

LLAMA LIS student and new library professional membership marketing and recruitment strategies

“The mission of the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) is to encourage and nurture current and future library leaders, and to develop and promote outstanding leadership and management practices.”

<http://www.ala.org/llama/about>

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Abstract

Though the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) is the foremost organization whose vision is to develop present and future leaders in library and information services, LLAMA currently has very few services or outreach oriented to students and new professionals – its future leaders. In 2011 LLAMA sponsored a three-year American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leaders (EL) initiative in an effort to understand the needs of this un-tapped market and ascertain the appropriate services and marketing strategies to better meet its mission of encouraging and nurturing future library leaders. The 2013 EL team reviewed the findings of the 2011 and 2012 EL teams’ research, key LLAMA organizational documents, and conducted a series of stakeholder interviews between January and May 2013. The result of this inquiry and research is a set of recommendations for meaningful and broad engagement in the professional lives of LIS students and new library professionals. Because the needs and methods of reaching this population are largely new to LLAMA and not comprehensively met by its current committee structure, the overarching recommendation is for the establishment of a New Professionals Section. Suggested services include creating a new professionals online portal and providing programming to Students Chapters facilitated by LLAMA members. Recommendations for outreach all involve the creation of targeted, virtual, and print marketing materials to reach this specific population. Such a comprehensive program would drastically increase LLAMA’s ability to meet its vision and mission of nurturing current and future library leaders, and would assist LLAMA in developing and promoting outstanding leadership and management practices.

Charge

The LLAMA EL three-year initiative began in 2011 and covered three distinct projects, each with its own objectives and strategies.

Year 1 (2011) focused on assessing a) Library and Information Science (LIS) professors’ awareness of LLAMA as an ALA division and b) the extent of LLAMA promotion conveyed in their management and leadership courses.

Year 2 (2012) focused on gathering data from LIS students regarding a) their awareness and perceptions of LLAMA and b) critical products and services that LLAMA could offer new professionals.

The charge for year 3 (2013) was to propose a set of strategies to engage and recruit new professionals into the Division. To this end, the Emerging Leaders of year 3 were to analyze data from the previous two years and solicit input and feedback on ideas from members of the ALA New Members Round Table and the LLAMA Joint Committee; the ALA Student Chapters, Chapter Relations Office; the LLAMA Marketing Communications Committee; and the LLAMA Membership Committee.

Summary 2011 -2012

Year 1 - 2011

The 2011 team surveyed 47 LIS professors that teach leadership and management courses from various ALA accredited universities in the United States.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed (98%) that professional organizations are important to librarianship, for purposes of networking, professional development, leadership, scholarship opportunities, best practices, and employment. However, only 28% were LLAMA members. Though familiar with LLAMA, many respondents were unaware of the benefits of LLAMA membership including connections between critical topics in their management courses and LLAMA's mission. Half of those surveyed stated that they mention LLAMA in their courses. In response to a question about what information or materials LLAMA could provide, respondents felt that additional materials from LLAMA, such as marketing and membership information, and teaching tools would provide more opportunities to discuss LLAMA in their courses.

For project details and methodology, visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/ellama2011/home>.

Year 2 - 2012

The 2012 team collaborated directly with the professors surveyed in year 1 who had agreed to work on the design of a survey for LIS students and recent graduates in year 2.

Over half of the 198 respondents had never heard of LLAMA, and another third were only vaguely familiar with it. Sixty three percent however, indicated that they want to hold a library leadership position in the future. The general perception was that LLAMA is most beneficial to new and established library administrators, and least beneficial to library staff and LIS students. Forty percent of respondents indicated that they were interested in hearing more about LLAMA and that they may respond to targeted marketing about its role and services to new professionals.

The 2012 team also developed a list of suggestions to make LLAMA more appealing to this new market. These included networking opportunities, tools related to leadership, creating opportunities for a broader audience, facilitating local collaboration, providing relevant experiences to students, and providing professional development opportunities.

For project details and methodology, visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/llamael2012/home>.

Accomplishments of 2013 Team

The 2013 team interviewed key stakeholders, reviewed strategic documents, and integrated the findings of the previous two years into a set of recommendations to LLAMA in order to reach this new target audience.

Stakeholder Interviews

Five stakeholder interviews were conducted between February and May 2013.

LLAMA Administration

Two meetings were held with Kerry Ward, LLAMA Executive Director and ALA staff liaison for the EL project, and Dr. Janine Golden, ALA/LLAMA Member Guide and LLAMA Immediate Past-President. The first meeting was held during the ALA Midwinter Meeting EL Pre-Conference to meet the project team, explain the project goals and

answer questions. The second meeting was held following all stakeholder interviews to clarify expectations for the final outcomes of the project.

2011 & 2012 LLAMA Emerging Leaders

The second stakeholder meeting, which involved the 2011 & 2012 LLAMA EL teams, Kerry Ward, and Dr. Janine Golden, allowed the 2013 team to obtain several key documents and interact directly with team members from the previous two years. Clarifications were provided on the LLAMA EL experience, methods used for team communication, and strategies and outcomes of the past projects.

Marketing Communications & Membership Committees

The third stakeholder meeting was held with Eric Shoaf, Chair, LLAMA Marketing Communication Committee, and Eileen Theodore-Shusta, Chair, LLAMA Membership Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit a) information on any membership and marketing outreach to new library professionals and b) input on the 2013 EL team’s suggested services and marketing tools derived from the results of the first two years of the project.

The 2013 EL team learned that the last major LLAMA membership drive was in 2006 and 2007; that there has been no major marketing or communication outreach specifically to LIS students and new library professionals; that LLAMA and the Student Chapters have very little interaction; and that the website and brochure are currently the only available marketing materials.

This stakeholder meeting also revealed that the lack of continuity among volunteers on committees means that any new ideas implemented should take into account the need for a supply of volunteers, or LLAMA staff time to keep the programs alive.

2013 EL ideas presented to Mr. Shoaf and Ms. Theodore-Shusta and their feedback

EL Ideas	Feedback
Newsletter	Favorable. Use LIS faculty to reach students
Free webinars/Reduced rate webinars	Favorable. Concern about cost to LLAMA
Welcome packet	Favorable. What would be included?
Concierge (buddy system)	Favorable. Less time intensive than mentoring
Use the LLAMA acronym less	Favorable
Adopt-a-student (pay membership)	Unfavorable. Members would not be supportive/participate

ALA Student Chapter Liaison

The fourth stakeholder meeting was with Don Wood, Program Officer, Chapter Relations Office. The Student Chapters’ role in ALA, past interactions with LLAMA (if any), and ways in which LLAMA might collaborate with student chapters and better serve LIS students were discussed.

The 2013 EL team learned that student chapters are fairly autonomous and tend to be a steppingstone into membership and leadership within ALA. Leaders of student chapters have to be members of ALA, but other members do not.

Mr. Wood expressed real enthusiasm for collaboration between LLAMA and the Student Chapters Program and felt that there are many opportunities for LLAMA to provide meaningful services to student chapters, especially

the student chapter leaders who are already members of ALA. Mr. Wood suggested that a short student chapter survey be conducted, before launching any initiatives, to get a sense of what they want and need.

LLAMA should bring its advantages and offerings to the students instead of expecting the students to come to them (not many students go to a conference). Many things remain abstract unless students have someone to show them. LLAMA cuts across all types of libraries – people join the association that is in their area (ACRL, PLA, State Library Associations, etc.) and LLAMA is not necessarily on their ‘radar screen’ but would be with more of a presence among students.

2013 Emerging Leader ideas presented to Mr. Wood and his feedback

EL Ideas	Feedback
Buddy system	Favorable. Gives a ‘taste’ of LLAMA
Provide webinars, workshops, & trainings geared towards the needs of LIS students	Favorable. Go to them! Electronic lists are available to gather and disseminate information
Digital Resource Guide – web presence	Favorable. Should be welcoming & address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why important to learn leadership skills - link into a friendlier/less academic presence - reasons to join ALA and LLAMA - what you can get out of LLAMA that you need

New Members Round Table (NMRT) and LLAMA/NMRT Joint Committee on Collaboration

The fifth stakeholder meeting was with New Members Round Table and the LLAMA/NMRT Joint Committee on Collaboration. The 2013 EL team spoke with Rachel Besara, Chair, LLAMA/NMRT Joint Committee on Collaboration, Emily Prather-Rodgers, NMRT President, and Jane Kinlaw, NMRT Past President.

The 2013 Emerging Leaders team learned about the New Members Round Table and discussed their recruiting initiatives. NMRT recruits from the ALA membership pool and have a couple of committees that reach out to student chapters. Their most successful recruiting initiative is that they promise a committee assignment to anyone who wants one and is willing to volunteer. Their most successful event is the conference orientation. The conference orientation brings a wide swath of individuals together from all types of library backgrounds.

The NMRT group reiterated items mentioned by Don Wood, the student chapter liaison and stated that LLAMA needs to make a really good case for the organization and clearly articulate what it can do for students to make it worth the membership fee. In addition, it was suggested that in reaching out to students, LLAMA should focus on the leadership aspect of its mission since the idea of ‘management’ can be intimidating.

2013 EL ideas for collaboration presented to Ms. Besara, Ms. Prather-Rodgers, and Ms. Kinlaw and their feedback.

EL Ideas	Feedback
Buddy system	Favorable. Less time commitment
Mentoring (perhaps – joint mentoring)	Favorable. NMRT welcomes LLAMA mentors
Webinars (joint effort)	Favorable. Can share info about training/education being offered to new members. Can offer joint programs

Documents and Materials Reviewed

LLAMA 2013 Membership & Marketing Survey

The Membership & Marketing Survey was sent to LLAMA members to determine “the makeup of our membership and what mechanisms prompted our current membership to get involved with LLAMA, as well as what marketing mechanisms LLAMA should employ in the future.” Results of this survey including all 524 responses are included at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=47RqmiCdDH_2fkInISXSTh9gpwualO7yVWclH1JUjmOnY_3d.

Findings from the LLAMA Membership & Marketing Survey 2012 Results Summary most relevant to the LLAMA EL 3-year project:

Composition of membership

- Very few LLAMA respondents were in positions without supervisory responsibilities.
- The majority of members (60.8%) are from academic libraries and 36% from public libraries.

Rating of services

- The most effective services identified by survey respondents are those provided at annual conference, a service delivery venue that may not be available to new and emerging professionals.
- Programs at annual conference (44.3%) and *LL&M* journal (37.9%) received the highest rank.
- The biggest factor in members choosing to join LLAMA was the opportunity to learn new management or leadership skills (61.2% - 318 respondents).

Marketing strategies

- The ALA website is the top mechanism for people to first learn about LLAMA.
- Survey results indicate that social media communication is not a good way to introduce existent professionals to LLAMA, but with greater investigation they may be useful in appealing to graduating and nearly graduating potential members.
- Discounts on LLAMA continuing education/publications/events were not a driving factor for new members to join nor was access to potential career mentors.

LLAMA Strategic Plan 2012-2015

[LLAMA Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015](#) focuses on member engagement and value, leadership development and continuous learning, and organizational excellence. Many key strategies outlined center around meeting the needs of a diverse membership, seeking collaborative ventures, and leveraging technology and communication tools to enhance LLAMA’s ability to deliver programs and services.

LLAMA Website

<http://www.ala.org/llama/>

LLAMA Membership Brochure

http://www.ala.org/llama/sites/ala.org.llaama/files/content/about/LLAMA_brochure.pdf

Map of ALA Accredited Library and Information Studies Programs

<http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/directory/map>

Emerging Leaders 2011 Website and Survey Results

<https://sites.google.com/site/ellama2011/home>

Emerging Leaders 2011 ALA Poster

Emerging Leaders 2012 Website and Survey Results

<https://sites.google.com/site/llamael2012/home>

Emerging Leaders 2012 ALA Poster

Recommendations

The 2013 EL team recommendations outlined below are a result of an in-depth review of the 2011 and 2012 EL projects and survey results, other strategic documents, our virtual meetings with key stakeholders, our individual experiences and discussions with new librarians and LIS students, and the EL 2013 team brainstorming sessions and discussions.

The 2012 LLAMA Membership and Marketing Survey clearly indicates that very few LLAMA members are not already in a leadership or at least supervisory position. The membership brochure is ostensibly geared towards established professionals with distinct areas of interest rather than to students and new professionals who are exploring new ground, needing flexibility, and in the process of creating themselves in a new professional world. The stakeholder interviews and findings from the 2011 and 2012 EL teams all indicate that students and new professionals are not being adequately reached or serviced.

As such, in the opinion of the 2013 EL team, the outreach strategies and services that need to be developed and sustained to reach LIS students and new professionals, would be better supported and managed by a separate and devoted LLAMA Section: the New Professionals Section. It is therefore our recommendation that LLAMA form a new section dedicated to students and new professionals entering the profession in all types of libraries and in all types of positions.

Outlined below is further information on the rationale and scope for a LLAMA Section dedicated to this new market. Recommended strategies for engagement and recruitment of LIS students and new library professionals fall into two broad categories which are also covered individually below, 1) marketing and outreach and 2) services.

Formation of a New Professionals Section

Throughout its interviews, the 2013 EL team observed a marked diversity of requested services and, in turn, a wide variety of moving parts to pull them off within LLAMA's current structure. Each existing division and section committee has its part to play, but none of them can take full ownership of services to new professionals. Cohesion of services and outreach are critical factors in the success of any new service portfolio since new and potential members will be reluctant to devote their time and financial resources to a piecemeal, inconsistent set of services. For this reason, a centralized approach, assigning primary responsibility to the New Professionals Section, represents an appropriate strategy.

Two alternate approaches were discussed by the EL 2013 team, but were found unsuitable:

1. New services and outreach responsibilities could be divided among existing sections and committees based on their charge: Human Resources Section taking professional development training, the Mentoring Committee handling the Buddy System, and so on. This approach has a marked downside in that each section and committee would be responsible for its own divergent programs, with varying degrees of commitment and success which would result in a fractured set of services to an already-uncertain set of potential members.
2. The new services and outreach responsibilities could be assigned to a new division-level committee drawn

from the membership and structure of LLAMA, and perhaps other divisions of ALA. Although a possible option the section level committee seems more appropriate for this central and unique functional area of LLAMA's portfolio.

The 2013 EL team recognizes that forming a new Section is a complex challenge. Per Article VII, Section 1 of the LLAMA Bylaws (<http://www.ala.org/llama/about/memberresources/governance>), a Section must be established as a "group of at least one hundred members of the association, representing a field of activity clearly distinct from that of any existing section".

Although worthy of care and consideration, the Team is confident that sufficient LLAMA members can be recruited to establish a 100-member initial quorum. Once designed and established, the section status of this group would provide enough autonomy, central authority, and LLAMA representation to support a vast and yet-untapped portfolio of services to LIS students and new professionals. These services, though related to the activities of other LLAMA entities, are distinct from the portfolio of existing sections and committees.

The 2013 EL team recommends that LLAMA members be asked to sign a statement of interest to establish the level of interest and that a motion be raised to the LLAMA Board of Directors expressing the purpose of and interest in this new Section, along with a provisional plan for executing the other recommendations below under the auspices of the new Section.

Services

Listed below are the recommended programs and services that LLAMA develop and offer to students and new professionals to attract and keep them in the Association. Again, the 2013 EL team came to these recommendations based on the data collected through its research and discussions. These are itemized below with reference to their alignment with the LLAMA Strategic Plan 2012-15 (<http://www.ala.org/llama/about/memberresources/governance>).

Recruit LLAMA members to offer programs to their local LIS schools & Student Chapters.

The 2012 Membership and Marketing Survey indicated that the most effective services identified by survey respondents are those provided at annual conference, a service delivery venue that may not be available to new and emerging professionals. In fact, one of the major difficulties facing students is the steep cost of conference attendance. By bringing LLAMA to them, the Division can provide much-needed services and communicate the benefits of joining LLAMA.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 1: "Continuously expand LLAMA activities such as programs, publications, and events to meet the needs of a growing and diverse membership."
- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 3: "Foster development of high-quality and cost-effective training in multiple formats including in-person, conference, non-conference, and virtual for managers and leaders at all career stages."

Offer low-cost trainings and webinars for students and new LLAMA members.

Another barrier to students and new professionals is the cost of existing LLAMA professional development opportunities. A student or student group is extremely unlikely to pay \$50 for a webinar. Exploring lower-cost options would open doors to LLAMA for many newer professionals. This may take the form of a discount for Student Chapters, additional free trial webinars for students and recent graduates, or a separate set of trainings and webinars directed to students free of charge.

- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 3: "Foster development of high-quality and cost-effective training in multiple formats including in-person, conference, non-conference, and virtual for managers and leaders at all career stages."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 5: "Expand capacity for providing continuing virtual

educational offerings such as webinars while reducing demand on LLAMA staff and enabling members to actively participate in the delivery of such offerings."

Design and maintain an online LLAMA new professionals portal.

One component of the online space should be a well-kept guide to resources for this target audience. This may include an archive of LLAMA-produced webinars, links to external resources, a database of local LLAMA contacts, and a student-run blog covering leadership skills for the new leader. This portal should not be behind a membership wall: it should be a service to new professionals to raise LLAMA's profile among LIS students and new professionals.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 1: "Continuously expand LLAMA activities such as programs, publications, and events to meet the needs of a growing and diverse membership."
- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 2: "Expand LLAMA's virtual presence and opportunities for virtual participation."
- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 5: "Leverage and master technology and communication tools to provide continuous virtual learning opportunities for our members."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 4: "Exploit technology that improves LLAMA's organizational effectiveness and enhances all aspects of virtual membership."

Offer new LLAMA members a Buddy who will serve as a short-term personal guide to LLAMA.

Established members can volunteer to take a new member under their wing and explain how LLAMA works and how to become involved. This is distinct from, but may overlap with, the Mentoring program: a mentor is more broadly scoped and often a long-term relationship, but a LLAMA buddy would be a 6-month to 1-year commitment intended to specifically orient the new member to all that LLAMA can offer.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 1: "Continuously expand LLAMA activities such as programs, publications, and events to meet the needs of a growing and diverse membership."
- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 6: "Foster continuous development of a robust formal mentoring program that enhances the LLAMA membership experience for aspiring library leaders."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 2: "Seek out collaborative alliances that enhance LLAMA's strategic initiatives and the division's ability to deliver programs and services that serve members and potential members."

Promote the existing ALA committee internship program.

Many ALA members may be unaware that committees can include an intern whose job is to support the chair and the committee overall. LLAMA could tout this option and market it specifically to students and new professionals as a quick path to involvement in the Division, increasing the odds that a new member will continue their involvement.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 1: "Continuously expand LLAMA activities such as programs, publications, and events to meet the needs of a growing and diverse membership."
- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 2: "Offer a wide variety of conference programs and events and professional development offerings both solo and in collaboration and partnership with other organizations, including ALA chapters, to meet established member needs and create an inclusive community."

Marketing and Outreach

The most notable finding of the 2013 EL team's research is that LLAMA's current marketing strategies do not adequately reach LIS students and new library professionals. A surprising majority of students and new professionals (more than two thirds of those surveyed by the 2012 EL team) either do not know what LLAMA is or

are only vaguely familiar with the Division. Based on the EL 2013 team's data collection, several communication strategies presented themselves as good options for LLAMA to connect with LIS students and new professionals. These are itemized below with reference to their alignment with the LLAMA Strategic Plan 2012-15.

Spell out "Library Leadership and Management Association" wherever possible.

Although active and experienced members may be completely aware of what LLAMA is, new professionals are often lost in a sea of acronyms. By spelling out LLAMA's full name, name recognition can be easily engendered.

- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 1: "Market LLAMA and its services to...recruit new members."

Produce a membership and marketing brochure specifically oriented to new professionals.

LIS management instructors asked for a small brochure to distribute to their students. The current LLAMA brochure does not directly point to what LLAMA might do for their students or new professionals. The EL 2013 team advises that this new brochure succinctly point out LLAMA's immediately available services to new professionals. Further, the text describing these services can be repurposed for other targeted communication strategies: write once, use often.

- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 1: "Market LLAMA and its services to...recruit new members."

Create a designated online space focused on services and resources for students and new professionals.

This space will not only collocate the services LLAMA can provide, but also provide a space for interaction, idea exchange, and collaboration among this new market with distinct needs. Content may include webinars, discussion forums, social media tickers, connection with geographically relevant resources, etc.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 2: "Expand LLAMA's virtual presence and opportunities for virtual participation."
- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 4: "Implement innovative and effective technological and communication tools and strategies that facilitate efficient and effective communication within LLAMA and that enhance virtual participation for members."
- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 5: "Leverage and master technology and communication tools to provide continuous virtual learning opportunities for our members."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 4: "Exploit technology that improves LLAMA's organizational effectiveness and enhances all aspects of virtual membership."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 5: "Expand capacity for providing continuing virtual educational offerings such as webinars while reducing demand on LLAMA staff and enabling members to actively participate in the delivery of such offerings."

Use social media venues to promote LLAMA.

In the 2012 Membership and Marketing Survey Results Summary the need to investigate the use of social media as a means to attract and serve students and new professionals to the Division is acknowledged. The 2013 EL team does not advocate the use of any specific venue, but advises a broad and consistent reach across popular social media platforms to facilitate communication among a technologically diverse membership. Further research may be needed to determine the best strategy in this space.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 4: "Implement innovative and effective technological and communication tools and strategies that facilitate efficient and effective communication within LLAMA and that enhance virtual participation for members."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 4: "Exploit technology that improves LLAMA's organizational effectiveness and enhances all aspects of virtual membership."

Target ALA Student Chapters as a key audience.

The ALA Student Chapter Coordinator advised the 2013 EL team that outreach to student chapters is easy and welcomed. Students would respond well to LLAMA pushing out webinars, leadership training, and local events directly to them. Further, the 2013 EL team recommends specifically targeting the *leaders* of student chapters because they are memberselected as rising leaders in their profession, and are likely to welcome any help they can get in this new leadership position they find themselves in. By reaching out to Student Chapters, LLAMA will invest in future leaders, and will likely gain new members in the process.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 3: "Seek out collaborative ventures to facilitate the development of leadership and management programs, resources, and tools that meet needs of library and information services professionals and organizations."
- Leadership Development & Continuous Learning, Key Strategy 3: "Foster development of high-quality and cost-effective training in multiple formats including in-person, conference, non-conference, and virtual for managers and leaders at all career stages."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 2: "Seek out collaborative alliances that enhance LLAMA's strategic initiatives and the division's ability to deliver programs and services that serve members and potential members."

Target LIS faculty as a pathway to reach students and recent graduates.

Faculty are always looking for ways to connect what they teach in the classroom to professional involvement that will span their students' careers. By providing rich resources that align with management curricula, LLAMA can create new points of contact with their target audience.

- Member Engagement & Value, Key Strategy 3: "Seek out collaborative ventures to facilitate the development of leadership and management programs, resources, and tools that meet needs of library and information services professionals and organizations."
- Organizational Excellence, Key Strategy 2: "Seek out collaborative alliances that enhance LLAMA's strategic initiatives and the division's ability to deliver programs and services that serve members and potential members."

In addition to the targeted recommendations above, the 2013 EL team encourages LLAMA to design a website with links and data for all of the content from this 3 year project. At the moment the content is in three different places and some of the documents are not easily accessible. Much of the detail that is not reflected in this white paper will be important to individuals who execute these recommendations.

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