TVET Promotion Toolkit
IMPRINT

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I.

Introduction
Marketing and communication are central to an organisation’s success. In the field of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), marketing and communication means active engagement in understanding the needs of industry as well as learners and responding to those needs. To achieve this, there must be a detailed understanding of the market TVET serves. This requires market research to understand the external and internal environment. At the same time, PR activities contribute to improve the credibility of TVET institutes and to promote the image of TVET in Viet Nam as a promising career choice. Thus, they aim to change the existing stereotype in the society that values university studies higher than vocational training.

Understanding the importance of this work, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) in cooperation with the Vietnamese-German Programme “Reform of TVET in Viet Nam” have implemented various activities to spread the message on the role of TVET ensuring a high-quality workforce that meets the needs of the labour market. At numerous TVET institutes across the country, many image activities have already been initiated with creative and attractive formats and content, arousing attention of a wide range of audiences.

The following brochure shares hand-on experiences on marketing and communication work in Viet Nam as well as other countries, with the inputs of communication experts from DVET, the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the Vietnamese Association of Vocational Education and Training (VAVET & SOW), TVET institutes across Viet Nam and GIZ. The guideline helps TVET staff to further develop their communication skills and gives food for new ideas to continue the PR work more effectively.

The brochure certainly has some shortcomings and the tools still need to be further developed and adjusted during their application in practice. Therefore, we hope to receive your comments and inputs to get a more comprehensive and practical toolkit.
II.

10 tips for marketing and communication activities for TVET
1. Focus on quality

The best advertisement for a product is the quality of what you do and having a delighted customer. For a TVET college, all communication and marketing means are worth nothing if the quality of your training is low. The quality and employability of TVET trainees or employers’ satisfaction with TVET graduates’ competencies are the most persuasive content to marketing TVET to different target groups.

2. Know your target groups

The target audience is the ideal customer that you want to attract to your service through communication and marketing efforts. Knowing the target group that you intend to address is a crucial success factor. You can create the most creative and expensive campaigns, but if your message falls on deaf ears, you are just wasting time, money and energy. TVET institutes that know their target audience can be more effective in getting their messages across.

Thus, it is necessary to identify different target groups within the TVET system:

**Internal**
- Teachers and managers of the TVET institutes
- Trainees of the TVET institutes

**External**
- Secondary school/high school students/graduates
- Workers, self-employed or unemployed persons who are seeking further training
- TVET alumni
- Parents/families
- Business partners/industries
- In-company trainers
- Government and ministries
- Media

... Understanding the target audience describing the “who, what, when, where and why” will help creating suitable marketing and communication means and contents. These information can be documented in the form of a persona, including:

- Demographics (age, gender, education,…)
- Location (urban or rural)
- Psychological characteristics (personality, hobbies, attitude)
- Habits (media channels they often use such as TV, radio, Instagram, Facebook, Zalo)
- Language (local, informal)
- Needs and pain points

**Example**

Persona of the target group: parent of a secondary/high-school graduate

- Likes his/her child to go to university rather than to a TVET college
- Is concerned about the tuition fee, and job opportunities after graduation
- Watches TV on a daily basis, sometimes browses Facebook and online newspapers

3. Use parents and family as influencers

Though students are the direct target groups of vocational training, parents’ and families’ opinions greatly influence the student’s decision making process. Therefore, it is important to explore how parents formulate their opinions and where they seek their information. Just when you understand their point of view when it comes to the education of their child, you can perfectly align your communication means.
4. Create positive emotions

As important as the identification of the target groups is the framing of an appealing key message. Due to a flood of information available on the internet and social media channels, it is difficult to get attention for your specific service. Thus, it is crucial to create positive emotions to draw and maintain audiences’ attention.

Example

Promoting national skills competitions (see page 18) will bring pride and joy, or using the school’s robot during events will raise curiosity and interest in the training provided.

5. Engage TVET alumni or current TVET trainees

Another way to create positive emotions on a personal level is the involvement of current TVET trainees or TVET alumni when it comes to the acquisition of new students. They can present their career choice, share their personal experience and provide potential new trainees with firsthand information about the TVET training environment. Many successful TVET trainees/graduates also become role models to share their own journey about how they overcome difficulties to achieve career goals. These are inspiring stories to encourage more young people into vocational career pathways. (see page 25).

6. Be pro-active in communication

Pro-active communication creates credibility, loyalty and trust in your institution. Pro-active communication includes opt-in notifications and chats, social media responsiveness and multi-channel contact.

7. Create beneficial partnerships

In line with a pro-active communication is the pro-active acquisition of new partners, such as local secondary and high schools or associations. Building mutually-beneficial relationships between local general schools and TVET colleges is an important factor. Ideally, the school and the TVET college enter into a promotive partnership, organising special events and establishing regular information exchange. Further, as the course develops, it is favourable to cooperate with national or regional associations to create marketing partnerships. The involvement of such associations helps the college achieve what it cannot achieve on its own and also suggests to the industry an assurance of quality and updated technology.

8. Promote the engagement of the business sector

Make enterprises delight to be part of your training institution, not only for training phases but also concerning marketing and communication activities. Establish a regular exchange to identify current bottle-necks, quality problems, equipment failures or management constraints that can be directly related to an absence of skilled labour. Proposing a joint solution that solves the problem will meet the industry’s demand for skilled workers as well as the students’ need for jobs. If employers sense the commitment of your institution to their training needs, they will work with you. On this basis, you can sell training as other suppliers sell their products or services to the industry.

9. Get local media coverage of your training partnership

Visibility in the press reassures the industry of its decision to work with you and gives it a socially responsible image. Therefore, you should establish and maintain a network of local media outlets to promote your activities via multimedia channels, including traditional as well as social media, to make sure that TVET messages can reach various audiences.

10. Promote inclusion and gender equality in TVET

Female as well as and disadvantaged (ethnic minorities, poor people, people with disabilities, etc.)
Increase visibility of women’s participation in all fields where men are often dominant and vice versa.

Make sure that the voice and image of both, males and females, are presented equally in your communications products.

Consider extensive social campaigning with focus on sensitization and awareness-raising reaching out to girls, families, employers and all stakeholders.

Organise communication events targeting on girls and their families (e.g. Girls’ Day, Boy’s Day see page 10).

Develop special promotional measures to attract female students to high-demand and non-typical skills areas.

Examples

Full scholarship granted by the Vietnamese-German TVET programme for women enrolling in technical occupations

The scholarship is aiming to raise awareness about vocational training, eliminating social stereotypes that prevent women from following occupations that are often considered inappropriate for women. This initiative is a specific and concrete action not only to give women access to vocational training but also to contribute to an equal environment for everyone.
Girls’ Day in Bac Ninh College of Industry (BCI)

The main idea of Girls’ Days is an open day for female highschool students to discover various technical training programmes offered by TVET institutes and to explore technical career opportunities. This aims to encourage female participation in traditionally male-dominated occupations. Thus, forty female students from a regional high school were invited to experience a day in BCI. They were divided into groups of five, each guided by a current BCI student showing them departments’ information booths, workshops, the campus, etc.

Moreover, a treasure hunt/photo challenge was organised to encourage the interaction between the girls and current students, alumni and teachers. The students had the chance to work with real machines, making them understand more about the offered occupations.
III.

Marketing and Communication Tools for TVET
A brand is the idea that people have in mind when thinking about specific products, services or institutions, both in a practical and emotional way. Branding is a combination of many things including name, logo, slogan, colours, visual identity or the message communicated. Good branding is essential for the success of the whole TVET system. The benefits of TVET branding are:

- Providing discernible TVET identification and recognition;
- Increasing school and student pride;
- Validating the TVET mission and core values;
- Building trust and loyalty.

TVET schools operate in a businesslike market where students are “customers” and other schools and universities are competitors. To successfully compete, the TVET college must develop and market its own brand that differentiates it from the thousands of other schools and universities vying for students and funding. Good branding is essential for the success of all TVET institutes because it provides discernible TVET identification and recognition, increases school and student pride, validates TVET mission and core values as well as builds trust and loyalty.

This brochure will discuss the two most important branding factors: logo and slogan. They are also the first two factors that the school develops and will accompany the school over its life-time.
Logo

A logo, just like in business, is an effective branding tool for TVET colleges as the local community, parents and students will associate the college with it. A good college logo is appealing, eye catching, unique, but at the same time simple and easy to remember.

Useful tips

- Use the college’s name that is most familiar to the community (full name or abbreviation).
- Choose a layout that is simple and easy to remember; avoid unnecessary and complicated details.
- Combine colours in a creative, but harmonious way.
- Focus on what distinguishes you from other competitors.
- Consider your target market.

Examples

Bac Ninh College of Industry
Motto
“Study the future”

Ba Ria-Vung Tau College of Technology
Motto “Continuous improvement toward a quality workforce”

Slogan

The slogan often follows the logo, representing the college’s spirit, goal and vision.

Useful tips

- Define a clear objective.
- Choose a strong, short, understandable and memorable message.
- Go with a smooth sound that has a catchy rhythm.
- Reflect the college’s unique selling points.
- Impress with a few words that say a lot.
- Avoid common words that are easily used by other brands.
- Use a cultural sensitive language.
02. Creating a professional website

The website is a comprehensive source of information about the offered programmes, curriculum, policies, events and operations. It is designed to meet the information needs of students, parents, companies and the public. The site should be created using web best practices. Further, a yearly online user survey and the regular use of analytic tools ensure that the site corresponds to key indicators and the goals of the college’s strategic plan.

**Useful tips**

A website should include the following pages:

**Home page**
The front page of the website where you can put the logo, motto, images, news and the latest information about upcoming events.

**About page**
Provides information about the history of the college, the location, certification, etc.

**Courses**
Provides detailed information about courses the school offers.

**Faculty bio and information**
Provides information about the teachers and team members of your college.

**Registration form**
Provides the option for students to sign up for classes.

**Contact form**
Inquiry form for prospective students and site visitors to contact the college.

**Examples**

https://www.bctech.edu.vn/
https://www.hvct.edu.vn/
https://www.lilama2.edu.vn/
03. Facebook, YouTube and other social media pages

In Viet Nam, Facebook is still the most common social media channel, which can also increase traffic to the college’s website. Thus, Facebook should be the first social media page to be filled with content. Subsequently, social media activities can be extended to other platforms (e.g. YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok).

Social media should be used to provide realtime information about the college life to the community. Relevant topics are e.g. news, photos of events, achievements, insights, student and staff pictures, information of college closures or general education news.

Useful tips

Link all social media pages to each other in order to boost traffic.

Maintain interaction on Facebook by asking questions, opening small contests, posting photos, visuals, etc.

Examples

- [facebook/cdktcnbryt/](facebook/cdktcnbryt/)
- [facebook/tuyensinhHVCT/](facebook/tuyensinhHVCT/)
- [facebook/cdcnbn/](facebook/cdcnbn/)
- Youtube: lilama2

Just post content that reflects the key values of your school.

Focus on quality and provide relevant information.

Use appealing messages and taglines; encourage sharing and interaction under the postings.
04. Printed material

Communication materials are comprehensive sources of information about the college in general, a specific training programme or a certain topic. Different materials can be designed to fit different objectives and different target audiences. Some common forms of communication materials are portfolio, leaflets, flyers and brochures.

Useful tips

- Use colours that are consistent with the school’s brand identity.
- Be creative, be unique (don’t copy).
- Avoid big words.
- Put an emphasis on the headline.
- Use high-quality paper.

Examples

Brochures introducing different occupations at LILAMA 2

Infographic “Vocational education and training in 2017 at a glance”: http://bit.ly/35gK0u
Organising Information Days at TVET institutes

Opening up to the public, the school should regularly organise some small events, especially for secondary and high school students, such as Open Days, Career Guidance Days or Girls’ and Boys’ Days. Before enrolment season, teachers and students show to interested school leavers, parents, companies and other key actors real classroom situations and experiences. Events like this also provide a great opportunity to involve the business sector.

Tips

- Establish your event objectives.
- Decide on the date: make sure that it doesn’t clash with other local events and pick a suitable time.
- Create a budget: most things cost!
- Recruit an organisation team: who does what? Involve your staff by giving them real responsibilities.

Example

Open Day at LILAMA 2

The event attracted a great attention by students, their parents and the management boards from high schools in Dong Nai and the neighbouring provinces, as well as LILAMA 2, alumni and current trainees and human resource managers from enterprises. Besides consultation and discussion sessions, the participants also experienced “one day as LILAMA 2 trainee” with many practical activities like visiting the TVET institute’s facilities, exchanging experiences with current trainees, teachers and alumni, and visiting the modern training workshops. With more than ten interactive booths, the event was a useful and practical experience for students and their parents, especially only a few months before they have to make their decision regarding about their career choice.
Participation in national and international skills competitions

Skills competitions bring youth, industries, and educators together to give young people the chance to compete, experience and learn how to become the best in their skill of choice. They are making a direct impact on raising the level of skills throughout the world. Further, the competitions have raised awareness among the youth, as well as their parents, teachers and employers, that our future depends on an effective skills training system. But most important, achieving good results in a skills competition is a great advertisement for your college.

Example

WorldSkills Competition
Organised every two years, WorldSkills Competition is the largest professional education event showcasing top young talents in various occupational fields and motivating youths to develop their skills to meet international standards. From 22 – 27 October 2019, the 45th WorldSkills Competition took place in Kazan, Russia, with the participation of over 1,300 young talents from 63 countries competing in 56 occupations. The competition was well-known not only among the competitors but also in their home countries and broadly covered by the national media. Viet Nam was presented by nineteen competitors and ranked overall 25th with a silver medal and eight excellent skill certificates.
07. Newsletter/regular report

College’s newsletters are regularly produced and sent home to students, companies and other relevant stakeholders. They are also published on the school’s website. The goal of the publication is to provide an update on the many activities and events that occur in the daily school life. The newsletter can be published monthly or quarterly.

Useful tips

Expand your reach
Offer the newsletter to an extended audience, so that your college will expand its overall branding to various subsets of the external community, including potential partners and prospective students.

Strengthen your ties
A newsletter helps your college to stay connected to a given community by offering a regular dose of college-related news and information; further, you give them another way to contact you and to keep in touch.

Define your audience(s)
Design the newsletter to target a specific audience; thus, you can directly contact a specific demographic with information on important news, updates and events.

Develop a schedule and a team

Set up a template

Monitor and analyse
Track certain metrics, such as the number of new subscribers or how many recipients opened the newsletter, to get a more detailed view of the activity on your newsletter and how readers are engaging with it.

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08.
(Mobile) billboard

One form of marketing campaigns are billboards. A billboard is a flat surface or board, usually outdoors, on which large advertisements are posted. Billboards are particularly suitable for groups in rural regions or in poor urban areas since people there have limited access to other means of communication.

Besides the traditional billboards, there are also mobile ones. The greatest advantage they provide is the move-ability factor that guarantees coverage at the exact physical route where the target group lives, works and hangs out. With mobile billboard advertising, it is also possible to reach a much larger audience as the vehicles are constantly moving around in high traffic areas. This tool is suitable within the frame of a communication strategy or event, such as a conference or skills competition.

Useful tips

Six words or less are ideal.

Use bright colours to attract attention.

Example

Advertisement on a public bus during the WorldSkills ASEAN 2014 in Hanoi

The campaign ran for two weeks, before and during the event. Targeting on high school students and TVET trainees, the route ran everyday along most of the high schools and TVET institutes in Hanoi. With a design that is clear and simple, the advertisement was not only providing the most important information of the WorldSkills event but also promoting the slogan “Skills – Our intrinsic value”.

The more billboards, the better.

Choose time and place suiting the needs and constraints of the target group.
Google AdWords is one of the most advanced advertising means to promote the school’s services in a matter of hours. There are numerous targeting options and settings that relate to different types of products and services.

Useful tips

Target customers
Keep your target customers in mind when writing your ads.

Target your ads
Implement all three types of keyword targeting (exact match, phrase match, broad match) into your strategy; bid the most for exact and the least for broad matches.

Address mobile users
Ensure that you are using mobile-preferred ads.

Use negative keywords
Negative keywords are keywords related to other keywords in the campaign, but that are not related to what is advertised.

Always test
Plan various tests trying to maximise your outcome; these tests should span the entire funnel (identification of keywords to bid on, design of the landing page, etc.); only run one test at a time to get specific results.

Monitor and tweak
Monitor your campaigns regularly to keep your costs low by eliminating ineffective keywords.

Google’s Remarketing feature
Choosing the right keywords for any Google Ads campaign can be an intimidating task. The key is to bid for the right keywords and keep evaluating over time if the new keywords are relevant for your courses. There are four major practices for TVET institutes to keep in mind:

1. Use keywords which are most relevant to your course offerings (very specific to your niche). For example, if you offer programmes in mechatronics in Hanoi, you could include keywords like: mechatronics course, mechatronics Hanoi, mechatronics diploma, mechatronics degree, mechatronics school, mechatronics education, mechatronics institute.

Avoid using one-word keywords which are highly searched for, as the search terms aren’t very informative about the kind of courses you offer. For example, if you use mechatronics as a keyword, your ads may trigger for search terms like: mechatronics qualification, mechatronics services, mechatronics jobs, etc. which are not even close to what you want to target for.

2. Don’t underestimate the power of long tail keywords. Irrespective of the fact that they have small search volume and are too tedious to work with when creating a campaign, they offer higher conversions at a lower cost compared to common keywords. For our example, long tail search terms could be as follows: mechatronics diploma Hanoi, mechatronics course in Vietnam, study mechatronics in Vietnam, 1-year mechatronics diploma in Hanoi, 1-year PG diploma in mechatronics, get an advance mechatronics degree in Vietnam.

3. Don’t underestimate the importance of negative keywords, especially as each click costs. Though accumulating negative keywords is an on-going process. Below are a few points to consider:

- Avoid including courses (e.g. Engineering), sub-categories (e.g. Finance, HR) and modes of education (e.g. online courses) that you don’t offer.

- Negate all the keywords which are not giving you conversions or have a high cost per conversion to be profitable.

4. Create a good landing page that includes various elements like trust badges, result-oriented headlines, explanation videos, testimonials, etc. Such landing web pages are aimed at driving visitors to take a worthy action. As every visitor who gets to your landing page after clicking on your ad may cost you a fortune, there’s no room for an error when designing a landing page for your business.

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**Example**

**Right Pay Per Click (PPC) Keywords for Schools**

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10. Live classroom and other event broadcasts

Selected classroom situations or other important events can be broadcasted live utilising YouTube, Facebook or other virtual platforms especially for those who cannot present at the event/activity. This medium brings audiences a lively picture of a learning environment or an occupation. With realtime engagement, live classrooms or event livestreams can also boost traffic and interaction on your social media platforms.

Useful tips

- Make sure the internet is stable; have a backup plan when the internet fails.
- Rehearse before the broadcast, make a list of everything you and your crew needs to know (eg. set-up, microphone check, rehearsals,...)
- Choose a suitable streaming platform: besides Youtube or Facebook Live, you can try other platforms like Switchboard Live.

If possible, encourage engagement with audiences by interactive activities (eg. live Q&A), talk to the audience.

Market the live broadcast in advance; inform about the time and prepare a compelling description about the broadcast.

Examples


11. Video

Generally, the video format is an effective promotion tool as it can touch people emotions by combining visuals and sounds. Videos can appear in different forms, e.g. music videos, infographic videos, documentaries and reportages. Another advantage audio-visual media have is the simple and fast production process via smartphone and the easy access for the customer. To address a broad audience, upload the video on the college’s website, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Useful tips

- Keep the script short.
- Put your key message in the first 30 seconds to tell the audience what to pay attention to in the video.
- Find the right tone (speak clear and understandable, use the language of your audience).

Examples

12. Success story

Success stories are an important marketing tool that is usually directed towards potential students and their parents who seriously consider to enrol for the course programme. Success stories provide potential students with real-world examples of an individual who shares his/her pain points, solutions and results. They can be posted on the college’s website and social media platforms or directly communicated during events.

Useful tips

- A success story is composed similar to a Hollywood plot (“Storytelling”).
- The hero corresponds to a student who is the protagonist of the story.
- The initial situation is usually unsatisfying for the hero.
- The pain points of the initial situation are the reasons why the hero has started his quest.
- The quest corresponds to the studies; during the quest, the hero will face a number of challenges or “adventures” that he will finally overcome; surprises may occur.

Example

Nguyen Thi Nhan, alumni from College of Technology II (HVCT)

Nhan passed the entrance exam to Tay Nguyen university but she still decided to enroll in the Sewage Engineering Technicians Department in HVCT because of her passion in environmental issues. Back at that time, many people insisted on her choosing Pharmacy or Accounting as apparently these majors fit women more. However, she was persistent with the occupation she chose to prove herself and fight gender stereotypes. After three years of training, Nhan graduated with excellent results and got a job at Di An water supply enterprise, under Binh Duong Water - Environment Joint Stock Company. Ms Truong Thi Thu Thao, who is Nhan’s supervisor, shared: “During the in-company training phase, Nhan got used to our company’s technology, working environment and staff. Therefore, when she started here as an employee, she adapted very quickly and works effectively”.

“WOMEN ARE CAPABLE OF FOLLOWING ANY JOB AS THEY WISH THANKS TO MORE AND MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR THEM.”

NGUYỄN THỊ NHÂN
13. Photo exhibition

“A photo speaks a thousand words”. According to this motto, a photo exhibition is an effective way to transfer messages and raise awareness. It can be part of a big or a stand-alone event, providing information about the training environment, specific occupations or telling lively stories about young people following their passion as TVET trainees or trainers.

Useful tips

Choose the topic of the photo exhibition to serve the communication objective.

Choose a location which is easy to access and has a suitable atmosphere.

Each photo can go with a caption. However, the photo that speaks for itself is much more valuable and impressive.

The photographer or the character of the photo can be present at the exhibition to share their own stories.

Example

A photo exhibition in Hanoi that honors distinguished skilled workers and their practical innovations. Following the stories of 65 skilled workers and TVET trainees, visitors are able to better understand different occupations and the value of vocational education and training.
14. 
Public contest

Launching public contests is an effective way to raise awareness. With appealing prices, contests do not only spread positive messages on TVET, but also boost brand awareness and draw more traffic to the TVET institute’s social media platforms.

Useful tips

Planning
Determine the goal, define budget, timeline, rules and format (e.g. song contest, poster contest, photo contest), pick a price that closely refers to the brand and mode of participation.

Launching the contest
Figure out on which platform the target audience spends most of its time to launch the contest.

Promote and drive engagement of the audience
Encourage comments, tagging, ratings; let the audience not only compete but also interact; use AdWords, Email marketing, posters, etc. to promote, remind, confirm and keep the audience tuned during the contest.

Convert, analyse and reflect
Announce the winners when the contest ends; follow up with people who entered the contest; run analytics on social engagement and reflect the contest.

Example
The writing contest “I choose occupation”
Launched by DVET in 2018, the contest received 300 entries across the country, with diverse contents: from a challenging journey of a young student confronting social stereotypes to choose the occupation he/she likes, to the pride of a mother when her child is successfully graduating from a TVET institute. Each entry is a real life story example showing potentials and opportunities that vocational training offers.
15. Press release

Press releases are usually one or two-page documents that share interesting news with the public. They are typically read by journalists, but sometimes general audiences might stumble upon them, too. Typically, they emulate a news article format, using the reverse pyramid to place the most important information first.

They are often released before an event to announce the activity and to invite the press to come; or after the event to provide the key information and messages of the activity.

Useful tips

An effective press release answers the questions of 5W1H (What, Who, When, Where, Why and How?)

A press release contains:

**T**

Write your headline; your headline should grab the attention of your audience.

**M**

Write 2-5 strong body paragraphs with supporting details.

**Q**

Include quotes.

**C**

Include contact information.
IV. Implementation Plan

Step 1
Define concrete SMART goals
(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)

Step 2
Define a clear key message

Step 3
Define and analyse your target audiences
(p.7)

Step 4
Define concrete marketing and communication tools with suitable communication channels to reach your target audiences
(p.11 - p.28)

Step 5
Make a plan with a clear budget and timeline

Step 6
Monitor, reflect and draw lessons learnt
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