

A Descriptive Study on Green Marketing

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Abstract

The challenge for today's marketer in the era of globalization is to keep the customers satisfied and even keep natural environment safe. This is because awareness among consumers about environmental issues such as global warming and the impact of environmental pollution is increasing day by day. The need of the time is protecting environment from pollution and it is a buzz word in today's business environment. In the modern market an important strategy of facilitating sustainable development is Green marketing which has emerged as an important concept in India as well as in other parts of the developing and developed world. In this research paper, main emphasis has been made on concept, and importance of green marketing.

The Paper aims at finding out what actually Green Marketing is all about and also offers implications of the study about how can a business firm become more competitive by using green marketing strategies to gain a competitive edge over others. This paper also explains the initiatives taken by various firm towards green marketing in India.

Keywords: Green marketing, Environment, Consumer, Green products, Sustainable.

Introduction

Throughout world people are now concerned about the rapidly changing environment. The quote "save the planet, not shave the planet" is now necessity of the time. To have a sustainable, pollution free environment, it is important to implement the concept of green marketing, so that people are educated towards this as much as possible. Now the question arises what is green marketing?

Environmentally responsible or "green" marketing refers to the satisfaction of consumer needs, wants, and desires in conjunction with the preservation and conservation of the natural environment. Considered an oxymoron by many environmentalists (because it still promotes consumption), green marketing manipulates the four elements of the marketing mix (product, price, promotion and distribution) to sell products and services offering superior environmental benefits in the form of reduced waste, increased energy efficiency, and/or decreased release of toxic emissions. The evolution of green marketing can be divided in three phases:

- The first phase was termed "Ecological" green marketing. During this period all marketing activities were concerned to solve environment problems and provide remedies for such problems.
- The second phase was "Environmental" green marketing and the focus shifted to clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which takes care of pollution and waste issues.
- The third phase was "Sustainable" green marketing. It came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000.

Defining green marketing is not a simple task because several meanings intersect and contradict each other. An example of this is the existence of varying social, environmental and retail definitions attached to this term. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing. According to the American Marketing Association, "green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe". Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including

product modification, changes in the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising.

Polonsky in an edited book of K. Suresh defines green marketing as, "All activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that satisfying of these needs and wants occur with minimal detrimental input on the natural environment." Green marketing involves developing and promoting products and services that satisfy customers want and need for Quality, Performance, Affordable Pricing and Convenience without having a detrimental input on the environment.

To understand green marketing one needs to know the four Ps of green marketing

Green Products

There is no widespread agreement on what exactly makes a product green. Some general guidelines include that a green product:

- does not present a health hazard to people or animals
- is relatively efficient in its use of resources during manufacture, use and disposal
- does not incorporate materials derived from endangered species or threatened environments
- does not contribute to excessive waste in its use or packaging
- does not rely on unnecessary use of or cruelty to animals.
- Other favourable attributes from the green point of view are the incorporation of recycled materials into the product and the product's own recyclability.

Greener Pricing

A central concern of many environmentalists is that product prices do not reflect total environmental costs. A number of companies have undertaken audits of their production processes to identify hidden environmental costs and to provide better information for pricing decisions. Emissions charges, carbon taxes, and increased fines are possible methods governments might

use to implement better environmental costing. European firms have been particularly proactive in this area, developing a method of environmental auditing (the eco balance) bridging the gap between standard accounting practices, in which data are expressed solely in conventional monetary terms, and qualitative environmental impact reports.

Green Promotion

Perhaps no area of green marketing has received as much attention as promotion. In fact, green advertising claims grew so rapidly during the late 1980s that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued guidelines to help reduce consumer confusion and prevent the false or misleading use of terms such as "recyclable," "degradable," and "environmentally friendly" in environmental advertising.

The FTC offers four general guidelines for environmental claims:

- Qualifications and disclosures should be sufficiently clear and prominent to prevent deception.
- Environmental claims should make clear whether they apply to the product, the package, or a component of either. Claims need to be qualified with regard to minor, incidental components of the product or package.
- Environmental claims should not overstate the environmental attribute or benefit. Marketers should avoid implying a significant environmental benefit where the benefit is, in fact, negligible.
- A claim comparing the environmental attributes of one product with those of another should make the basis for comparison sufficiently clear and should be substantiated.

The FTC's Environmental Marketing Guidelines provide additional guidance for a number of specific claims including "Degradable/ Biodegradable/ Photodegradable," "Compostable," "Recyclable," "Recycled Content," "Source Reduction," "Refillable,"

and "Ozone Safe/Ozone Friendly." They strongly recommend avoidance of overly general claims such as environmentally friendly.

Greener Distribution:

Logistics and transportation costs are coming under greater scrutiny due to rising fuel prices, congested highways, and global-warming concerns. Package redesign for lighter weight and/or greater recyclability reduces waste while simultaneously reducing costs. In some countries, marketers must also consider two-way flows, as governments pass legislation requiring manufacturers to take back products at the end of their useful life ("reverse logistics").

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the meaning of green marketing.
- To know about the tools of green marketing.
- To study the various reasons for going green.
- To learn the initiatives taken by the various firms

Research Methodology

The research paper is an attempt of exploratory research based on the secondary data sourced from journals, magazines, articles, SSRN and media reports. Looking into the requirements of the objectives of the study the research design is of descriptive type. Available secondary data was extensively used for the study.

Literature Review

Green marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first book titled Ecological Marketing was the outcome of first workshop on "Ecological Marketing", held by American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975. Green marketing acquired an eminent status since early 1990s. There has been occurring about green consumers and green consumerism in 1970s and 1980s. Henion and Kinnear (1976) defined green consumers as environmentally conscious consumers while Antil (1984) described green consumerism as a specific type of socially conscious consumer behaviour with prime focus on protection of environment. Green consumerism was described as a

form of "pro-social" consumer behaviour (Weiner and Doescher, 1991). Michael Polonsky (1994) defined "green marketing as the marketing that consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Various studies support the assertion that consumers today prefer environmentally safe products and have a positive disposition towards companies following such practices. A strong willingness is shown by consumers to favour environmentally conscious products and companies as per various opinion polls taken in US and elsewhere, however action to do so in reality are debatable (Mendleson N, Polonsky M J, 1995). In spite of huge interest in green marketing by researchers and organizations, demand of green products is not as high as expected. Mintel (1995) found a significant gap between consumers concern and actual green purchasing. It is found that still there are considerable barriers towards the diffusion of more ecologically oriented consumption styles.

According to Michael J Polonsky, environmental marketing has been perceived as an opportunity by the organizations to achieve their objectives (stated by Keller 1987, Shearer 1990). It was believed that organizations have moral obligation to serve the society in more environmental friendly way (Davis 1992, Freeman and Liedtka 1991, Keller 1987, Shearer 1990). Firms are also forced to become more socially responsible due to the laws laid by the government towards the protection of the environment. Firms are also pressurized by the environmental activities adapted by competitors that demand the firms to change their marketing activities to environmental marketing activities. One of the factors identified that affects the purchase of green product is its high price in comparison with traditional product. Price of the product can be reduced by properly designed environmental standards. Environmental standards can trigger innovations that

lower the cost of the product or improve its value. Such innovation will allow the companies to use a range of inputs more productively—from raw materials to energy to labour – thus offsetting the cost of improving environmental impact and hence enhanced resource productivity will make companies more competitive. Innovation will play a lead role in sustainable development for the companies to be competitive and resisting innovations will lead to loss of competitiveness in today's global economy (Michael Porter and Claas van der Linder, 1995).

Jacquelyn Ottman, (1998) suggests that from an organizational standpoint, all aspects of marketing including new product development and communications should be integrated with environmental considerations. This holistic view of Green Marketing suggests that not only the suppliers and retailers, but the new stakeholders including educators, community members, regulators, and NGOs should also be taken into purview. Environmental issues should not be compromised to satisfy primary customer needs. Organization operating green practices in their processes and products is considered as environmentally friendly by the consumers and they prefer to purchase the products of the organization that are marketing themselves as green organizations.

It has been always believed that the actions of individuals can be predicted by their attitudes. Number of studies has been made towards improving the ability to predict an individual's actions. Davidson et al. (1985) found that the consumers' attitude is associated with the knowledge and personal experience they possess. However inconsistencies were found among the relationship between consumers' attitude and their behaviour when it comes to green consumerism. Mainieri et al. (1997) found low correlation between consumers' attitude and green behaviour. Previous researches also proved low correlation between consumers' attitudes and their green behaviour (Tracy and Oskamp, 1984). Spruyt et al. (2007) suggested that the prediction of individual's behaviour is dependent on

the attitude of the consumer. In order to predict specific behaviours, the measurement criteria of attitudes should be directed at a specific environmental issue like purchasing of green products (Gadenne et al, 2011; Wulf and Schroder, 2003). Green Gauge Study of Roper Organization (stated by Crispell, 2001) classified the American consumers into True-Blue Greens, Greenback Greens, Sprouts, Grouzers and Basic Browns. True-Blue Greens are the consumers who buy only green products and trying to make up for the deficits, Greenback Greens are the consumers willing to expend money towards protection of natural environment but don't have time and energy for environmental activities, Sprouts are the consumers who can buy green products but are not involved in environmental activities, Grouzers are the consumers who cares about the protection of environment but make excuses for adapting green products, and Basic Browns are the consumers who don't care about the environment protection and are not even ashamed of it.

Consumers are substantially aware about green products; however applying green marketing practices in business operations is not an easy task (Juwaheer, 2005). Antonio et al (2009) suggested that due to environmental consciousness that has evolved over time, studies on green consumerism will be the main focus point in future leading to identifying the consumer attitudes, behaviours and intentions. Braimah and Tweneboah-Koduah (2011) studied Ghanaian consumers and have found low level of awareness towards green marketing issues which affected that purchase decision of the consumers. Price of green products was also found to be one of the factors that influence the purchase of green products. However, it was found that young consumers are more likely to be influenced by green issues. Cherian and Jacob (2012) found that consumers lack green knowledge and because of this low awareness, organizations are still not focusing towards development of green products.

There are several issues and challenges identified by various researchers with respect to Green Marketing

(Welling and Chavan, 2010). Practicing green marketing initially may prove to be a costly affair as it encourages green products/services, green technology (procuring new technology or modification of existing technology), green power/energy which requires a lot of money to be spent on R&D programs. High investment is required in marketing promotions to create awareness regarding green products and their uses. Many customers may not be willing to pay a premium for green products which may affect the sales of the company. It requires the companies to extensively communicate the presence and benefits of green marketing to the customers by means of various tools available for integrated marketing communication. Eco-labeling could be a good way to convince the customers regarding green products. Consumers might be willing to pay premium price if they see additional benefit (such as quality, environmentally safe product, fuel-efficient vehicles, and non-hazardous products) attached with the product. Green Marketing can help organizations to gain a competitive advantage and a strong consumer base. (Renfro L A, 2010).

According to Joel Makower (cited by Shafaat& Sultan, 2012), challenges faced by green marketer also include the lack of standards and common consensus among the public about what actually constitutes “green”. Despite these challenges, green marketing continues to gain popularity, particularly in light of growing global concern about climate change. Companies are coming forward to showcase their commitments to reduce adverse climate impacts of their products and services. Green marketing can play an important role in sustainable development so firms must adapt innovative methods to sustain itself in the competitive environment.

Green Marketing Tools

Eco-label, eco-brand and environmental advertisement are part of the green marketing tools which can make perception easier and increase awareness of eco-friendly products features and aspects. Consequently, this will lead the consumers to purchase the environmentally friendly products. Practicing these policy tools plays an

important role in changing consumer purchasing behaviour to purchase environmental friendly products, thus, decreasing the adverse effect of artificial products on the environment (Delafronz, Taleghani, &Nouri, 2014).

a) Eco-labeling: Eco-label is one of the important green marketing tools used on eco-friendly products. Eco-label is characterized as a tool for consumers to assist the progress of making a decision to choose eco-friendly product. It also allows them to understand how the process of products is made. Environmental labels are used by marketing to facilitate the labeling of green products. Labels made up of a series of small pieces of paper, up to very complicated diagrams that are involved as a part of the goods packaging. Labels can include merely the brand products or a series of mixed information. In some conditions, the seller may want a direct ‘Label’, but law obliges them to contribute more information (Delafronz, Taleghani, &Nouri, 2014). Environmental labels allow consumers to easily distinguish environmentally friendly products over normal standard products. Eco-label is positively correlated with consumer enthusiasm to buy (Awan&Raza, n.d.). The recognition of eco-label has a positive impact between the information of a green product and consumer’s willingness to buy. In addition, previous researches that were finalized in western nations have agreed that most consumers have positive green consciousness on eco-labeled products (Cherian& Jacob, 2012). Eco-labels are appealing tools notifying consumers about the environmental impact of their buying determination (Rashid, 2009). To guide consumers to classify products those are more environmentally favoured than other identical products, eco-labeling schemes were proposed in order to facilitate environmental consumerism. The very first eco-labeling schemes have been developed since the late 1977 in Germany (Blue Angel eco-label). In modern day, there are relatively 30 various green label schemes worldwide. Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore have launched their own eco-labeling schemes. The Malaysian business

sector is not far behind in reacting to protests rising from interest made from the consumers for eco-friendly products. Malaysian green label schemes were committed to launch in 1996 by the Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM) in the time of there were eco-labeling schemes connected to degradable, agricultural products, energy conservation, electronic equipment, hazardous metal free electrical, non-toxic plastic packaging material, recycled paper and biodegradable cleaning agents (Rahbar& Wahid, 2011).

b) Eco-brand: The American Marketing Association interprets a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or the combination of them, engaged to recognize the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to distinguish them from those of a competitor.” This description can be concluded for the eco-brand as well. Eco-brand is a name, symbol or image of products that are harmless to the environment. Applying eco-brand aspects can help consumers to distinguish them by some means from other non-green products (Delafrrooz, Taleghani, &Nouri, 2014). Consumers will pursue to purchase eco-friendly options for products that produced high level of environmental impact correspond to those with low level of environmental impact. Malaysian consumers consider aerosols, house hold cleaning, glass based, pesticides and plastics as non-green product classifies with high level of impact to environments (Rahbar& Wahid, 2011). For that reason, it can be anticipated that consumers will react positively to products with environmental aspects known as eco branded products. The earlier research in western countries encourages this opinion as consumers in the Germany and USA take action positively to eco-branded products such as green energy and Body Shop (Wustenhagen&Bilharz, 2006).A consumer’s interpretation on the environmental conduct of brands should be positively impressed by environmental labels. Recognition of the impact of brands on consumers’ purchasing opinion is very critical for marketers and marketing researchers. This impact is recognized as brand equity. Brand equity can be defined as a particular impact that brand awareness has on a

consumer’s reaction to the marketing of that brand from a consumer’s viewpoint. Green brands should be used to point out the situation that green products functions the same as non-green ones. Also, green brands should be used to assist consumers distinguish green brands from other identical brands with same actions. The critical aspect persuading consumers to change actual purchase behaviour to buy eco-friendly products is emotional brand benefits. Hence, the purchasing behaviour will change to purchase environmental friendly products as a consequence of concerning of the advantage of green brands. The consumers who widely recognized themselves as an environmental responsible consumers suggest to picks the green products in their actual purchase to meet their emotional desires (Rahbar& Wahid, 2011).

c) Environmental advertisement: In order to improve green movements worldwide and raise public attention to environmental problems, most organizations prefer environmental advertisements through media or newspapers as green techniques for introducing their products to environmentally responsible consumers. Green advertisement is one of the ways to influence consumers’ purchasing behaviour that will strongly encourage consumers to buy products that are eco-friendly to our environment. Besides, direct their attention to the positive consequences of their purchasing behaviour, for themselves as well as the environment (Delafrrooz, Taleghani, &Nouri, 2014). Davis (1994) describes there are three elements in green advertisement. Firstly, the company will start a statement that is related to the environment. Secondly, the company will demonstrate its concern and dedication to improve the environment by its changed procedure from the green advertisement. Thirdly, specific environmental actions in which the company is involved will be promoted by green advertisement (Rahbar& Wahid, 2011). When the population of companies using environmental interest in their advertisement is getting higher, even though some of them are just simply green washing, it will lead consumers to be suspicious towards environmental advertising. For marketing managers,

who tries to be environmentally responsible and anticipates a reward from consumers for their responsible behaviour, the reliability and influences of green advertising is a major issue. Marketing managers and advertising professionals need to master environmental information communication and presentation of environmental information in the ads (Alniacik&Yilmaz, 2012).

Reasons for going Green

Opportunities - As demand changes, many firms see these changes as an opportunity to exploit and have a competitive advantage over firms marketing non-environmentally responsible alternatives. Some examples of firms who have striven to become more environmentally responsible, in an attempt to better satisfy their consumer needs are:

- McDonald's replaced its clam shell packaging with waxed paper because of increased consumer concern relating to polystyrene production and Ozone depletion.
- Tuna manufacturers modified their fishing techniques because of the increased concern over driftnet fishing, and the resulting death of dolphins.
- Xerox introduced a "high quality" recycled photocopier paper in an attempt to satisfy the demands of firms for less environmentally harmful products.

Government Pressure - As with all marketing related activities, governments want to "protect" consumer and society; this protection has significant green marketing implications. Government regulations relating to environmental marketing are designed to protect consumers in several ways:-

- Reduce production of harmful goods or by-products. Modify consumer and industry's use and consumption of harmful goods.
- Ensure that all types of consumers have the ability to evaluate the environmental composition of goods. Government formulates

rules and regulations to control the amount of hazardous wastes produced by firms.

Competitive Pressure - Another major force in the Environmental marketing area has been firms' desire to maintain their competitive position. In many cases firms observe competitors promoting their environmental behaviour s and attempt to emulate this behaviour. In some instances this competitive pressure has caused an entire industry to modify and thus reduce its detrimental environmental behaviour. For example when Xerox introduced 100% recycled photocopier paper other manufacturers had also started introducing recycled photocopier paper.

Social Responsibility - Many firms are beginning to realize that they are members of the wider community and therefore must behave in an environmentally responsible fashion. This translates into firms that believe they must achieve environmental objectives as well as profit related objectives. This results in environmental issues being integrated into the firm's corporate culture. Respecting the principle of extended producer responsibility (EPR), the Sony Company will continue to promote the development and efficient operation of low-environmental-impact recycling systems suited to the needs of local communities. With the aim of reducing resource use, the Sony Company has planned to step up efforts to design products that are easy to recycle as well as to promote the establishment of legislation that enshrines the concept of individual producer responsibility (IPR) and the building of an infrastructure for recycling Sony products.

Cost or Profit Issues - Firms may also use green marketing in an attempt to address cost or profit related issues. Disposing of environmentally harmful by products, such as Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) contaminated oil are becoming increasingly costly and in some cases difficult. Therefore firms that can reduce harmful wastes may incur substantial cost savings. When attempting to minimize waste, firms are often forced to-examine their production processes. In these cases

they often develop more effective production processes that not only reduce waste, but reduce the need for some raw materials. This serves as a double cost savings, since both waste and raw material are reduced. In other cases firms attempt to find end - of - pipe solution instead of minimizing waste. In these situations firms try to find markets or uses for their waste materials, where one firm's waste becomes another firm's input of production. One Australian example of this is a firm who produces acidic waste water as a by-product of production and sells it to a firm involved in neutralizing base materials.

Initiatives Taken Up By Business Organizations towards Green Marketing

Lead Free Paints From Kansai Nerolac

Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd., has always been committed to the welfare of society and the environment. It has worked on removing hazardous heavy metals from their paints. Lead in paints especially poses danger to human health where it can cause damage to Central Nervous System, kidney and reproductive system. Children are more prone to lead poisoning leading to lower intelligence levels and memory loss.

Going Green: Tata's New Mantra

Tata Motors is setting up an eco-friendly showroom using natural building material for its flooring and energy efficient lights. The Indian Hotels Company, which runs the Taj chain, is in the process of creating Eco rooms which will have energy efficient mini bars, organic bed linen and napkins made from recycled paper. And when it comes to illumination, the rooms will have CFLs or LEDs.

Suzlon Energy

The world's fourth largest wind-turbine maker is among the greenest and best Indian companies in India. Tulsi Tanti, the visionary behind Suzlon, convinced the world that wind is the energy of the future and built his factory in Pondicherry to run entirely on wind power.

Suzlon's corporate building is the most energy-efficient building ever built in India.

Tata Metalliks Limited (TML)

Every day is Environment Day at TML, one of the top green firms in India. A practical example that made everyone sit up and take notice is the company's policy to discourageworking on Saturdays at the corporate office. Lights are also switched off during the day with the entire office depending on sunlight.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

India's largest oil producer, ONGC, is all set to lead the list of top 10 green Indian companies with energy-efficient, green crematoriums that will soon replace the traditional wooden pyre across the country. ONGC's Mokshada Green Cremation initiative will save 60 to 70% of wood and a fourth of the burning time per cremation.

State Bank of India

Green IT@SBI By using eco and power friendly equipment in its 10,000 new ATMs, the banking giant has not only saved power costs and earned carbon credits, but also set the right example for others to follow. SBI is also entered into green service known as "Green Channel Counter". SBI is providing many services like; paper less banking, no deposit slip, no withdrawal form, no cheques, no money transactions form all these transaction are done through SBI shopping & ATM cards. State Bank of India turns to wind energy to reduce emissions: The State Bank of India became the first Indian bank to harness wind energy through a 15-megawatt wind farm developed by Suzlon Energy.

Mahindra & Mahindra Limited

Mahindra Reva is the first –in-line of next generation global electric vehicles. Rapid urbanization rising fuel costs Pollution & congestion, Eco-conscious Cost-conscious, Tech savvy, small is big concept, the desire to strike a balance between sustainability and functionality. All these factors motivated Mahindra & Mahindra limited to produce its first electric car Reva. Consumer choice will increasingly be driven by how "clean" or green a vehicle is, from birth to use to disposal. "Clean" will be defined and broadly understood as a reflection of

a clean footprint across the entire value chain from sourcing to manufacturing, to distribution, to product use and ultimately, disposal. The entire mobility chain will see the emergence of "cost-effectiveness" as a mantra for success. Large factories will be replaced by small, smart, flexible, low-cost manufacturing. Superior technology and enhanced features will increasingly become accessible to more and more consumers and "value-for-money" will become the chant by discerning consumers. Large change renewal energies will get rid of vicious circle of oil, making the purchase and use of such born green product cost effective.

Solar Power ATM: Indusind Bank

Green banking has been catching up as among the top Indian green initiatives ever since Indusind opened the country's first solar-powered ATM and pioneered an eco-savvy change in the Indian banking sector.

Conclusion

Adoption of Green marketing may not be easy in the short run, but in the long run it will definitely have a positive impact on the sustainability of the firm. The lots of opportunities are available in Indian market. Customers too are ready to pay premium price for green products. This transformation in consumer's behaviour is compelling corporate to think about the harmful impact of their activities on the natural environment of the world. The rapid increase for the environment concern in last two decades is stressing companies to prove the change to ensure the sustainable growth of the society. Green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. In the modern era of globalization, it has become a challenge to keep our natural environment safe. As resources are limited and human wants are unlimited, it is important for the marketers to utilize the resources efficiently without waste as well as to achieve the organization's objective. So green marketing is inevitable. There is growing interest among the consumers all over the world regarding the protection of the environment. Now we see

that most of the consumers, both individual and industrial, are becoming more concerned about environment-friendly products. Most of them feel that environment-friendly products are safe to use. As a result, green marketing has emerged, which aims at marketing sustainable and socially-responsible products and services. Now is the era of recyclable, non-toxic and environment-friendly goods. This has become the new tune for marketers to satisfy the needs of consumers and earn better profits.

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