



## Maximize Your Home's Value: Essential Tips for a Successful Sale in 2025

If you're looking to sell your home, you've probably heard that making improvements can result in higher profit at sale time. But knowing exactly which home improvements are worth the money, time and effort can be challenging. Your REALTOR® can provide guidance on this.

### Every property is unique.

What improvements or upgrades you choose to make before selling your home will depend on three things: (1) how quickly you want to sell your home, (2) your budget, (3) comparable homes for sale in your area.

### Home price outlook for 2025

The U.S. housing market is likely to remain largely frozen through 2025. Some growth is still expected, but at a very subdued pace of 3% or less. Demand—often understood through existing home sales (EHS)—remains exceptionally low. And though housing inventory is gradually increasing, it remains below the historical averages.<sup>1</sup>

### No one knows what the future holds. But knowledge is power.

- Mortgage rates are expected to slowly come down, which should make buying a home more affordable. "We're looking for a reprieve in inflation and in mortgage rates," according to New American Funding Investment Officer Jason Obradovich.<sup>2</sup>

- More homes are expected to go up for sale in 2025. That should lessen competition (and heated bidding wars), keep prices at least somewhat in check, and lead to more home sales.<sup>3</sup>
- The National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) anticipates mortgage rates will stabilize around 6% in 2025.<sup>4</sup>

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**“As mortgage rates stay steady around 6% in 2025, homeowners are hunkering down and focusing on home upgrades. But here's the kicker: not all renovations deliver equal bang for your buck. Whether you're gearing up to sell or simply want a better living space, choosing the right projects is essential.”<sup>5</sup>**

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## Deciding what home improvements to make.

Doing a major remodel to increase the value of your home is not always necessary. If your budget doesn't allow for more expensive updates, consider making simple ones, which can favorably impress potential buyers who tour your home. Focus on making your property as attractive and move-in ready as possible. Prospective buyers don't want to see lots of repairs that need doing. They want to picture themselves moving right into your home.

If you want to boost your property value, consider investment-worthy renovations such as boosting curb appeal, creating a more functional floor plan, installing a kitchen island or walk-in pantry, building or converting a home office, modifying your home for aging in place or intergenerational living, expanding your mudroom and making it more functional.<sup>6</sup>

**Before you put your house on the market, review our Homeseller's Toolkit, created to help you make informed decisions about readying your home for sale.**

We recommend allowing at least two months to schedule and make improvements before listing your home to ensure you can complete all the repairs. They'll pay off in the end when you get a great offer on your home.

## Get Dwell's Remodeling Report for Chicago

Understanding the basics of home renovation can help you navigate the process effectively. Learn more in our recent article series that explains some essential aspects of general home remodeling.

Part 1: [Remodeling in the Chicago Area: Making Informed Decisions](#)

Part 2: [The Hottest Trends in Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling](#)

Part 3: [Which Remodeling Projects Provide the Best Return on Investment in Chicago?](#)

Part 4: [The Dos and Don'ts of Remodeling](#)

## CONSIDER A PRE-INSPECTION

Many sellers choose to pay for a pre-inspection. A good home inspector will take a thorough look at your home's major systems, structural components, and appliances, and identify any issues that may be red flags to potential buyers. A pre-inspection helps you prioritize any repairs that need to be done, helps you determine what issues may slow down the sale of your home, and directs you toward a reasonable asking price for your home. You'll also get an idea of any safety issues that may exist. Your REALTOR® can provide recommendations for inspectors.



## INCREASE CURB APPEAL

**As the saying goes, potential buyers tend to “judge a book by its cover.”** Peoples' first impression of your home should be a good one. Buyers don't want to spend time or money catching up on neglected maintenance. Freshen up the front entry and walkways.

### Clear the yard.

- Put away bikes, outdoor toys and gardening tools.
- Discard rusty or broken patio furniture and playground equipment.
- Tidy up flowerpots and planters, discarding/recycling/removing any that are unused or broken.
- Discard dirty or broken décor, such as water features, windchimes, birdhouses and bird feeders. Consider removing any artwork—what you find suitable may be off-putting to potential buyers.

### Manicure landscaping.

Regular maintenance is key: keep your front and back yards well maintained by clearing leaves, trimming bushes and cleaning up debris. Whether it's fall, spring or summer, a pristine, mowed lawn is always the hallmark of a well-maintained home.

### Hang new house numbers.

Choose bronze or brass for a traditional home, brushed nickel for a more contemporary house. These can be found at your [local hardware store](#) or ordered online.

### [Schedule house number installation \(handyman\)](#)



## Freshen up the front entry and walkways.

- Make sure that your sidewalk is cleaned or pressure washed and the grass is neatly edged.
- If your walkway is not adequately lit, consider adding easy-to-install solar-powered lighting.
- On the walkway, landing and patios, replace broken stone or pavers, fill any sidewalk cracks and fill or repair any concrete. [Schedule masonry repair](#)
- **Replace the welcome mat.** Choose something clean and simple—no cartoons or funny phrases!
- **Consider potted plants.** Determine if your front door faces the morning or afternoon sun and choose plants accordingly. Frame the front of your home by keeping things symmetrical. Place identical potted plants (or groupings of container gardens) on both sides of the staircase leading to the front porch or on either side of the front door. Keep it simple: buyers want to see your home and shouldn't be distracted by lots of decoration. Many [neighborhood hardware stores](#) offer pre-planted planters and can offer guidance.

## Freshen exterior doors.

- Shabby, faded doors (especially the front exterior door) signal neglect to potential homebuyers (first impressions matter!) Sand and repaint or re-stain doors for a welcoming appearance. [Request a painting estimate](#)
- If door handles are worn or scuffed, consider replacing them. These can be found at your [local hardware store](#) or ordered online. Need help? [Schedule a handyman](#)



## Replace exterior doors.

Worn, outdated doors diminish the look of your home and decrease its overall value. If your doors are beyond saving, and you and your REALTOR® agree that exterior door replacement must be done, then know that it has one of the highest returns on investment.

Today's modern door replacements are available in a great variety of colors, finishes and styles. Replacement exterior doors are custom crafted to fit your home's exact measurements, resulting in a door system that delivers outstanding energy efficiency, comfort and security, one that can elevate your Chicagoland home.

## New exterior doors appeal to prospective home buyers.

They represent safety and security for the home's inhabitants as well as comfort in every season because they help keep warm air in and cold air out. Whether you're looking for traditional elegance, modern flair or simply enhanced durability, the many choices available mean you can find the perfect door for your home.

**Front entry doors:** Choose from a variety of elegant, classic wooden doors or the modern appeal of fiberglass and steel options. Wood doors are fully customizable in terms of stain and paint, and available in a broad range of wood species and glass options. Fiberglass entry doors are low maintenance, resist dents and scratching, and won't rot, rust, deteriorate, warp, bow or twist. They offer 5X the insulation of wood and create a water barrier. Available in wood grain or smooth textures.

**Patio doors:** Upgrading your patio door can give you more natural light and easy access to your yard. Single, double or triple-pane sliding glass doors, French, sliding, swinging and multi-slide doors are all popular choices that will boost your curb appeal. In general, vinyl patio doors tend to be less expensive than aluminum, aluminum is less expensive than fiberglass, fiberglass costs less than wood. Folding doors are usually the most expensive, followed by French doors, then sliding patio doors.

**Storm doors:** Increase the energy efficiency and security of your front and back entryways with storm doors. They are an excellent investment for your home, providing an additional barrier against harsh weather and helping to keep your home warm in winter and cool in summer. This added buffer from the elements can significantly improve your home's energy efficiency and help reduce your energy bills. Moreover, storm doors enhance security by adding an extra lockable door, making it harder for intruders to gain access.

[Request an exterior door replacement estimate](#)

## Freshen/repair windows.

- Sand and repaint trim (especially around windows and horizontal surfaces such as sills where water tends to gather) and any areas that have peeling or cracking paint to give your home a fresh, clean look.
- If you have rotting sills, missing caulk or cracked panes, fixing those issues is a less expensive alternative to complete window replacement.

[Schedule a handyman](#)



## Replace windows.

Older windows are sometimes beyond repair. Inspect all your windows and determine if any need replacing.

[Schedule a window replacement estimate](#)

## Pressure wash.

**No matter how great your home looks on the inside, a messy or neglected exterior is a turnoff.**

Pressure washing should be part of your pre-sale To Do list. If the outside of your home has years of caked-on dirt and grime, mold or algae, buyers may move on without ever touring the inside. A clean exterior signals to buyers that you take care of your home. Pressure washing can elevate your home to a like-new condition.



Consider pressure washing these surfaces:

- Front entry
- Driveway
- Siding, brick, stucco, stone
- Shutters, doors, windows
- Roof and gutters
- Sidewalks, patios, pavers, stairs
- Decks and fences

Get Dwell professionals know the best equipment settings and cleaning products to use on all your home's surfaces, from windows to bricks. They use only eco-friendly chemicals to both clean and rejuvenate your home's exterior while respecting your landscaping and the planet.

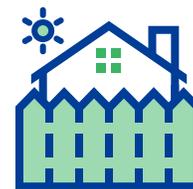
[Request a pressure washing estimate](#)

## Hide the AC unit and garbage.

A shadow box fence enclosure with a gate for the A/C unit or a more enclosed structure for the garbage area is usually most desired, but simple screening and lattice also work well, as do strategically placed bushes. Need help? [Schedule a handyman](#)

## Repair, paint, stain or replace any broken fencing or railings.

Wooden fences shouldn't have any rotting or weather-beaten boards. The gate on all fences should open and close smoothly. Replace any wood that's unsightly or too rotted to be functional. Prime and paint over any areas with issues. If there's rust on any metal, remove it with a metal brush and apply a rust treatment before painting. Or reach out to Get Dwell—we are happy to help. Whether a simple fix or new install, our professional teams can repair all types of fences, including wood, wrought iron, aluminum, composite, steel and vinyl.



[Request a fence and gate repair estimate](#)

## Replace your mailbox or install a new one.

A rusty, broken or shabby looking mailbox makes a poor impression on prospective home buyers. They may see it as just one more thing they'll have to pay to update if they purchase your property. Get Dwell can either install a new mailbox on your home or a mailbox and post at the end of your driveway; we'll leave the area where the work was performed clean and tidy.

Purchase a mailbox, and a post if needed, from your [local hardware store](#) and our team will install it for you.



[Schedule mailbox replacement or installation](#)

## Plant flowers.

Another relatively easy way to increase curb appeal is by planting colorful seasonal flowers. Flowers will make your home more welcoming. If it's spring, plant bright, blooming annuals. In the autumn, plant fall-blooming flowers such as mums, asters and pansies in rich, warm tones such as oranges, deep reds and yellows. If you don't have beds for planting, plant in containers such as inexpensive terra cotta pots, plastic planter boxes or hanging baskets. If you're not a gardener, don't despair. Garden centers and many [neighborhood hardware stores](#) offer pre-planted planters and can offer guidance.



## INTERIOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Modest home improvements that tend to make the home cleaner, safer and more functional are good bets for sellers, according to Zillow® research.<sup>7</sup>

### Clean all windows, both inside and out.

**Just about every REALTOR® will recommend that your windows be gleaming bright and without a speck on them.** This is a job sometimes best left to the pros. Get Dwell's team of efficient, uniformed technicians combines state-of-the-art equipment and water purification technology to spotlessly clean your windows, skylights, glass atriums, screens, sills, window tracks, awnings and exterior lights. Using water-fed poles, the team removes layers of dust, dirt and grime on exterior windows, including those as high as the third floor. Inside, they'll leave windows, ceiling fans, sills, window tracks, chandeliers, light fixtures and mirrors spotless. This process also offers weather resistance: rain won't dull the shine. We offer a 100% satisfaction guarantee.

[Request a window washing estimate](#)

### Detect it.

All smoke and carbon monoxide detectors should be in good working order and less than 10 years old. Test your detectors and replace the batteries if needed.

### Clear the clutter.

An essential element to selling real estate is making the right impression on buyers. **Nothing turns off buyers more than clutter.** It's difficult for most people to correctly estimate the size of a room when it's filled with clutter. The goal is to make your property a clean slate that potential buyers can visualize themselves in. Do a clean sweep of any unnecessary items on counters, shelves, windowsills, tables and fireplace mantels. Make sure to remove all personal items (such as family photos) as well.

### Get your junk picked up.

So you've decluttered your home. What to do with all the items you've decided to part with? Our junk removal services provide you with all the labor needed to remove junk and debris from your home, load it into our vehicles and dispose of it properly. You can be assured of a friendly, professional, hard-working team that will also leave all areas clean when they're done.



[Request a junk pickup estimate](#)

## Paint.

Since you see your house every day, it's easy to overlook problems that may jump out to potential buyers. Most REALTOR®s will agree that **painting is one of the best and least costly improvements sellers can make to their home.** Your walls may have peeling paint, holes, scuffs and dings. Perhaps there's water damage on the ceiling. When your house is on the market, these dings and dents, however small, can be a turnoff to buyers. A fresh coat of paint on the walls and trim can make your house look like new. Get Dwell's EPA-certified painters are experts in both interior and exterior painting. Using only the finest products and paints, such as Benjamin Moore, they use painting and finishing best practices on fine trim details, walls, ceilings and exterior surfaces to create long-lasting finishes. In the process, they'll work hard to keep your home clean and dust free. Folks who tour your home will see fresh walls, clean lines and a home that's ready to move into. [Request a painting estimate](#)



## Clean the attic, basement and crawlspaces.

After you've decluttered and had junk hauled away, it's time to clean those neglected areas of your home. If you need help, our professional cleaners work in teams of two. They wear backpack vacuums and bring all the cleaning equipment needed to get your job done professionally. Using only organic products and cleaning top down, they'll wipe, vacuum and mop any surface needed, making your basement or other out-of-the-way place shine.



[Schedule an attic cleanup](#)

[Schedule a basement & crawlspaces cleanup](#)

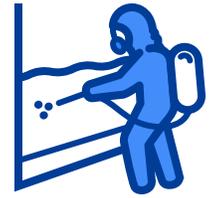
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“A well-maintained home can sell for about 10% more than a similar home in average condition, according to Thumbtack research.”<sup>8</sup>

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## Remove any mold.

If you suspect you have mold growth in your home, address it before putting your house on the market. **Unknown mold found in the attic by a buyer's inspector can be a deal-killer.** Our IICRC-certified inspectors will test for, identify and help determine the cause of the mold and put together a plan to safely remove it. Then our team works with you to create the solution to prevent any reoccurrence.



[Request a mold inspection or cleanup estimate](#)

## Fix it.

You walk through your home every day and have probably stopped seeing all the things that need attention. However, these things will stand out to potential buyers. Check your home for these problems:



- Signs of rot and water damage
- Sticky cabinet doors and drawers—they should open and close smoothly. If your drawers have tracks, make sure they're free of gunk and replace them if necessary.
- Broken or missing knobs and handles on cabinets and drawers
- Loose hinges or doors that don't easily open and close—bi-fold doors can be especially frustrating
- Dirty looking grout, discolored caulk and cracked tiles
- Damaged wallpaper
- Broken garbage disposal

Get Dwell can assist you with all these projects. No project is too small. Beyond being skilled jack-of-all-trades, our handypersons are experienced Project Managers. They can fix, assemble, install and make things in your home right using industry best practices, while making sure that even your very small projects are handled with the seriousness and respect that you and your home deserve. [Schedule handyman services](#)

## Make electrical upgrades.

In order for a house to be desirable to potential buyers, it needs to be safe, functional and reliable.

Electrical fixtures play a huge role in a home. If they're outdated, worn and dirty, they lower the value of your home. **No one wants to buy a home that needs a panel upgrade or one with unreliable wiring.** These issues will come up in an inspection.



Many electrical upgrades rank very high on the Return on Investment (ROI) scale, meaning the money you put into them will not only make your home more attractive to buyers, but also hopefully increase its value. All in all, electrical upgrades can be a fast, easy and very cost-effective way to boost home value. Many home buyers are using an increasingly larger number of amps to accommodate computers, TVs and other modern appliances. An up-to-date electrical system is an attractive selling point.

Defective electrical outlets and light sockets should be repaired prior to listing your home. Outdated overhead light fixtures and ceiling fans (20–30+ years old) may no longer be safe. Consider replacing them.

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A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) is an automatic device that offers personal protection against lethal electrical shock or electrocution by stopping electrical power within milliseconds. Code requires that GFCIs should be installed anywhere there is the potential for contact between a person and an electrical appliance in or near water, moisture or water pipes. This includes kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms, basements, outdoor outlets and outbuildings.

**Our certified, licensed and experienced electricians will help you make the right choices** for you and your family. We believe that there's only one way to do electrical work and that's the correct way.

[Schedule electrical services](#)

## Stop the leaks, clogs, and other water fun.

Do you have any of these issues?

- Leaky sinks and dripping faucets
- Clogged drains in sinks, showers, tubs
- Defective overflow drain (prevents overflowing a bathtub)
- Broken toilets
- Dripping shower heads
- Leaking or corroded water heater
- Dripping outside hose spigot or faucet



Get Dwell can help you check all these things off your list before selling your home.

[Request a plumbing repair estimate](#)

## Tie up the loose ends.

Getting your home ready to sell is a daunting task. Sometimes you just need an extra pair of hands to help you get to the finish line. Chore Taskers, a less expensive alternative to our handyman service, can help with tasks such as:



- Moving/packing boxes
- Assembly/disassembly
- Changing interior and exterior light bulbs in hard-to-reach fixtures
- Organizing your garage, basement and attic
- Cleaning window wells

Basically, Chore Taskers can handle anything that doesn't require a [skilled handyman](#) or [carpenter](#). They'll show up on time, are professional, organized and get the job done, no matter how large or small.

[Schedule a Chore Tasker](#)

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## Keep cool. And warm.

Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) should be in good working order, clean and free of leaks. Your thermostat should operate properly. If you have any doubts, schedule an HVAC technician to perform a tune-up and give you an assessment of your system's condition. [Schedule an HVAC technician](#)

## Deep clean.

One of buyers' top priorities is a clean home. Clean homes fetch an average of \$10K–\$20K more than houses that haven't been cleaned well. **According to 87% of REALTORS®, the most important thing for a homeowner to do is clean.** A deep clean has an average return on investment (ROI) of 3,650%.<sup>9</sup> In other words, a \$400 investment in deep cleaning can potentially mean an average of \$14,600 more at sale time. Ask your REALTOR® for a recommendation of a good deep cleaning service.

And remember, when your home is on the market, it's important to keep everything tidy—you never know when a buyer is going to schedule a last-minute tour. Take special care with the bathroom and kitchen, making sure the counters, floors, tile and shower shine.

## Stage it.

Staging is the process of arranging your home to show it off in the best way possible, making it easy for prospective buyers to see themselves living in your home. Staging awkwardly shaped rooms allows buyers to get an idea of what space could be used for. If you plan to be moved out of your house by the time tours begin, adding décor and furniture that's on trend and well curated will help potential buyers imagine themselves in your home.

The National Association of REALTORS® Research Group reported from survey results that staging the living room was found to be most important for buyers, followed by staging the primary bedroom and staging the kitchen.<sup>10</sup>

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**“81% percent of buyers' agents said staging a home made it easier for a buyer to visualize the property as a future home.”<sup>11</sup>**

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In the end, hiring a staging company can be a worthwhile investment for many sellers. If you're not comfortable staging your home yourself, consider hiring a company or consultant—ask your REALTOR® for a recommendation.



## EXTERIOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS

### Ensure your roof is solid.

**Roof issues will likely be flagged on a home inspection.** Your roof shouldn't have any cracked, broken or missing shingles or tiles, as these components protect your home from water damage and once flagged as issues, will worry potential buyers.

A flat roof showing cracks, bubbles and blisters may be highlighted during inspection and lead to suspicions about its longevity and integrity. If you have interior water damage or staining on your ceilings or walls it can mean a roof leak or condensation issue—no one wants to inherit those issues when they purchase a home.

The licensed roofing repair contractors at Get Dwell can inspect your roof and, if needed, use drone technology to video map your roof. This provides a bird's-eye view of its condition and highlights any areas that require attention, giving you the information and peace of mind you and your buyer are looking for.

[Schedule a roof inspection](#)

[Request a roof repair estimate](#)



### Refresh your deck.

The Get Dwell team can repair, rebuild and refresh your deck to restore its former glory. **Outdoor living areas like these score high on homeowners' paybacks.** Sometimes a little TLC and a simple, solid stain can make a big difference to the look of your deck and the added value to your home.



[Request a deck refresh or repair estimate](#)

“ A flat roof showing cracks, bubbles and blisters may be highlighted during inspection and lead to suspicions about its longevity and integrity. ”



## REMODELING

### To remodel or not—that is the question.

Making upgrades you can enjoy for years to come is one thing, but spending money on projects when you've already decided to sell is another. You might invest in major improvements and get your money back when your property sells. Or you might not. Reports show that less expensive, minor projects have far greater payback than major and even mid-range projects.<sup>12</sup>



“Reports show that less expensive, minor projects have far greater payback than major and even mid-range projects.”<sup>12</sup>

A good REALTOR® who knows your neighborhood and location well should know what's worth doing and what's not. They're taking clients into homes and hearing prospective buyers' comments and complaints every day.

A modern kitchen is a top draw for buyers, but you might want to think twice about overhauling a dated one, which could cost you a bundle. New drawer pulls, painting or refacing old cabinets and installing sleek light fixtures are all low-cost upgrades that will make your kitchen more appealing. Experts agree that smaller renovations will have a greater payback when you sell your house rather than major remodels, but only you, with help from your REALTOR®, can determine if an outdated bathroom will limit your home's potential enough to justify investing in a new one. In other words, if it isn't broke, refresh vs. renovate.

Contact Get Dwell—we can work with your REALTOR® to help you decide what remodeling projects to invest in before listing your home.

[Learn more about our home improvement and remodeling services](#)

## From the foundation to the roof, Get Dwell has you covered.

Maintaining and enhancing Chicago-area homes is the foundation of our business. Whether we are helping you maintain your investment, making a repair, preparing your home to sell, or completing a remodeling project, we make sure everything runs smoothly from start to finish.

### REPAIR

Have a repair needed in your home? Schedule our home repair and handyman experts to make sure it's done right.

### MAINTAIN

Our Whole Home Assessment and regular home maintenance can fix or prevent issues before they turn into major repairs.

### IMPROVE

You want to update and improve your home. Our home remodeling team can make your vision a reality!

### Homeseller's Toolkit™ Sources

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2, 3, 4 "[Housing Predictions for 2025: What to Anticipate in the Year Ahead](#)," New American Funding Learning Center, December 4, 2024

5, 6 "[Top 9 Renovations to Increase Home Value in 2025](#)," HomeLight.com, December 31, 2024

7, 8 "[11 Home Improvement Projects That Don't Add Value](#)," Zillow.com, September 18, 2024

9 "[Highest ROI Home Improvements](#)," iPropertyManagement.com, April 28, 2022; Homelight's "[Top Agent Insights for New Year 2022](#)"; National Association of REALTORS® Research Group, "[2022 Remodeling Impact Report](#)"

10, 11 "[2023 Profile of Home Staging](#)," National Association of REALTORS® Research Group

12 *Remodeling Magazine's* 36th annual [Cost vs. Value report](#), Zonda Media

## LET'S CONNECT!

We know that selling a home can be stressful. Our goal at Get Dwell is to maintain good communication with you at all times, making our time with you as efficient, productive and cost effective as possible. Please reach out if we can help you ready your house in any way!

[Contact Get Dwell](#)

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**No Time? No Skills? No Problem!**

Schedule the help you need.

[GetDwell.com](https://www.getdwell.com)

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