

**HEALTHCAREAPEX**

# Healthcare Career Growth Starter Kit

*A Free Guide for Nurses, Therapists, Caregivers, and Healthcare Professionals to  
Increase Income, Stay Licensed, and Plan Their Next Career Move*

## **Inside this starter kit**

Career self-assessment, license and CE planning, salary growth ideas, resume/profile checklists, specialization options, flexible work comparisons, burnout prevention, and a 30-day career action plan.

**Prepared for HealthcareApex.com**

Lead Magnet Edition | Practical Career Planning Resource

## Important Note and How to Use This Guide

This ebook is an educational career planning resource. It does not replace advice from your state licensing board, employer, credentialing agency, attorney, tax professional, financial advisor, or healthcare regulator. Requirements can vary by profession, state, employer, specialty, and contract type. Always confirm license, renewal, continuing education, and scope-of-practice requirements with the appropriate official source before making career decisions.

Use this guide as a working document. Read one chapter at a time, complete the worksheet at the end of each chapter, and transfer your answers into the 30-day action plan in Chapter 11. The goal is not to create a perfect career plan in one sitting. The goal is to make your next career move clearer, safer, and more intentional.

- Be honest about your current income, stress level, schedule, and satisfaction.
- Keep copies of licenses, certifications, CE certificates, performance reviews, and updated resumes.
- Review your career plan every 90 days, even when you are not actively job hunting.
- Use HealthcareApex.com as a professional visibility and career organization resource.

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# Chapter 1: Your Healthcare Career Self-Assessment

A strong healthcare career plan starts with a clear picture of where you are today. Many professionals work for years without pausing to measure whether their role still fits their income needs, health, family life, skill level, and long-term goals. This chapter helps you slow down, look at the facts, and identify what needs to change.

## Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of your healthcare career self-assessment and one practical action you can take this month.

## Current Role and Work Setting

Write down your job title, employer type, unit or department, shift, average weekly hours, patient population, and the tasks you perform most often. Your role on paper may be different from your real day-to-day responsibilities. A CNA in long-term care, an RN in med-surg, a therapist in outpatient rehab, a caregiver in private duty, and a medical assistant in a busy clinic all face different schedules, stress patterns, and advancement options.

## Income, Benefits, and Schedule Reality

Your compensation is more than your hourly rate or salary. Include shift differential, overtime, weekend pay, paid time off, retirement match, health insurance, tuition reimbursement, travel reimbursement, and schedule flexibility. A higher hourly rate may not be better if the schedule causes burnout or if benefits are weak.

## Career Satisfaction Score

Rate your current career satisfaction from 1 to 10. Then score the major parts separately: income, schedule, leadership, work environment, patient load, growth opportunities, commute, benefits, and emotional energy after work. The total picture helps you see whether the issue is the profession, the employer, the setting, or a missing growth plan.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, and Transferable Skills

List the skills people already trust you with. These may include patient communication, wound care, medication administration, scheduling, documentation, EHR use, conflict resolution, care coordination, leadership, training new staff, or family education. Also list areas where you need improvement. A useful career plan is built on both truth and opportunity.

## 30, 90, and 365 Day Changes

Career change does not always require quitting. In the next 30 days you may check your license, update your resume, or ask about tuition support. In 90 days you may complete CE, apply for a certification, or interview for a better role. In 365 days you may enter a bridge program, switch settings, become a travel professional, or launch a small healthcare-related business.

## Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Healthcare Career Snapshot

Career Area	Current Answer	Score / Notes
Job title and role		
Years of experience		
Income and benefits		
Work setting and schedule		
Career satisfaction 1-10		
Stress/burnout level 1-10		
Top strengths		
Skills to improve		
30-day change needed		
90-day change needed		
365-day goal		

## Chapter 2: Understanding Your Career Options in Healthcare

Healthcare is not a single ladder. It is a network of clinical, administrative, technical, educational, remote, contract, and entrepreneurial paths. The best path for you depends on your license, interests, income goals, tolerance for stress, schedule needs, and willingness to pursue additional education or certification.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of understanding your career options in healthcare and one practical action you can take this month.

### Clinical Career Paths

Clinical pathways include bedside care, outpatient care, rehabilitation, diagnostics, behavioral health, emergency care, surgical services, long-term care, home health, hospice, and specialty clinics. Some professionals grow by deepening their clinical expertise; others grow by moving into a new patient population or care setting.

### Administrative and Operational Roles

Healthcare organizations need people who understand care delivery and can manage schedules, documentation, quality, compliance, billing support, referrals, authorizations, and patient experience. These roles can be attractive for professionals who want to use healthcare knowledge with less physical strain.

### Telehealth and Remote Healthcare Roles

Remote healthcare work may include triage, care navigation, case management, utilization review, patient education, chart review, scheduling, prior authorization support, and chronic care management. Not every role is fully remote, but many hybrid opportunities exist for experienced professionals with strong communication and documentation skills.

### Home Health, Private Duty, and Mobile Care

Home-based care continues to create opportunities for caregivers, nurses, therapists, aides, and care coordinators. These roles can offer flexibility and close patient relationships, but they also require independence, documentation discipline, travel planning, and strong boundary-setting.

### Leadership, Education, and Entrepreneurship

Leadership may include charge roles, supervisory positions, clinical manager roles, director roles, staff development, or education. Entrepreneurship may include CPR training, caregiving agencies, staffing support, consulting, patient advocacy, healthcare content, continuing education, or specialized community services. Start with compliance, scope of practice, and a realistic business plan.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.

2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.

3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

### Worksheet: Healthcare Career Path Comparison Chart

Path Option	Why It Interests Me	Requirements	Income Potential	Lifestyle Fit
Clinical specialty				
Administrative role				
Telehealth/remote				
Home health/private duty				
Travel/contract				
Leadership/education				
Entrepreneurship				

## Chapter 3: How to Check Your License and Credential Status

Your license or certification is one of your most valuable career assets. If it expires, lapses, or shows unresolved issues, your income and job options can be affected quickly. This chapter helps you build a simple habit of checking and protecting your professional status.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of how to check your license and credential status and one practical action you can take this month.

### Why License Status Matters

Employers, staffing agencies, insurers, credentialing departments, and patients depend on accurate licensing information. An active license supports employability and trust. A lapsed license can delay hiring, stop assignment placement, or create compliance problems.

### State Licensing Boards and Certification Agencies

Many healthcare roles are regulated at the state level. Others rely on national certification agencies or specialty boards. Keep a list of every agency connected to your role. Include your license number, certification number, renewal date, login portal, and support contact.

### Renewal Deadlines and Required Updates

Do not wait until renewal month to check requirements. Update your mailing address, email, name changes, employer information, and required documentation early. Missed notices are a common reason professionals fall behind.

### Disciplinary History and Verification

Periodically check your public license profile. Confirm your name, status, expiration date, endorsements, restrictions, and disciplinary history are accurate. If anything looks wrong, contact the official board or agency promptly.

### Common Renewal Mistakes

Common mistakes include assuming the employer tracks everything, taking non-approved CE, losing certificates, forgetting background check or fingerprint requirements, missing fees, and confusing certification renewal with state license renewal.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

### Worksheet: License and Credential Checklist

Item	Details	Status
------	---------	--------

License/certification name		
License/certification number		
Issuing board/agency		
Expiration date		
Renewal portal/login saved?		
Address/email current?		
CE requirements confirmed?		
Certificates saved?		
Any public profile issue?		

## Chapter 4: Continuing Education and Renewal Planning

Continuing education protects your license and can also position you for better roles. Instead of treating CE as a last-minute requirement, use it as a professional development strategy. The right courses can support specialization, promotion, and confidence.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of continuing education and renewal planning and one practical action you can take this month.

### What Continuing Education Means

Continuing education includes approved learning activities required to maintain a license, certification, or credential. It can include online courses, workshops, conferences, employer training, specialty modules, and required topics such as ethics, infection control, pain management, cultural competency, or safety.

### Requirements Vary by Role and State

A nurse, therapist, caregiver, medical assistant, social worker, technician, or administrator may have different CE rules. Requirements may also vary by state and renewal cycle. Always check the official source for your exact role.

### Tracking Required Hours

Create a simple CE tracker with course title, provider, approval number, date completed, hours earned, required category, certificate location, and renewal cycle. Store certificates in both digital and printed formats.

### Choosing Approved Providers

Before paying for a course, confirm that it is accepted by your board or credentialing agency. Look for provider approval numbers, course descriptions, required topic categories, completion certificates, and customer support.

### Using CE Strategically

Choose CE that supports your next step. If you want home health, take wound care, fall prevention, chronic disease, documentation, or patient education courses. If you want leadership, take communication, delegation, quality improvement, and compliance courses.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: CE Hours Tracker

Course / Activity	Provider	Date	Hours	Category	Certificate Saved?

## Chapter 5: Salary Growth Opportunities by Role

Income growth in healthcare rarely happens by accident. It usually comes from experience, specialty skills, location, shift selection, certifications, contract work, leadership responsibilities, or moving to a better-paying setting. This chapter helps you compare options before making a move.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of salary growth opportunities by role and one practical action you can take this month.

### How Healthcare Pay Is Determined

Pay may be influenced by role, license level, specialty, location, facility type, staffing demand, union agreements, shift, years of experience, certifications, and employer budget. A realistic salary plan compares total compensation, not just base pay.

### Shift Differentials, Overtime, and Weekend Pay

Even within the same role, night shift, weekend shift, on-call, overtime, and holiday pay can change annual income significantly. However, higher earnings should be balanced against sleep, family needs, safety, and long-term sustainability.

### Specialty Certifications and Skills

Certifications can signal expertise and may help you qualify for specialty units, higher-paying roles, or leadership tracks. Choose certifications based on demand, employer recognition, cost, renewal requirements, and relevance to your desired path.

### Travel, Contract, Home Health, and Private Care

Flexible work can create higher income opportunities, but it can also bring gaps in benefits, tax complexity, inconsistent hours, travel costs, and contract risk. Compare net income, not headline pay.

### How to Ask for a Raise Professionally

Prepare evidence. Include years of service, performance results, patient satisfaction, leadership tasks, training responsibilities, certifications, hard-to-fill shifts, and market comparisons. Ask for a meeting, use a respectful tone, and be ready to discuss specific numbers or growth steps.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Salary Growth Planner

Opportunity	Base Pay	Differential/OT	Benefits	Schedule	Pros/Cons
Current role					
Specialty role					
New employer					
Per-diem/PRN					
Travel/contract					
Leadership role					

# Chapter 6: Building a Strong Healthcare Resume

A healthcare resume should show more than job history. It should prove that you are qualified, dependable, patient-focused, compliant, and ready for the role. Recruiters and hiring managers often scan quickly, so your strongest details must be easy to find.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of building a strong healthcare resume and one practical action you can take this month.

## Resume Format for Healthcare Professionals

Use a clean layout with clear sections: contact information, professional summary, licenses and certifications, clinical or technical skills, work experience, education, and additional training. Avoid clutter, long paragraphs, tiny font, or unrelated personal details.

### Professional Summary

Write three to five lines that describe your role, experience, strengths, settings, patient populations, and career focus. Tailor this summary to each type of role you pursue.

### License and Certification Section

Make licenses and certifications easy to verify. Include license type, state, license number if appropriate, status, expiration date, and certifications such as BLS, ACLS, PALS, CPR, CNA, LPN, RN, specialty credentials, or therapy credentials.

### Clinical Skills and Technology

List relevant skills such as medication administration, wound care, vital signs, documentation, care planning, patient education, EHR systems, scheduling software, remote monitoring, infection control, or equipment experience.

### Accomplishments and Keywords

Use action language and measurable examples where possible. Instead of only saying responsible for patient care, say provided daily care for 12-18 residents, trained new aides, improved documentation accuracy, or supported discharge planning. Use keywords from the job description while staying truthful.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Healthcare Resume Checklist

Resume Section	Complete?	Notes
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Contact information		
Professional summary		
Licenses/certifications		
Clinical/technical skills		
Work experience with accomplishments		
EHR/technology experience		
Education and training		
Keywords from target jobs		
Proofread and saved as PDF		

# Chapter 7: Optimizing Your Online Professional Profile

Your online professional presence can help employers, staffing agencies, clients, referral partners, and professional networks understand what you do. A complete profile builds credibility before someone contacts you.

## Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of optimizing your online professional profile and one practical action you can take this month.

## Why Professional Profiles Matter

Many healthcare opportunities start online. Recruiters search directories and professional networks. Patients and families also review public profiles when choosing private care, therapy, home health, or support services.

## LinkedIn Basics for Healthcare Workers

Use a clear headline, professional photo, concise bio, license and certification details, work settings, specialties, and career interests. Engage professionally and avoid sharing patient information or workplace details that violate privacy.

## Healthcare Directory Profile Essentials

A strong directory profile includes your role, service area, license or credential status, specialties, care settings, availability, languages, contact preferences, and a short credibility-building bio.

## Professional Photo and Bio Tips

Choose a clear, friendly, appropriate photo. Your bio should explain who you help, what you are qualified to do, and what makes you reliable. Keep it specific and professional.

## How a Complete HealthcareApex Profile Can Help

A complete HealthcareApex profile can help organize professional details and improve discoverability. Treat it as part of your career toolkit: current, accurate, polished, and aligned with your next opportunity.

## Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Healthcare Profile Optimization Checklist

Profile Area	Complete?	Improvement Needed
Professional photo		

Headline/title		
Bio/about section		
License/certification details		
Specialties listed		
Service area/availability		
Contact preferences		
Privacy check completed		
HealthcareApex profile updated		

# Chapter 8: Career Growth Through Specialization

Specialization can help you stand out, increase confidence, qualify for better roles, and protect your career from stagnation. The best specialty is not always the most popular one. It is the one that fits demand, your strengths, your lifestyle, and your long-term goals.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of career growth through specialization and one practical action you can take this month.

## Why Specialization Matters

Healthcare employers often need professionals who can solve specific problems. Specialized skills can help you move into higher-responsibility roles, specialty departments, consulting, education, leadership, or flexible work.

## Nursing Specialty Examples

Examples may include emergency, ICU, perioperative, labor and delivery, dialysis, oncology, wound care, case management, utilization review, infusion, pediatrics, geriatrics, informatics, education, and home health.

## Therapy and Rehabilitation Specialties

Therapists and rehab professionals may explore neuro, ortho, geriatrics, pediatrics, sports rehab, hand therapy, pelvic health, lymphedema, home health, assistive technology, or management roles.

## Home Health, Elder Care, and Behavioral Health

Ageing populations and mental health needs create demand for professionals who understand chronic disease, dementia care, fall prevention, medication support, caregiver education, behavioral health, and community-based care.

## Choosing a Specialty Based on Demand and Lifestyle

Compare cost, time, required education, employer recognition, schedule, physical demands, emotional demands, income potential, and long-term market demand. A good specialty should move you toward a better life, not just a busier one.

## Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Specialization Decision Matrix

Specialty Option	Demand	Cost/Time	Income	Lifestyle Fit	Next Step
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			Potential		

## Chapter 9: Travel, Per-Diem, Telehealth, and Flexible Work Options

Flexible work can be attractive because it may offer higher pay, schedule control, remote options, or new experiences. It also requires careful comparison. A contract with a high rate may not be better if benefits, taxes, travel costs, cancellation risk, or workload make it unstable.

### Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of travel, per-diem, telehealth, and flexible work options and one practical action you can take this month.

### Traditional Full-Time Employment

Full-time employment may offer stable benefits, paid time off, retirement plans, training, consistent scheduling, and internal promotion. It may also limit flexibility or income growth if the role has few advancement pathways.

### Per-Diem and PRN Work

Per-diem and PRN roles can provide schedule flexibility and higher hourly rates. They may be useful for professionals who want extra income or variety. The tradeoff may include fewer benefits, inconsistent hours, or limited guaranteed shifts.

### Travel Nursing and Allied Travel

Travel and contract assignments can offer strong pay and experience in different settings. Before accepting, review housing, stipends, cancellation terms, license requirements, onboarding costs, guaranteed hours, overtime rules, and support from the agency.

### Telehealth and Remote Roles

Telehealth roles often require excellent communication, documentation, technology comfort, triage judgment, and privacy awareness. Remote work can reduce commute stress, but it may also involve productivity metrics and strict documentation standards.

### Questions Before Accepting Contract Work

Ask about rate, guaranteed hours, benefits, cancellation policy, onboarding costs, travel reimbursement, schedule, patient ratio, floating requirements, supervisor support, documentation system, insurance coverage, and whether the role fits your license and scope of practice.

### Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Flexible Work Comparison Sheet

Work Option	Pay	Benefits	Schedule Control	Risks	Best Questions to Ask
Full-time					
Per-diem/PRN					
Local contract					
Travel assignment					
Telehealth/remote					
Home health/mobile					

# Chapter 10: Avoiding Burnout and Protecting Your Well-Being

A career plan that ignores health is incomplete. Healthcare work can be meaningful and demanding at the same time. Burnout can affect performance, relationships, sleep, empathy, physical health, and long-term career decisions. Protecting your well-being is not selfish; it is part of professional sustainability.

## Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of avoiding burnout and protecting your well-being and one practical action you can take this month.

## What Burnout Looks Like

Burnout may show up as emotional exhaustion, irritability, low motivation, cynicism, dread before shifts, sleep problems, frequent sickness, mistakes, isolation, or feeling detached from patients and coworkers.

## Common Causes in Healthcare

Common causes include understaffing, high patient load, difficult leadership, rotating shifts, moral distress, documentation pressure, workplace conflict, trauma exposure, low pay, lack of control, and poor recovery time.

## Sleep, Recovery, and Boundaries

Protect sleep as a career asset. Plan recovery after difficult shifts. Set boundaries around extra shifts, phone calls, schedule changes, and emotional labor. High achievers often need written limits because saying yes becomes automatic.

## Support Systems and Difficult Workplaces

Build support through mentors, peers, employee assistance programs, faith or community support, family conversations, therapy, coaching, or professional associations. If a workplace is unsafe or consistently harmful, changing settings may be the healthiest career move.

## Building a Healthier Career Rhythm

A sustainable rhythm includes income planning, adequate rest, manageable workload, professional growth, supportive relationships, and periodic review. Sometimes the goal is not to leave healthcare; it is to find a healthier version of your healthcare career.

## Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: Burnout Risk Self-Check

Statement	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Notes
I feel exhausted before work begins.				
I have trouble recovering after shifts.				
I feel detached or cynical.				
My sleep is inconsistent.				
I say yes to extra work too often.				
I feel unsupported at work.				
My health is being affected.				

# Chapter 11: Creating Your 30-Day Healthcare Career Action Plan

Information becomes powerful when it turns into action. This chapter gives you a practical four-week plan to organize your career, protect your license, improve your resume, compare income options, and take the next step.

## Chapter goal

By the end of this chapter, you should have a clearer view of creating your 30-day healthcare career action plan and one practical action you can take this month.

## Week 1: Career Audit and License Check

Complete your career self-assessment. Check your license and credential status. Record renewal dates, CE requirements, certificates, and login portals. Identify one urgent issue that must be fixed this month.

## Week 2: Resume and Profile Updates

Update your resume, LinkedIn, staffing profiles, and HealthcareApex profile. Add current skills, certifications, specialties, work settings, and accomplishments. Save your resume as both editable and PDF formats.

## Week 3: Salary Research and Opportunity Search

Compare your current compensation with other roles, settings, shifts, specialties, and flexible work options. List at least five potential opportunities and identify what each would require.

## Week 4: Applications, Networking, and Next Steps

Apply to selected roles, contact recruiters, speak with mentors, request informational interviews, or ask your employer about promotion or tuition support. End the month with a clear 90-day plan.

## Measurable Goals and Accountability

Use numbers: applications submitted, CE hours completed, profiles updated, recruiters contacted, salary targets, or certification steps. Accountability turns interest into progress.

## Action Steps

1. Circle one issue or opportunity that needs attention now.
2. Write one measurable action you can complete within 7 days.
3. Add that action to your 30-day planner in Chapter 11.

## Worksheet: 30-Day Career Growth Planner

Week	Primary Focus	Tasks	Completed?
Week 1	Career audit and license	Complete snapshot; verify license; list CE needs	

	check		
Week 2	Resume and profile updates	Update resume; update LinkedIn; update HealthcareApex profile	
Week 3	Salary and opportunity research	Compare roles; contact recruiters; identify gaps	
Week 4	Applications and next steps	Apply; network; set 90-day plan	

## Chapter 12: HealthcareApex Career Toolkit

This toolkit brings the most useful worksheets into one printable section. Use it as a career binder. Update it every quarter, before license renewal, before applying to jobs, and after major career changes.

### How to use this toolkit

Print the worksheets, complete them honestly, and keep them with your resume, CE certificates, license information, and job search notes. Review the annual career review sheet once per year.

### Annual Career Review Sheet

Question	Answer / Notes
What changed in my role this year?	
What did I learn?	
What certifications or CE did I complete?	
What income growth did I achieve?	
What caused the most stress?	
What role or setting should I explore next?	
Top 3 goals for next year	

### Job Opportunity Comparison

Employer / Role	Pay	Benefits	Schedule	Growth Potential	Decision

### Networking Tracker

Contact Name	Role/Organization	Date Contacted	Purpose	Follow-Up

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## Interview Preparation Sheet

Prompt	Prepared Notes
Tell me about yourself	
Why are you interested in this role?	
Describe a difficult patient or workplace situation	
What are your strengths?	
What questions will I ask the employer?	

## Career Goal Planner

Goal	Why It Matters	Deadline	First Step	Support Needed

## Final Encouragement

A better healthcare career does not always require a dramatic move. Sometimes it begins with checking your license, completing CE early, updating your resume, improving your profile, comparing salaries, or having one professional conversation. Small, organized steps can compound into better income, better opportunities, and a healthier career rhythm.

Use this starter kit as a living plan. Revisit it when your schedule changes, when your license renewal approaches, when you feel burned out, or when you are ready to grow. Your healthcare experience has value. The next step is to organize it, protect it, and position it for the opportunities that fit your future.

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