



Creating content marketing that leverages its full potential to drive impactful outcomes requires a rich pool of data-driven insights, as well as a well-structured demand generation and branding strategy. However, establishing this strategy is often challenging to implement and maintain, especially within organizations striving to pivot rapidly to meet changing trends and prospect needs in line with evolving business goals.

To combat this challenge, this guide presents a detailed process for structuring an actionable framework and culture that empowers teams to sustain the creation of high-impact content.



This guide explores the following:

- 1. What is high-impact content?
- 2. How to leverage content to maximize performance
- 3. How to measure content performance to drive success and innovation

By following the advice from this guide, your marketing and sales team, as well as creative professionals, will be empowered to create a strategy that evolves with the changing needs of target accounts to continually improve business outcomes.

ALIGN CONTENT WITH BRAND GUIDELINES AND GOALS

Building impactful content that resonates with your target audience requires a detailed branding strategy. This should include clear and actionable guidelines for marketing and creative teams to follow to ensure that all content has a consistent brand image and message.

Defining precise goals on how to generate awareness, as well as how to achieve long-term outcomes for the brand is also essential to inform content marketing efforts.

This understanding will be what defines your demand generation strategies, which are composed of both elements (branding and content), in order to drive a significant impact from marketing efforts.

How to synchronize demand generation efforts with brand goals

In order to drive the best outcomes, demand generation strategies must be built with brand goals in mind (in addition to the aforementioned guidelines and other resources such as style guides).

For example, if an organization is looking to rebrand itself as an approachable thought leader as part of a go-to-market (GTM) strategy, this positioning needs to be consistent throughout all materials and campaigns to achieve these goals.

Below is a framework with demand generation efforts you can use to advance your branding strategy, broken down into three individual components:



Branding strategy

Brand legacy, mission, and messaging

2 Design and emotion

3. Loyalty and Competitive Positioning

Demand Generation efforts

- Snackable content with a focus on core brand values to be promoted via social media and sales outreach
- Targeted Display Ads that showcase brand keywords and benefits
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaigns with events that highlight key brand values beyond sales initiatives
- Useful gifts that develop a positive connection between the prospect and the brand, such as a jacket or travel bag.
- Evergreen materials for prospects to utilize in their day-to-day lives with clear brand design (such as 101 guides, checklists, and tools)
- Interactive content that builds a stronger impression of the brand design, logo, and colors (such as minigames and long-form pieces with motion design/video elements)
- Campaigns to incentivize reviews from clients
- Sales enablement materials with clear messaging on the brand's unique value proposition (UVP)
- Events with thought leaders to create a branded, informative space for promoting solutions for major market challenges

The benefit of utilizing a framework such as the one above is that it demonstrates the intended results of specific demand generation tactics to stakeholders—such as the goal of a sales enablement PDF to promote an organization's UVP and help differentiate its offerings from competitors.

This framework also makes it easier to <u>sync marketing and sales</u> teams by effectively providing them with shared goals and guidance on how to achieve them, therefore increasing their likelihood of success.



Plan your high-impact content strategy with a downloadable template of the branding and demand generation framework

How to advance branding and generate demand with content

Developing assets that creative professionals, marketers, and sales teams can refer to when building demand generation campaigns is crucial to ensure that content furthers brand awareness and achieves its intended outcomes.

Assets to advance branding

Below are examples of assets that guide content creation to resonate with audiences and their particular needs:



Style guide

This informs creatives and content marketers on how to promote the brand in content, with guidelines on how to convey messaging, as well as unique values and benefits. It is important for style guides to include tangible examples and do's and don'ts to effectively guide creative efforts. Style guides are also crucial for informing partners and freelancers about the branding goals of your content marketing.



Buyer personas

Buyer personas represent Ideal Client Profile (ICP) leads or accounts, and guide marketing strategies with an informed overview of a target decision maker.



Cheatsheet on common pain points

Having a list of the pain points of a brand's target audience will assist both marketing and sales teams when creating content and developing messaging to engage prospects.

Read the Definitive Guide to B2B Buyer Personas to develop personas aligned with your ICP to reach intended outcomes with campaigns —



Methods to advance branding

Below are examples of methods to collect data for branding and demand generation, as well as drive awareness and engage decision makers:



Surveys and focus groups

Conduct surveys to assess your audience's pain points, challenges, and goals. Open-ended questions are also an opportunity to glean insights on vocabulary which can be utilized in content and messaging for relevancy and accuracy.

As for focus groups, the goal is to interact with your audience directly and gain insights you could not collect elsewhere (such as first impressions, emotional responses, and spontaneous comments)—due to their hands-on nature, focus groups can provide authentic feedback on your brand to not only improve products, but also understand the most elementary objections that stall sales.



Leadership branding

Establishing business leaders as thought leaders is a key demand generation tactic for advancing branding in the long term. Creating specific content calendars for leaders, as well as enabling them with materials so they can share their own thoughts on social media, is an effective approach to build trust and awareness. This, in turn, is likely to attract leads who can then be nurtured further by other content marketing initiatives.

Discover 7 ways of utilizing surveys to gather actionable insights for B2B demand generation →

HOW TO BUILD HIGH-IMPACT CONTENT?

High-impact content is informed by multiple factors that drive its relevancy, and as a result, engagement among audiences.

By fueling your content with intent data, sales feedback, and social listening (see more below), you can effectively understand the finer details of your audience's knowledge gaps, as well as their discussions with peers and the challenges they are facing to advance both their career and business goals.

The more data you are able to compile and reference, the better, as this will allow you to guide content creation with actionable insights, increasing its accuracy and performance.



Informing content creation with relevant data and trends

Below is a breakdown of data sources that can be leveraged to fuel the creation of high-impact content for B2B marketing and sales:



Intent data

<u>Buyer intent data</u> is collated from lead activity that indicates brand interest, and ultimately, a propensity to make a purchase. When combined with other sources of data, such as first and second-party, as well as information from surveys, intent data can help you better understand audience expectations. It will also allow you to craft ideal touchpoints to engage leads during the decision stage (and compare solutions with other members of the <u>buying committee</u>).

3 ways to drive high-impact content with intent data:

- Utilize intent data to revisit the challenges and goals of your buyer personas.
- Develop <u>Account Based Marketing (ABM) campaigns</u> to expand your target audience, utilizing insights from intent data to create assets to generate demand with accounts that could result in future sales.
- Utilize intent data in tandem with other sources to clean your database and test hypotheses, creating a better understanding of your target audience and fueling your content marketing efforts with more accurate information.







Sales feedback

Content (especially in B2B) is only likely to contribute to performance if marketers and creatives have feedback from sales on the relevancy and accuracy of campaigns and their messaging. This should include the responses they receive from their approaches/pitches, as well as common objections or questions from prospects.

Therefore, make sure to set up regular meetings, as often as weekly (ahead of time to ensure attendance) to reflect upon sales feedback and constantly inform content creation. To truly drive the best results from this feedback, be sure to allow for flexibility when developing content strategies, to empower teams to pivot as necessary and capitalize on trends and timely content topics.

Here are 3 elements recommended for gathering feedback from sales:

- Data from sales meetings and deals: Stats on successful deals, topics covered during meetings, as well as common objections can provide a timely outlook of what content should address to be relevant and actionable for its target audience.
- Engagement from nurturing cadences, approaches, and pitches: Clarifying which <u>lead nurturing touchpoints</u> are receiving the most attention from leads is beneficial to understand the pain points, content assets, and overall messaging that is most successful for engaging your audience. It is also important to get sales feedback on specific marketing approaches such as <u>emails</u>, LinkedIn InMails, and product pitches to understand how your content can improve the performance of these efforts.
- Data and insights from Linkedin Sales Navigator: Characteristics from leads in top-performing lead lists can inform changes to your <u>Ideal Client Profile (ICP) and buyer personas</u>. This is also an opportunity for the marketing team to help build up each salesperson's personal branding (a key element of the <u>LinkedIn Social Selling Index SSI</u>) and share content that you have recently produced to support their engagements.







Social listening

This method helps marketing teams better understand your audience's current brand perception and awareness, as well as uncover any challenges prospects or clients may be facing through discussions on forums and social media.

Social listening is also key to monitoring trends, which in turn, helps to inform your content and add relevance to your campaigns.

3 elements to create a social listening strategy for your brand:

- **Tools:** Social monitoring tools track branded keyword mentions, and some even offer insight into the overall sentiment of your brand online (positive or negative). The real-time insights delivered by these tools can help teams update evergreen content and create new pieces to ensure your content library is relevant and timely for your audience. View the best ranked Social Monitoring tools by G2 here.
- Influencers, thought leaders, and groups: The "thinkers" of your industry can lend insight into trends, as well as current topics that are driving the decisions of buying groups. By keeping in touch with influencers and thought leaders, not only can you source topics for brands, but also leverage these voices to promote brand awareness with your content (such as sponsored posts). Social media groups and forums are also great places to partake in discussions as a brand (or even thought leader) to shape public discourse in your niche and drive awareness of your solutions.
- Consultants: Seek advice from seasoned consultants to test your strategies and pool exclusive insights from other decision makers and C-Suite members on forecasts for your industry. Since consultants conduct plenty of networking with like-minded professionals, hiring them can provide ample insights into the "behind the scenes" of your industry to guide your content marketing and social media efforts.

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY LEVERAGE CONTENT TO DRIVE HIGH PERFORMANCE

Yielding positive outcomes with content requires a detailed understanding of the factors that drive relevance and engagement for your marketing and sales efforts.

Below is more information on how to drive performance with content:



Brief in content with data insights

When briefing creatives on a new content project or asset, make sure to include as many data insights as possible (as discussed above: intent data, sales feedback, and social listening) in the briefing process to ensure relevancy and support performance.

This can include statistics and guidance, as well as recommendations for how the content should cover these factors precisely.

Below are 3 elements to create a content brief:

- Include stats, key arguments, and facts in the summary of the brief: Make sure the creative has foundational information they can utilize to conduct further research, as well as understand your rationale for the content.
- Include a detailed skeleton of headers, items, and takeaways: Ensure that the creative will fulfill your vision when elaborating on the asset. This is particularly important for freelancers, who may need further guidance in order to ensure that content aligns with your exact needs, style, and voice, as well as the argument you wish to build into your content.
- Include critical information such as the function of the content and its target funnel stage:
 Providing this context, as well as expectations surrounding its intended role in the buyer's journey, will be invaluable for helping the creative understand how to build out the content accurately.

Break down the most used formats and tactics

Understanding the best practices and uses of each content marketing format is integral to ensuring performance. Particularly as user expectations vary drastically depending on the type of content they are consuming.

Therefore, in order to ensure a high-quality user experience (UX), it is crucial to develop and leverage knowledge and experience on what your audience expects (and needs) from each content format and channel.







Landing and product pages

For both formats, what drives high performance is specificity. For a landing page (LP), this is especially true as the end goal is to <u>encourage form fills to generate leads</u>. This goal is only achieved if the LP effectively convinces a lead to complete a form, which requires the key benefit to be clear and precise. LPs must also not distract the visitor, which means no links to other webpages or mentions of services that might distract from the key offering/benefit received in exchange for the lead's contact information.

As for product pages, the goal is to showcase the benefits and outcomes that buyers will receive from your solutions. For these pages to be impactful and drive performance, they must address common objections, showcase relevant results with social proof, and utilize clear, easily-digestible messaging and copy to ensure that even users that scan the page can understand quickly the benefits of a purchase.



Blogging

Memorable blogs provide an experience that not only creates a long-standing positive impression, but also facilitates the learning process of readers.

Therefore, creating a brand blog must first consider the user experience (UX), which will then lead to best practices that inform other relevant content marketing efforts—this includes Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and developing content according to <u>buyer personas</u>.

3 elements of high-impact B2B blogging:

- Create a "learning hub": Every brand requires foundational knowledge on its blog to engage leads at the top of the funnel (TOFU), as well as build a library of evergreen content to support SEO initiatives and drive long-term organic traffic to the brand. Establishing a "learning hub" with interactive content that answers common questions and addresses the top objections of your prospects is a key element of a high-impact content strategy.
- **Establish a category for forward-thinking content:** This is what fuels thought leadership and establishes a brand as an authority and unique voice in its niche. Make sure to interview experts and promote content that reconsiders current practices in the market and provides input for new considerations on the future of the industry. Whitepapers, surveys, and reports are prime examples of forward-thinking content.
- Develop lead magnets: Lead magnets are tools designed to generate leads, which means these assets are a crucial part of demand generation efforts to drive interest in your brand. Glossaries, calculators, and verification tools are some examples of evergreen assets that can serve as lead magnets.



<u>Discover 10 B2B Lead Magnet Ideas</u> to drive brand awareness →



Client and User Experience (CX and UX)

Developing a high-quality Client and User Experience (CX and UX) is essential for developing a digital brand presence that is engaging and enables positive interactions with content, as well as products and services.

Due to the saturation of digital mediums, brands with CX and UX-driven content are more memorable, and therefore, stay top of mind for when prospects are ready to buy—their high-quality experience also encourages word-of-mouth marketing, which drives more visitors to your content.

3 ways to implement CX and UX best practices for your brand:

- Analyze heatmaps: Heatmaps demonstrate what elements website visitors are interacting with, which can help improve the layout of the website to allow them to find the resources they are looking for. Heatmaps are crucial to optimizing navigational menus, buttons, microcopy, and other elements for a positive experience, which consequently increases conversion rates.
- **Routinely collect user and client feedback:** Collecting feedback via chatbots, surveys, sales meetings, and other interactions with users and clients will provide insights into the obstacles that hinder a positive brand experience. Adding voluntary questions after prospects and clients consume content or use a service is a good way to evaluate your Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is a valuable metric to inform the quality of your overall CX and UX initiatives.
- **Evaluate the quality of your brand experience quarterly:** By pooling feedback from both heatmaps and user and client feedback, you can measure per quarter the overall sentiment of your brand experience and action improvements.



LEARN MORE ABOUT MEMORABLE BRAND EXPERIENCES

Read The Rise of ABX by VP of APAC Sales Mukesh Rajpurohit to learn how to drive engagement with Account Based Marketing (ABM) with UX and Client Experience (CX) best practices

Read 30 Examples of Creative Content Marketing Done Right for a selection of unique B2B content that drives results





Content syndication and co-marketing

High-impact content syndication entails personalization of content for the audience (and outlet) it is syndicated to. This means that even if the audience of a syndicated outlet is similar to your brand audience, it is important to <u>segment your marketing appropriately</u> to resonate with their challenges and preferences (including language use, tone, and style).

The same advice applies to co-marketing, but perhaps to a larger extent—in this case, content must represent both brands equally, and appeal to both audiences. Establishing this healthy balance is crucial for driving the intended outcomes for both parties and supporting a long and fruitful partnership.

Checklist for personalizing content for syndication and co-marketing:

- Research (or request) the style and audience of the syndicated outlet or partner: Gain an in-depth understanding of the content published by the other party, as well as their audience <u>buyer personas</u>. Create a list of common words utilized by the brand and the public (such as in social media comments) and a cheatsheet with the challenges and goals of the other party's ICP. This will help your creatives custom-tailor your brand content to resonate better with these audiences.
- Collect feedback from the other party to improve future content marketing efforts: After developing lists and cheatsheets, analyze your content's performance to ensure your strategy is on track. Be sure to source data from your partner as part of your agreement. If your content did not perform well, then be sure to discuss this with your partner. This may be an opportunity to conduct research (such as uncovering new pain points) to make sure your content hits the mark. Even in the case of content successfully driving performance, it is important to regularly assess content to make necessary adjustments and improvements.



OUTLOOK

LEARN HOW TO FORGE PARTNERSHIPS TO DRIVE EFFICIENCY WITH CONTENT SYNDICATION AND CO-MARKETING DURING THE RECESSION →



By **Andrew Sambrook,**SVP of Global Demand Generation



Lead nurturing and the buyer's journey

Driving high-impact outcomes with lead nurturing requires content that addresses the <u>evolving needs</u> of <u>buyers</u> as they progress through the buyer's journey. Therefore, understanding pain points and common objections in <u>each stage of the sales funnel</u> (top, middle, and bottom), is essential to craft content for touchpoints that will engage leads with these concerns as they arise.

Understanding the buyer's journey as an <u>omnichannel</u>, non-linear experience also assists in making sure touchpoints are available at multiple channels to cater to different preferences. For example, one buyer could focus on video in the top of funnel (TOFU) stage, while another may be more likely to research blog posts and whitepapers via organic search on Google.

3 tips for creating engaging touchpoints for lead nurturing:

- Create content for touchpoints in a lead cadence from the top to the bottom of the funnel:

 Mapping out a path for leads to follow until they are ready to make a decision on their purchase can help you understand evolving pain points clearly, as well as pinpoint specific content for each funnel stage to engage leads. This is more effective when you create a cadence per buyer persona.
- Analyze content and messaging of high-performing touchpoints quarterly: By creating a quarterly report of the success of your <u>lead nurturing strategy</u>, you can identify what is resonating most with leads and glean insights for creating more engaging touchpoints for the next quarter.
- Study high-performing content by other influencers and competitors in your vertical: Utilize social listening tools to identify themes, trends, and formats that are driving high engagement with similar audiences to yours. This can inspire you to create touchpoints and creative content that can deliver similar (or even better) results in your lead nurturing strategy.



DRIVE RESULTS PER FUNNEL STAGE

Improve engagement with leads at each stage of the sales funnel with these pieces by INFUSE demand experts:

- MOFU to BOFU Guide: How to Get Leads to the Bottom of Funnel
- The Dangers of Only Focusing on Bottom of Funnel Leads





Social media

Driving high-impact outcomes with content on social media requires an understanding of social media channels as:

- Mediums for promoting content to drive brand awareness and support demand generation.
- Virtual spaces for public discourse where your brand can build a community and shape opinions with thought leaders to grow target audiences.

Understanding these two dimensions will allow you to determine the outcomes you wish for each content marketing campaign:

- Social media as a medium: Performance can be measured via reactions, clicks, and followers.
- Social media as a virtual space: Performance can be assessed via referrals, brand mentions, and direct traffic to content.

By developing an understanding of both sides of social media as a vehicle for B2B demand generation strategies, it becomes possible to develop long-term demand generation campaigns and plan their intended outcomes to either drive traffic or build a strong community.

3 ways to drive high impact with social media content:

Understanding social media as the end, not the means: When you develop content to be consumed solely on social media, you cater to a large portion of your audience which will only make the jump from social media to your brand website, when they have built enough trust (or curiosity). Therefore, creating social media-specific content (such as videos, infographics, and slides) engages a large portion of your brand followers who have not yet become leads.

- Promoting business leaders and staff as thought leaders: Establishing personalities not only makes your brand more credible, but also sparks familiarity and trust in your brand, which then leads to better content performance. When shared by a collection of unique voices, content is more relevant and engaging than when done solely via corporate channels.
- Creating and participating in communities and events: Developing communities for your niche is a surefire way of generating demand for your content and brand. Hosting or partnering with other brands to create events is an easier way to achieve similar results with more focused efforts (after all, maintaining a long-term community is more work than launching events from time to time). If creating communities/events is out of your reach, then participating in other industry events will also help promote your brand, as well as fuel your content with materials to engage your audience.



READ THE EVOLUTION OF THE MARKETER
FOR TRENDS TO KEEP AN EYE ON
AND BEST PRACTICES TO ADAPT YOUR CAMPAIGNS



By **Victoria Albert**, VP of Marketing



HOW TO MEASURE CONTENT SUCCESS

Beyond KPIs, effectively measuring content success requires clear attribution of revenue to specific efforts, as well as aligning teams with an understanding of brand goals for individual content marketing campaigns.

Indeed, the performance of each content marketing campaign must be assessed at an individual level rather than as a whole. For example, a content marketing campaign focused on generating long-term brand awareness will deliver different results than a short ad campaign for driving interest in a company event.

With this in mind, it is also important to establish specific goals for each content campaign and how they contribute to a greater strategy and general performance.

How to define the role of content in your marketing strategy

As mentioned above, understanding the goal of content marketing is crucial when measuring success. This also informs what role individual campaigns and assets play in the <u>demand generation strategy</u> of the brand, as well as in the buyer journey of your leads.

Below are two checklists for demand generation and the buyer's journey respectively to help you understand the goals of content considering both dimensions:

The role of content in demand generation

- Increase brand awareness and generate demand for brand solutions in the near future (when the lead is considering a purchase)
- **Encourage word-of-mouth marketing and referrals** through a positive brand experience (UX and CX)
- Drive traffic to thought leadership content and participation of business leaders in events

The role of content in the buyer's journey

- **Resolve common objections** and address the pain points of leads
- Address knowledge gaps to help leads fully understand your solutions
- **Build relationships** throughout the sales process and increase conversion rates

Ideally, content should cater to both fronts, but in some cases, a content asset will be better suited for nurturing leads than for generating long-term demand. Separating these dimensions helps stakeholders and creatives understand the different opportunities for content and what to prioritize depending on the most pressing issues the company must resolve.



What KPIs should you use to measure success?

The most suitable KPIs for your brand will be those that drive actionable change and intended outcomes for both demand generation and the buyer's journey.

This means that creating a list of KPIs custom-tailored to your content marketing strategy is more effective than building out a "generic" list of metrics to evaluate performance. Make sure to select KPIs that can effectively define success considering the outcomes you wish to achieve with content marketing.

Discover demand generation KPIs recommended by

10+ B2B experts for your content marketing efforts →

Below is an example of a framework to associate demand and buyer's journey KPIs for content marketing:

Demand generation and buyer's journey KPI framework





High-impact tools for building social proof



Title: High-impact tools for building social proof

- Format: Whitepaper
- **Themes:** Social proof, tool recommendations, advice to drive performance
- Intended outcomes:
 - Generate leads via a Landing Page (LP)
 - Inform leads on tools to build social proof, a key element for ensuring the success of demand generation
 - Encourage email subscriptions via a CTA at the end of the whitepaper
 - Enable sales with an educational asset to drive interest among prospects
 - Drive interest in the brand blog, by encouraging clicks on links to other assets



- **Social media interactions:** Reactions, clicks, shares
- Conversions: LP form fills
- Traffic: Per source, homepage visits
- **Email subscriptions:** Attribution via a trackable link on the whitepaper
- **Revenue:** Cost per lead (CPL), client lifetime value (CLTV)

SAS Buyer's
SOB Journey KPIs

- Content engagement metrics:
 - · Page views
 - Time on page
 - Bounce rates
 - Visitors per sales funnel stage
 - Clicks on internal links
- Sales engagement metrics:
 - Clicks on content shared via sales on social media (trackable links),
 - Click-through rates on sales emails promoting the content



Download a template of the KPI framework to evaluate your content success —

How to fix performance issues

As the success of your content marketing will likely come down to a multitude of factors, referring to your KPIs to assess performance obstacles is essential. Use data from your KPIs to determine why some outcomes are not being achieved.

Then, be sure to laser-focus on each KPI to develop and test new approaches to improve performance. Make changes in isolation and then measure outcomes before making additional adjustments.

This approach will provide a better understanding of what approach resulted in an improvement so that you can identify other correlations and apply the most appropriate strategy. Any insights you gain will also have the potential to be replicated and applied to content assets and campaigns.

Utilize the 4 following processes to pool additional feedback after making adjustments:

- ✓ A/B testing: Implement changes and run an A/B test to evaluate if it resulted in higher performance than the original version.
- Client council: Gathering select clients routinely in a council is an ideal opportunity to collect feedback on specific changes to campaigns or assets, as well as glean insights on other possible changes that can drive results.
- UX research: As discussed previously, gaining feedback from users on their experience with your brand marketing and digital interfaces also drives insights for improving content overall, particularly when it comes to messaging, jargon, and expected outcomes from products.
- Analysis per funnel stage: Understanding the success of your content per stage in the funnel can help you assess if the content is meeting its intended outcomes in the buyer's journey, or if it is more suitable for a different funnel stage than you originally planned.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Driving high impact with content marketing is determined by a thorough understanding of branding and demand generation, as well as previously determined outcomes to be achieved and measured with KPIs.

- Create clear guidelines for branding and demand generation efforts, which should then support the content creation process.
- Empower teams with assets and research including guidelines on the branding and key information on your target audience.
- Collect intent data, feedback from sales, and insights from social listening to drive relevance in your content marketing efforts.
- Gain a clear understanding of the preferences of your audience per content channel and format to better resonate with their needs and drive engagement.
- **Define the outcomes your content marketing must achieve** to then decide the most suitable KPIs.

GENERATE DEMAND WITH INFUSE ITCURATED

Create high-impact content with quarterly planning and a clear understanding of KPIs, so your marketing efforts exceed your expected outcomes.



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