

ProcureCon INSIGHTS

Boost Your Procurement Power: 5 Tips to Transform User Experience



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Executive Summary

A June, 2025 webinar by ProcureCon Insights explored five transformative strategies that procurement teams can implement to enhance user adoption and drive organizational value. The discussion revealed that the modern user experience must extend beyond traditional screen interfaces. Now, systems must also include seamless, intelligent workflows that guide users through complex procurement processes while reducing friction and increasing compliance.

This paper provides five actionable insights from the event, which procurement and supply chain leaders can use in their own UX strategies.

About the Contributors



Mark Harris

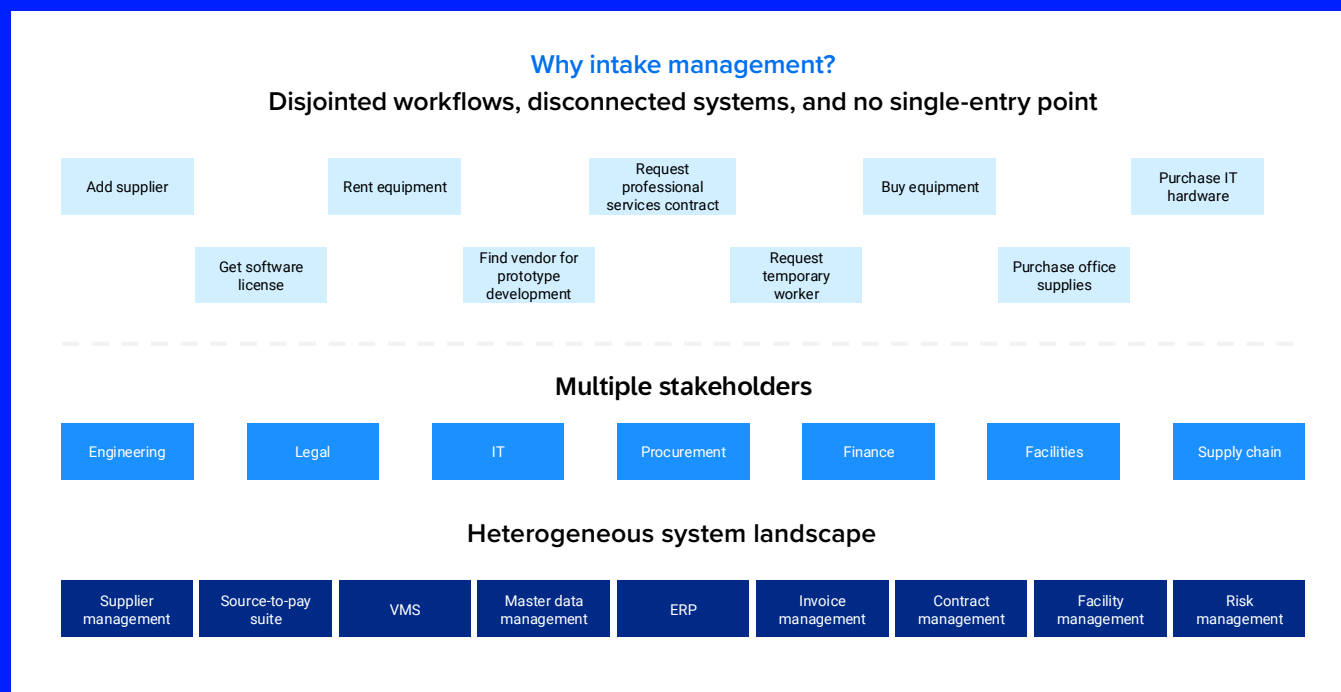
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1 Offer a Front Door for Users

Traditional procurement processes often force users to navigate multiple disconnected systems, each with its own interface and requirements. This fragmentation creates confusion and leads to non-compliant spending as users seek workarounds to accomplish their goals.

Intake management, the process of systematically managing requests and demands, allows the organization to synchronize systems and streamline the user experience.

Specifically, the concept of a “front door” addresses this challenge by providing a single-entry point where users can interact with procurement systems using natural language queries. Rather than requiring users to understand which system handles supplier onboarding, budget requests, or sourcing events, intake management orchestrates these processes behind the scenes. This orchestration extends beyond simple intake to guide users through entire workflows, from initial request to final completion.

Research supports this approach. The Hackett Group’s 2025 Agenda and Key Issues report indicates that **55% of companies have investigated, piloted, or implemented intake management and/or guided sourcing.**¹ Organizations implementing these solutions report significant returns on investment. The technology leverages artificial intelligence to understand user intent and route requests appropriately, creating a more intuitive and efficient procurement experience.

1. The Hackett Group. 2025 Procurement Agenda and Key Issues Study Results. January 2025. <https://www.sap.com/cmp/dg/hackett-2025-procurement-key-issues-studies/index.html>

Key Recommendations

- **Implement a unified intake management system that serves as the single-entry point for all procurement requests.** This centralized approach eliminates the confusion and inefficiency that comes from users having to navigate multiple systems and interfaces to accomplish their procurement goals.
- **Leverage natural language processing capabilities to enable intuitive user interactions with procurement systems.** Allowing users to describe their needs in plain language can dramatically improve adoption rates and reduce training requirements.



Intake management gives every user a single-entry point. It's like having a single front door where anyone can get what they need. This system guides people step by step, so they don't have to figure out how to use several different tools or systems. Many clients are implementing this as a way to ignite their AI agenda and improve the user experience.

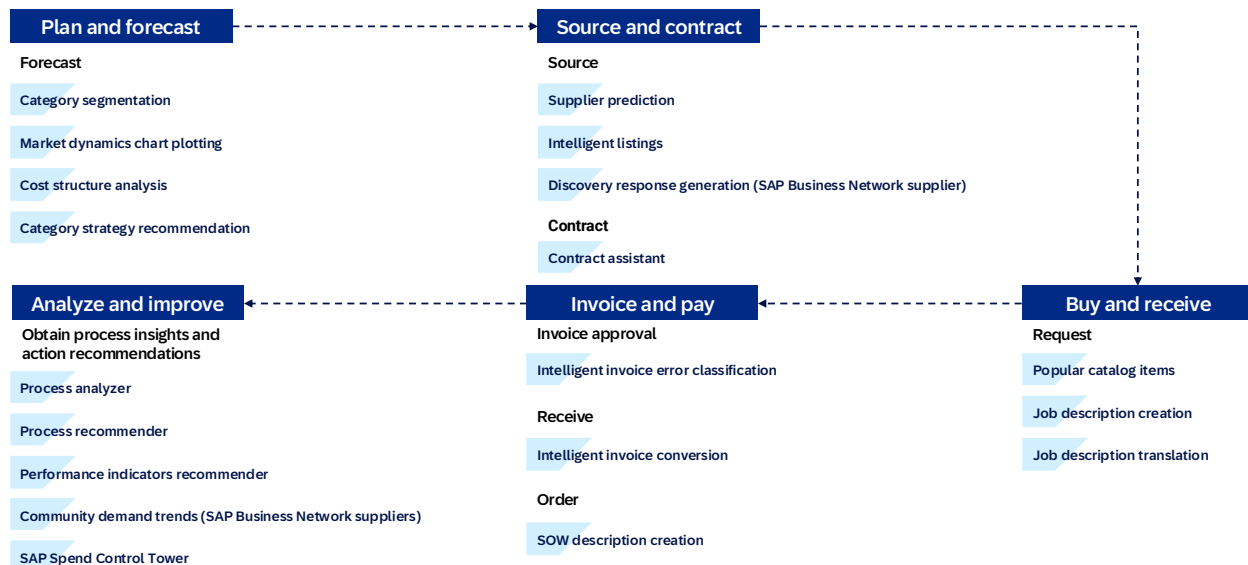


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Explore how to embed AI across the process for Source to Pay



2 Harness the Power of AI

Artificial intelligence in procurement operates across a spectrum, ranging from basic automation to advanced generative capabilities and intelligent decision-making. Organizations are increasingly recognizing AI as “an opportunity rather than a threat,” said Mr. Harris. The vast majority (92%) of Chief Procurement Officers planned to assess generative AI capabilities in 2024, and they believe the technology will address the long-standing issue of productivity stagnation. [source for this is Deloitte research]

AI applications in procurement span multiple use cases, from query-based systems that provide instant status updates to sophisticated authoring tools that generate RFPs and contracts. The technology excels at preparation and analysis tasks, such as digesting lengthy RFP documents, preparing for supplier quarterly business reviews, and identifying sourcing opportunities from spend data. Advanced implementations include autonomous agents that can execute tasks independently and predictive systems that recommend next steps.

The evolution of AI in procurement follows a clear progression. It began with static AI systems, which provide data mining and flagging capabilities, then evolved into copilots capable of conversational interactions for queries and guidance. The future points toward autonomous AI agents capable of agent-to-agent communication, where multiple AI systems collaborate to handle complex procurement workflows.

However, successful AI implementation requires careful consideration of data governance, security, and privacy requirements. Organizations must balance the desire for advanced capabilities with the need to maintain control over sensitive procurement data and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

Key Recommendations

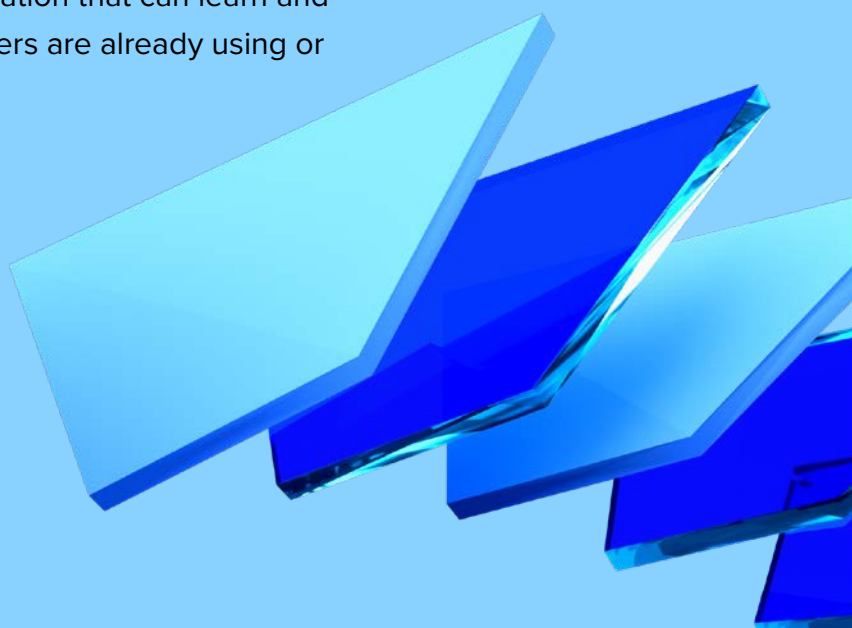
- **Start with practical AI applications that address immediate productivity challenges in your procurement processes.** Focus on areas like automated document analysis, spend data insights, and supplier research where AI can provide immediate value without requiring significant organizational change.
- **Develop a comprehensive AI governance framework that addresses data privacy, security, and compliance requirements.** This foundation will enable your organization to scale AI adoption confidently while maintaining appropriate controls over sensitive procurement information.



I think of AI as a spectrum. It starts with basic automation, then moves to more complex automation across solutions, and finally to generative-based automation that can learn and support decision making. Our customers are already using or actively exploring AI in all these ways.



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Traditional approaches to indirect spend can't keep up

Fragmented systems and processes drive users away



Procurement teams are over-burdened



Tail spend is too difficult to manage

3 Make Buying Fun

The concept of making procurement “fun” extends beyond entertainment to encompass reducing friction, increasing compliance, and creating positive user experiences that encourage adoption. Traditional procurement often erected barriers to discourage spending, but modern approaches recognize that ease of use drives compliance and better outcomes.

“We want people to actually use the tools, spend within our guidelines, and use the right suppliers at the right time,” said Mr. Harris. This involves streamlining processes, providing clear guidance, and implementing intelligent features that anticipate user needs.

Guided buying interfaces use visual design and intuitive navigation to help users find what they need quickly. Advanced features like intelligent bundling can suggest related items based on purchase history and context.

Automation plays a crucial role in improving user experience by handling routine tasks and reducing manual work. However, the focus should be on augmenting human capabilities rather than replacing personnel. Automation enables procurement professionals to focus on strategic activities like analysis and decision-making rather than data entry and routine processing.

The challenge lies in balancing ease of use with control mechanisms. Organizations need systems that are simple enough to encourage adoption while sophisticated enough to ensure compliance and capture necessary data. This requires careful attention to user interface design, process flows, and underlying technology architecture.

Key Recommendations

- **Design procurement interfaces that prioritize user experience while maintaining necessary controls and compliance measures.** Focus on creating or onboarding visually appealing, intuitive systems that guide users through processes rather than creating barriers to completion.
- **Implement intelligent features that anticipate user needs and streamline common procurement tasks.** Technologies like smart bundling, contextual suggestions, and automated form completion can significantly improve user satisfaction and process efficiency.

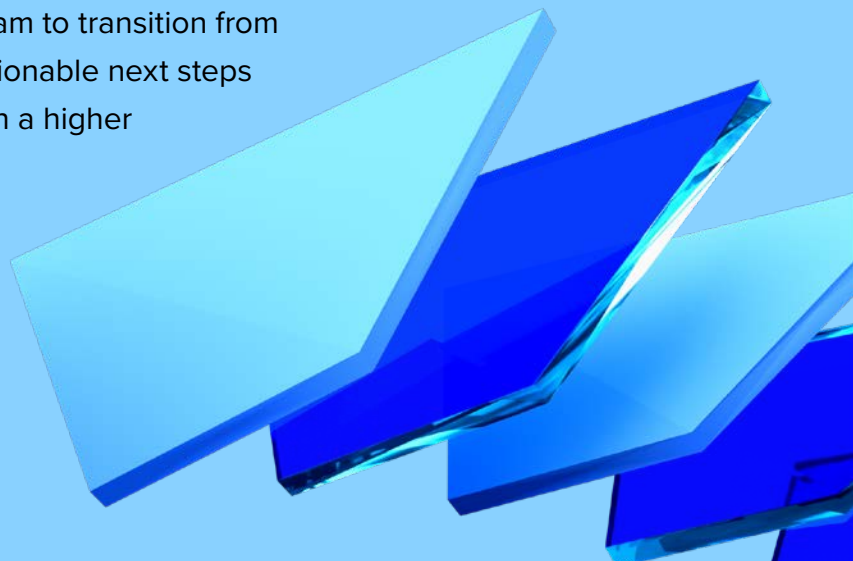
* Discover how guided buying simplifies procurement. Start your free trial [here](#).



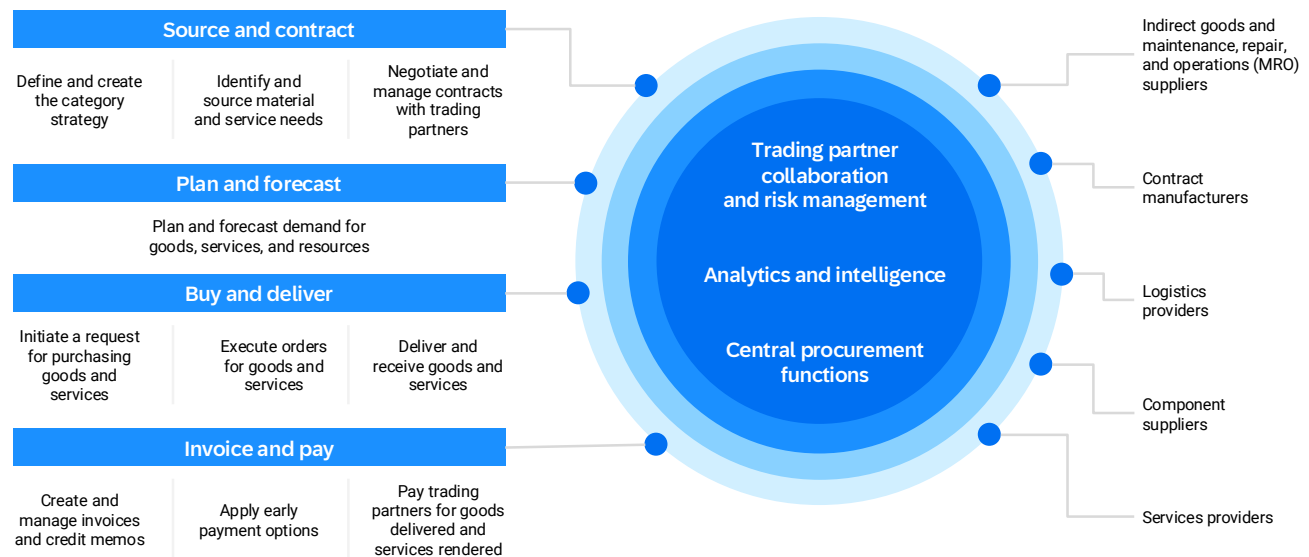
Practitioners are starting to worry that automation will take over their jobs as category managers, buyers, or Procurement professionals. What we're seeing is that automation doesn't replace these roles—it enables the team to transition from data collection and compilation to actionable next steps based on strategic insights resulting in a higher level of business impact.



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Category management—the foundation for Source to Pay success



4 Transform Your Team into Strategic Thinkers

Category management allows practitioners to advance from transactional procurement to strategic planning and execution. Mr. Saini calls it a “great north star” that allows practitioners to “think beyond the transactional purchase.”

Category management takes a holistic view of spending areas, helping teams develop comprehensive strategies that align with broader business objectives.

The discipline involves creating overarching visions for how organizations manage categories of spend, incorporating factors like market dynamics, supplier relationships, risk management, and sustainability goals. This requires tools and processes that support planning, execution, and continuous improvement across extended timeframes.

Modern category management platforms provide integrated environments where procurement professionals can conduct market analyses, develop strategies, create sourcing plans, and track performance against objectives. These systems connect analytics, strategy development, and execution in a continuous feedback loop that supports ongoing optimization.

In this way, the role of technology in category management extends beyond simple automation to enable strategic thinking and planning. Platforms can integrate external market data, internal spend analytics, and supplier performance metrics to provide comprehensive views of category opportunities and challenges. This integration allows category managers to make informed decisions and develop sophisticated strategies that drive business value.

Key Recommendations

- **Develop comprehensive category management capabilities that extend beyond individual transactions to strategic planning and execution.** Empower procurement teams to create value through sophisticated supplier strategies, market analysis, and risk management rather than focusing solely on cost reduction.
- **Implement [integrated technology platforms that connect category strategy development with execution and performance tracking](#).** These systems should enable the seamless flow of information from initial analysis to strategy execution and results measurement.



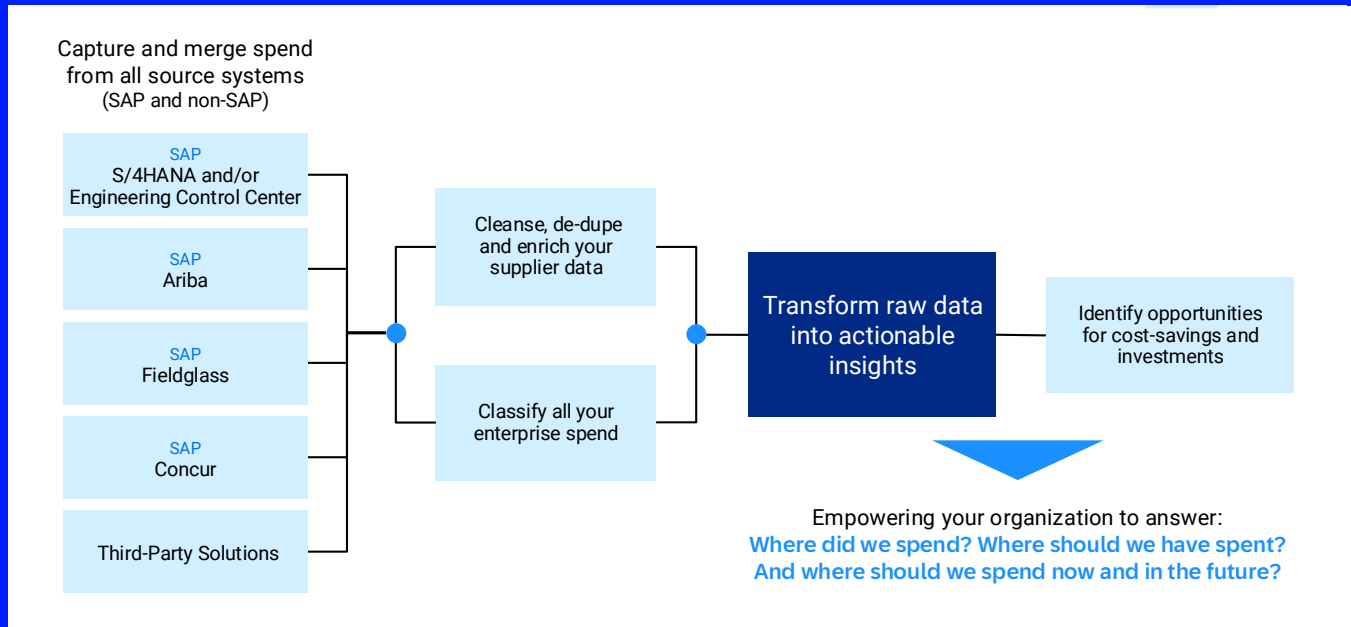
At SAP, we created a solution that makes category management an integrated, strategic part of the procurement process. By filling the gap between analytics and sourcing, data can move smoothly through the system as part of a unified workflow.



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5 Put Analytics and Visibility at Your Fingertips

Data analytics capabilities are now foundational for effective procurement decision-making. However, many organizations struggle to extract actionable insights from their information.

“Only 14% of the C-suite executives surveyed by the Economist Impact strongly agree that their organizations apply procurement insights effectively,” said Mr. Harris. The question therefore becomes, “How do you turn those insights into action?”

The challenge stems from data fragmentation across multiple systems, inconsistent classification schemes, and the sheer volume of information that today’s procurement function generates. Organizations often have spend data scattered across ERP systems, procurement platforms, and third-party sources, making comprehensive analysis difficult and time-consuming.

Effective spend analytics platforms address these challenges by consolidating data from multiple sources, cleansing and enriching it, and providing unified views of procurement performance. These systems can rationalize supplier data, classify spend consistently, and identify opportunities for cost savings, supplier consolidation, and process improvement.

Advanced analytics capabilities include identifying spend patterns, supplier performance trends, and compliance issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. The technology can flag anomalies, suggest optimization opportunities, and provide benchmarking data that helps organizations understand their performance relative to industry peers.

The ultimate goal is to transform raw data into actionable intelligence that enables better decision-making and continuous improvement. This requires not just technology but also the skills and capabilities necessary to interpret insights and take appropriate action.

Key Recommendations

- Invest in **comprehensive spend analytics platforms** that can consolidate and harmonize data from multiple procurement systems. Unifying data flows enables organizations to identify opportunities and risks that would be invisible when data remains fragmented across different platforms.
- Develop organizational capabilities to translate procurement **insights into specific actions** and measurable improvements. Having good data is only valuable if your team can interpret the insights and implement changes that drive business value.



Spend visibility starts with three simple questions: Where am I spending? How am I spending? With whom am I spending? But as companies grow and adopt new systems, achieving that clarity becomes complex. When organizations establish true visibility across systems, processes, and suppliers, they unlock insights that extend far beyond cost savings—driving smarter decisions, stronger supplier partnerships, and lasting business value.



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About the Authors



SAP helps bring simplicity and clarity to all types of spending from all across a company. With spend management and business network solutions from SAP, companies can guide employees to smart spending decisions, partner with the rest of the organization and work closely with suppliers to make sure every transaction is a strategic investment.

For more information, please visit [SAP.com](https://www.sap.com).

For more insights, listen to the recording [here](#).

ProcureCon INSIGHTS

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Our deep industry intelligence not only informs procurement leaders but also connects innovative solution providers with key decision-makers, fostering a dynamic ecosystem that drives the future of procurement and sourcing in the business world.

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