceo mentality to knowing the right time to cash in filled with his trademark humor and straight talk the hard thing about hard things is invaluable for veteran entrepreneurs as well as those aspiring to their own new ventures drawing from horowitz s personal and often humbling experiences available in a variety of formats this summary is aimed for those who want to capture the gist of the book but don t have the current

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summary of the hard thing about hard things many people talk about how exciting it is to start a company but not about how difficult it is to operate one it combines business teachings with lyrics from songs telling it like it is about anything from firing friends to poaching competitors from establishing and maintaining a ceo mentality to knowing when to sell summary of the hard thing about hard things is for senior entrepreneurs including those dreaming to their own new businesses and it s filled with humor and direct speaking as well as personal and often humbling experiences disclaimer this is a summary of the book not the original book and contains opinions about the book it is not affiliated in any way with the original author

strategic value creation shows how senior business leaders can design and execute a data driven strategy for their organizations to ensure that value creation is focused on the customer segments most integral to business success value creation underpins any successful business and businesses that fail to create unique value for their customers will struggle to survive this book demonstrates how to recognize when strategy thinking and actions are flawed how to correct these and how to devise and implement an effective strategy that unlocks the power of value creation it provides the practical tools necessary to put strategic theories and frameworks into practice and explains the data needed at every step strategic value creation shares the powerful 4ds framework for strategy execution diagnose today design tomorrow draw the plan and deliver with data this framework outlines how to use data for diagnosis analyse value factors for customer segmentation determine the value factors their customers value the most and ensure differentiation from competitors it also covers how to track and measure performance against stated objectives and risks improve board packs board back commentary and board meeting effectiveness and capture and categorize actions ensuring they are managed effectively

the hard things about hard things a complete summary the hard things about hard things is a best selling novel written by ben horowitz besides being a novel the hard things about hard things is also a guide for all new entrepreneurs and those who want to become an entrepreneur or start new business horowitz uses his own life experience in order to describe what it takes for a person to become successful as a leader and entrepreneur he also offers many examples which explain that things are not always as they seem for example highly intelligent people do not always become great employees in order to explain his thesis and opinions horowitz uses many examples from his own life and from lives of people who influenced him because of that the hard things about hard things is definitely a book that every person who wants to start a business and keep it growing should read here is a preview of what you will get a summarized version of the book you will find the book analyzed to further strengthen your knowledge fun multiple choice quizzes along with answers to help you learn about the book get a copy and learn everything about the hard things about hard things

how can businesses transform to achieve competitive advantage in a digital enabled world how can managers and leaders create a culture that supports lasting change through these transformations building the agile business through digital transformation is an in depth guide for all those needing to better understand implement and lead digital transformation in the workplace it sets aside traditional thinking and outdated strategies to explain what steps need to be taken for an organization to become truly agile embed innovation and develop talent to succeed this majorly revised second edition of building the agile business through digital transformation contains new material on the culture and mindset challenges of shifting at scale from linear to agile working and using data effectively in organizational decision making full of practical advice examples and real life insights from organizations at the leading edge of digital transformation including airbnb amazon and google this book is an essential guide to driving success by becoming an agile and digital native business

the discipline code break bad habits with mental toughness and build an unstoppable mindset a life changing tool that millions of people can't stop talking about control your mind master your feelings and develop emotional intelligence habits for success are you tired of setting goals only to watch them fade away do you constantly battle procrastination self doubt and bad habits that hold you back the discipline code is the ultimate guide to forging an unbreakable mindset eliminating distractions and creating the high performance habits that fuel lasting success the difference between those who achieve greatness and those who stay stuck isn't motivation it's discipline motivation is unreliable fleeting and fades when you need it most discipline on the other hand is the foundation of every high achiever's success this book gives you a proven framework to build mental toughness break free from self sabotaging habits and create a system for success that works even when you don't feel like it inside you'll discover why discipline beats motivation every time and how to rewire your brain to make it your superpower the focus formula a step by step strategy to eliminate distractions sharpen your concentration and boost productivity the 90 day mental toughness protocol a battle tested system to break bad habits overcome mental resistance and lock in winning routines control your mind and master your feelings how to develop the

emotional intelligence habits needed to overcome self doubt fear and hesitation the warrior s mindset how to take action no matter how you feel push through fear and develop rock solid confidence morning battlefield tactics how to start your day with unstoppable momentum increase willpower and set yourself up for success the pain driven growth method how to turn challenges discomfort and failure into fuel for unstoppable progress discipline in work fitness and life strategies to develop relentless focus build an unbreakable training mindset and set strong boundaries for personal and professional success the discipline code framework learn how to master the 3 pillars of unshakeable discipline and how to integrate them into your life this life changing tool that millions of people can t stop talking about will give you the mental edge to control your mind master your feelings and build emotional intelligence habits that fuel success in every area of life success is not about feeling motivated it s about executing with discipline if you re ready to break bad habits master mental toughness and unlock your full potential this is the book you ve been waiting for are you ready to take control of your life and forge an unstoppable mindset

if you re an executive manager or anyone interested in leveraging ai within your organization this is your guide you ll understand exactly what ai is learn how to identify ai opportunities and develop and execute a successful ai vision and strategy alex castrounis founder and ceo of why of ai northwestern university adjunct advisor and former indycar engineer and data scientist examines the value of ai and shows you how to develop an ai vision and strategy that benefits both people and business ai is exciting powerful and game changing but too many ai initiatives end in failure with this book you ll explore the risks considerations trade offs and constraints for pursuing an ai initiative you ll learn how to create better human experiences and greater business success through winning ai solutions and human centered products use the book s aipb framework to conduct end to end goal driven innovation and value creation with ai define a goal aligned ai vision and strategy for stakeholders including businesses customers and users leverage ai successfully by focusing on concepts such as scientific innovation and ai readiness and maturity understand the importance of executive leadership for pursuing ai

initiatives a must read for business executives and managers interested in learning about ai and unlocking its benefits alex castrounis has simplified complex topics so that anyone can begin to leverage ai within their organization dan park gm director uber alex castrounis has been at the forefront of helping organizations understand the promise of ai and leverage its benefits while avoiding the many pitfalls that can derail success in this essential book he shares his expertise with the rest of us dean wampler ph d vp fast data engineering at lightbend

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