Fishing For Effective Business Strategies

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The State of Kansas is successfully rebuilding their radon program around three basic business strategies: Resourcing radon information, determining a niche market that can effectively educate the general public, and networking with unlike entities to increase creative thought and stimulate education of rural populations.

PRE-STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

The pre-existing radon program was fairly efficient and very professional. Five individuals were well versed regarding radon. Two primary personnel exclusively dedicated their time to the radon program. Three other individuals supplied backup, when the primary individuals were at a meeting, a public speaking engagement, or traveling on business. This radon program had a "1-800" number to answer radon questions from concerned citizens. It was well documented that the "800" number was successful and critical to the mission of public education regarding radon. This program also housed multiple copies of all EPA literature on radon. These documents were maintained and disbursed to Kansas citizens as requested.

Up to this point, Kansas had collected approximately 14,000 reports from home owners on radon levels in their homes. This data had been compiled according to zip code, and disseminated utilizing a map of Kansas divided according to zip code. Kansas was also voluntarily participating in the Radon Proficiency Program sponsored by the EPA. Kansas was providing easy access to radon test kits equally across the state, by placing them at Kansas State University County Extension Offices. A policy was in place regarding any home that tested above 40pCi/l. If home owners had a residence that tested 40pCi/l or higher, they could make a formal request of the radon program for technical assistance. This assistance usually was in the form of affirmation of test results and technical assistance with mitigation, if necessary.

The final piece of the program was public outreach. The radon staff attended various fairs across Kansas, hosted Radon Action Week, and Earth Day. Various promotional tools such as pencils and T-shirts were utilized.

SOLID BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS

Upon reviewing the existing radon program, it was determined that four very basic business fundamentals were missing from this program. These fundamentals would identify viable opportunities and solidify the mission of the program.
Vision Statement - The radon program had an established mission statement. It is fairly apparent that the mission statement addressed **what** the program is to accomplish. The program also had the EPA's predetermine objectives. These objectives addressed **how** the mission was to be accomplished. The program lacked a vision statement. The vision statement gives the **direction** the program will take to accomplish the mission. Without a clearly defined direction, often organizations and/or projects tend to stagnate, flounder, or fail to reach their full potential.

Procedures and Protocols - With the radon program being a small program, it is understandable that procedures and protocols were not seen as a necessity. Everyone who was, or is involved in the program knew all about the prior successes and failures, and knew what the current programs were. Unfortunately, without a written procedure or protocol there was also no written desired minimal outcome. Therefore, the success of an individual program became ambiguous. This ambiguity became greater as time advanced and the individuals involved tend to forget the real objective of the program. When procedures and protocols are written down with a clear objective and expected outcome, it is easier to determine if the program was successful. Furthermore this success can be viewed at the end of the year, or reviewed ten years later, and the desired objectives and outcomes are still clear.

Quality Assurance - The Kansas Radon Program has been described by many as a quality program with a highly qualified and professional staff. When asked how it was determined that the program was a "quality" program, answers ranged from the friendliness of the staff, the program was comparative to other state radon programs, and there didn't seem to be any glaring problems with the existing programs. A possible problem became apparent when reviewing earlier SIRG grants. When reviewing prior individual programs/projects, it was not always clear **how** successful they were. Therefore, it was determined that a measurable standard needed to be applied to all of the radon programs/projects. These measurable standards would be program/project specific. The glue or quality assurance piece that made these measurable standards successful is that they had to be in line with one of the EPA's established radon objectives. This ensures that the overall radon programs stays on task regarding EPA's established objectives. This ensures that projects could produce factual hard data in the format of quarterly/yearly reports.

Communication Vehicle - It is fairly apparent that with such a small radon staff, it would be virtually impossible to evenly educate the entire population of Kansas. This task is made more difficult by the fact that a large demographic section of Kansas is very rural. This made the usual modes of transportation like newspapers, tv, radio, and brochures very limited in their success. Therefore it became obvious that a new or additional mode of transporting the radon message needed to be established.
FISHBONE DIAGRAM METHOD OF IDENTIFYING A BUSINESS STRATEGY

The fishbone diagram is a pictorial business tool used to either brainstorm potential answers regarding predetermined areas/objectives, or to strategize a business plan that will address all of the business objectives. We utilized it in both formats. First, we wanted to build a foundational program that hopefully would address some or all of EPA's stated objectives. To accomplish this we determined that the following EPA objective would be utilized:

Continue efforts to increase public awareness about radon through public speaking and presentations.

It was felt this objective could have an effect on, or overlap all other EPA radon objectives. Therefore, this objective became the backbone of the strategic business plan (see illustration 1:1). Three of the ribs were filled in with ideas generated, with an emphasis on the identified business fundamentals. Obviously the first rib had to be resourcing radon information. This went to the very heart of the stated objective. To accomplish this, we identified three areas: radon in libraries, the radon video library, and the mini-grant program. All of these programs were established as leveling mechanisms to ensure availability to every citizen in Kansas.

Radon in libraries-It was determined that it was feasible to place a packet of information in every secondary, academic, and public library in Kansas. A list of these libraries was obtained from the State Library. Two introduction letters were included, one to the library staff requesting they maintain this packet of information and make it available to their patrons; and a second letter to library patrons explaining why this material was being made available and how to request the literature by filling out an order form and forwarding it to Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Radiation Control Program, Radon Program. The quality assurance measurement standard decided on for this program was a telephone survey conducted every three years to ensure replacement of literature that had disappeared and to request how many times this packet of information had been checked out.

Radon video library-KDHE houses 42 different radon videos, some in multiple copies. These videos were not being utilized by anyone except radon staff for educational purposes. It was felt this resource was being drastically under utilized. Therefore, a checkout brochure was developed and included in the radon in libraries literature, and in the mini-grant program discussed later in this presentation. The quality assurance measurement standard applied was a yearly tally of the number of requests received, availability of the video when requested, and the successful return rate on the videos.

Mini-grant program-The radon staff felt that resourcing radon information would be better accomplished if more individuals across the state were working the radon issue. Last year there had been an attempt at putting together a mini-grant program. Three persons responded and one actually put together a radon program. However, from this fledgling attempt it became apparent
that clearer guidelines and oversight were needed by KDHE to ensure a quality service or product was produced.

Therefore, the Radon Networking, Success Through Partnerships handbook was created. This handbook utilized literature already developed by EPA covering the following areas:

A. Introduction letter  
B. A Community-Based Approach for Radon Education and Action  
C. The Keys to Success in Building Coalitions for Community Action  
D. Historical Reference/Health Risks from Radon  
E. Radon in New and Existing Homes  
F. Radon in Schools  
G. Radon in the Work Place  
H. Radon and Real Estate  
I. Radon and New Construction  
J. Radon Awareness and Risk Reduction Grant Program

The following is additional information developed by the radon staff to complete this handbook:

K. Grant Application  
L. Mini-Grant Application  
M. EPA Objectives in Certificate Format  
N. Additional Radon Information Ordering Forms  
  1. Radon video library  
  2. KDHE radon publication ordering form  
  3. EPA radon publication ordering form  
  4. NEHA current RPP list  
  5. A list of suppliers for radon testing and mitigation products

A one-day seminar was conducted to familiarize applicants with the mini-grant process, the staff EPA objectives, and to educate about radon. These seminars were scheduled in two different locations and over 400 organizations were invited to participate.

The quality assurance measurement for this mini-grant program consisted of the following components:

A. All applicants were familiarized with the grant writing format required by KDHE. An outline of this format was included in both the grant and mini-grant sections of the handbook.  
B. An EPA Region VII representative was asked to attend the seminars to help convey a solid working commitment to this grant program and those who decided to participate.  
C. All grant applications were reviewed by three radon staff and one EPA Region VII staff member. This was done to help ensure that the application was workable and addressed at least one of the established EPA objectives.
D. All grant applications needed to demonstrate reportable measurable standards. These standards were to be in the form of number of citizens educated about radon, number of radon tests done, number of different audiences addressed, daily circulation numbers of ads, if a radio or tv interview was conducted, daily listening populations, and number of students and teachers exposed to classroom curriculum.

E. Site visits were conducted by radon staff. These served two purposes: First To check accuracy of curriculum materials, and to show support and dedication of radon staff to grantees

F. It was a concern that many grantees would not have the financial ability to start a radon grant without receiving funding up front. It was also a concern that if all grant money was disbursed when the grant was awarded, this could cause problems. It was decided that 50% of the total grant amount could be requested upon receipt of the letter to proceed. Another 25% could be requested halfway through the program and the final 25% could be requested when the final report was received. All requests for funding had to be on organizational letterhead.

G. Quarterly reports would be required from all grantees. A concise narrative of what had been accomplished in the current quarter was expected.

H. A final report was to be submitted in a three-ring binder. Including copies of all materials produced and the total number of individuals exposed to the radon message. If radon-resistant homes had been built. Finally, if radon tests were conducted the total number needed to be documented. A financial page giving a final account of all monies received and spent, and a total amount of match-in-kind displayed. This match-in-kind was to be displayed in a total monetary amount. Including donations of wages donated (volunteer time), products donated (paper, staples etc...), administrative overhead, and vehicles or building utilization.

Identifying an appropriate niche market-This was the second rib of the fishbone diagram. The communication vehicle by which the radon message would be spread. Two different niches were identified: nonprofit organizations and school children. It was felt that if school children were educated about radon while they were a captive audience, that perhaps tomorrow's adult population would be more pro-active regarding radon. Secondly, it was felt that for every child who was educated, it was clearly a possibility that the parent figures in the house would also become educated. Finally, it seemed that parents were more likely to address a health risk to their children before they address their own health risks. Therefore it seemed likely that homes identified as having high radon levels with children in them were more likely to get mitigated.

Not wanting to be too narrowly focused when determining the communication vehicle was the driving force behind including all non-profits organizations as potential grantees. A large portion of non-profit organizations deal with public outreach and education on a daily basis. This was seen as a positive attribute. These were professionals who should need little oversight in grant development or implementation.

Networking with unlike entities-The Kansas Radon Program was willing to entertain networking with all interested parties regarding the radon issue. The radon staff recognized the value of
coalitions and worked to further such efforts in the state. However, coalitions often consist of members who are in like industries and have similar driving forces behind their involvement. The radon staff felt that if it centered the mini-grant program around unlike entities it would increase the possibility of creative thought and hopefully reach a greater rural population in Kansas. This represented the direction the radon program was taking for the foreseeable future.

Finally the fishbone diagram was utilized with each of the EPA objectives becoming one of the ribs. Each mini-grant application had to fall under one of these ribs. This gave the staff a good pictorial representation of what objectives were being covered effectively by the mini-grant program, and enabled them to concentrate their efforts on EPA objectives that were not receiving enough attention. (see illustration 1:2).

POST-STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

It was felt by radon staff that when working with school age children, often an incentive or thank-you gift would be appreciated. Therefore, a T-shirt was developed that catered to teenagers. Teenagers were picked because it quickly became apparent that this was the largest age group working on our mini-grants. When utilizing this marketing strategy it was determined that the established color scheme created by Tommy Hilfiger would be used, as it had already been embraced by the teenage population. Secondly, it was determined that a short snappy message with a cartoon character depicting a loony teenager would also be used (see illustration 2). This marketing tool has been highly successful and has also been found to be effective with pre-teens and adults.

Both non-profit organizations and schools were invited to the seminars regarding the radon grants. The number of schools and non-profit organizations that successfully completed a grant application and received a mini-grant was about evenly split. Teachers embraced the opportunity to present their classes with the ability to learn something new and to have an impact on their community. The students were excited about doing something outside of the classroom and having adults listen to them speak knowledgeably about something that often the adults had limited knowledge about. The student population often times did not have outside influences while they were learning about radon. This seemed to have an impact on how serious a health issue they viewed radon to be.

The non-profit organizations were also determined to be a good vehicle to communicate the radon message. It proved to be true that often these organizations were already involved in public outreach and education. It also proved to be true that these organization rarely needed help writing in grant format or managing their grant activities.

Resourcing radon information through the utilization of the public library and the video library was very helpful for the grantees. It made the resources either available locally or by request. The radon video library gave schools another format other than written by which to educate their students. Of course the hope was that the general citizen would also utilize these
available resources, but currently the main people doing so have been connected to one of our mini-grants. Many of our mini-grants referred parents and interested groups to the local public library for additional answers or resources.

Networking with unlike entities was clearly a positive direction in which to head for utilizing the mini-grant format as a resourcing tool. We had twelve successful mini-grants this year. The following is a narrative overview of our most successful mini-grants recipients and their grant projects.

**McPherson County Extension.** An annual event in Moundridge is the USD 423 Faculty Wellness Day, which all of the approximately 100 employees of the district are required to attend. In 1999, one of the health topics to be highlighted will be indoor radon and its impact on health. This presentation will consist of the following:

* A presentation by a McPherson County FACS agent who will inform faculty and staff of the health risks associated with high radon levels and will encourage them to test their homes for radon.
* Participants will be shown how to use a radon test kit and will test their homes and classrooms for radon. All test results will be recorded according to zip code.
* Total results of the radon testing for the Moundridge area will be made available to the McPherson County Extension Office and utilized for media coverage to promote radon awareness throughout McPherson and surrounding areas.
* The project will be marketed and the community informed about indoor radon risks through the Faculty Wellness Day program and news coverage in the Moundridge newspaper, as well as the McPherson Sentinel.

**Inman Future Farmers of America (FFA).** This organization coordinated a community-wide radon education program to inform residents of the health risks associated with high radon levels and encourage homeowners to test for radon. Both the elementary and jr/sr. high school buildings in the district will be tested. All classroom teachers will test their homes. Each of the 40 FFA members will find three homeowners that are willing to test their homes for radon and report their results to the FFA.

**Anthony Middle School.** Eighth-grade physical science at Susan B. Anthony is a full-year course that focuses on chemistry and physics. It is a lab-based course with opportunities for inquiry learning and content. Use of computer is encouraged and taught as part of the curriculum. Each year a unit is present on radiation. This project will be part of the unit, with an emphasis on radon and natural radiation. The following activities will occur:

* The students will research topics dealing with radiation including natural radiation. They will use the Internet and other sources to create a presentation and visual display. The projects will be displayed in the school and oral presentations will be given on the topics. Some of the displays may be taken to the Science Technology Fair at the Manhattan Town Center Mall in February.

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*The students will go on a radioactive treasure hunt to search for background radiation around the school. They will also do a variety of tests on some common materials using a Geiger counter. One group will work with the mystery radioactive rock and will be awarded a prize if they can find the rock.

*The students will do a lab activity to demonstrate radioactive half-life and decay.
*The students will make a cloud chamber to actually see radioactive particles.
*An interested group of students will be assembled to be the Radioactive Radon Rangers. This group will meet after school and organize a booth for the Science and Technology Fair in February. The “Raiders” will set up a booth to raise public awareness about radon. This group will conduct radon tests in their homes and then will have drawings for kits to be given away at the booth. The students will also have information about radon testing available at the booth. They will wear their Radioactive Radon Raiders t-shirts and have a drawing to give away a t-shirt.
*The science teacher will present this radon project in March at the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) in Boston, Massachusetts. Expected attendance is approximately 18,000 science educators.

Topeka Community Action. The following is an overview of their comprehensive radon mini-grant program:
*Will produce and provide a radon and energy education kit to elementary schools. The kit will contain a lesson plan prepared in conjunction with the Kansas Board of Education recommended science requirements outline and that utilizes existing material and publications. The lesson plan and enough materials for a class of 25 students will be packaged and shipped to requesting schools.
*Will provide 250 winterization and radon kits. These kits are distributed to low income residents that attend a Winter Readiness Workshop that offers energy conservation advise and explains how to use all of the items in the kit. A phone number is provided to answer questions about kit items.
*They will increase radon awareness and testing by including radon awareness as part of their Energy Education Program Workshops held throughout north central Kansas. They will provide free radon testing to attendees.
*Will provide free radon testing to residents that qualify under state income guidelines for home weatherization in their district.
*Will disburse radon information from an information booth at the following Environmental awareness days in the area:
  Winterization Workshops
  Topeka-Papans Landing
  Topeka-Oakland Community Center
  Topeka-Central Park Community Center
  Topeka-Abbott Community Center
  Topeka-Hudson Head Start Center
Weatherization Workshops
Topeka-Builders and Contractors Association
Clay Center-McKinley School
Leonardville-TBA
Topeka-Landlords Association

General Information
Walmart-Green Days
Back-to-School-Fair

Radon Specific Workshops
Topeka-Landlords Association
Topeka-Builders and Contractors Association
Topeka-Topeka Realtors Association

**Junior Achievement of Northeast Kansas.** This group will develop a radon education supplement for the Junior Achievement elementary school program offered in third grade classes. The overall theme of this program is an analysis of a city, how a city is built, and the role of the construction industry. This radon education supplement will develop awareness on the part of children about the risk associated with radon exposure, how and where it occurs, and introduce the students to steps to prevent exposure. This project would target all third grade classes in Shawnee County currently participating in the Junior Achievement program. It is anticipated over 30 classrooms will be participating with over 750 students in ten schools.

**Wonder Workshop.** This children's interactive museum that encourages learning through participation. A coloring book will be developed that is target for elementary children. High school students will perform a 45 minute skit based upon the coloring book. This dramatic presentation will be taken to nine elementary schools and will educate grade school children and their teachers about the dangers and effects of radon. The coloring book will be distributed at these plays. Additional coloring books will be kept at the museum for their patrons.

**Emporia USD #253 Village Elementary School.** This mini-grant will take the format of a music club. The club will produce a video that gives an overview of radon gas and a World Wide Web site that mirrors the video. The video will star Randy and his friends, all fictitious characters designed by the students. Original songs, morph animation, a slide show, and stop-action animation will all be used in development of the tape. The web site will include in addition a coloring book, puzzle pages, and club membership material that can be downloaded and printed off by internet users. The videotape and web page will be produced by Mr. Ferree's fourth grade class of 27 students. The video will be distributed to the local school libraries for checkout. Each participating child in Mr. Ferree's class will also receive a radon test kit so they can test their homes.
Larned Middle/High School. Twenty high school students will gain knowledge about radon-resistant construction by participating in the construction of a new radon-resistant home. Twenty seventh grade students will design a unique web page that will depict the construction of a radon-resistant house. This web page will have actual pictures of the process, taken while high school students built the radon-resistant home. A select group of gifted students will construct a doll house showing radon-resistant construction for in-class learning and demonstration. Approximately 120 students and teachers will test their homes for radon. This project, upon completion, will be presented to NBC affiliate in Great Bend.

Southeast Kansas Education Service Center (SEKESC). SEKESC is the largest education service center in Kansas, with a primary service area that includes more than 117 school districts, 14,000 teachers and administrators, and 192,000 students. This project will be coordinated by a board certified safety professional who is also a Kansas certified school teacher. Project marketing efforts will be directed at school administrators, science teachers, elementary teachers, industrial arts/vocational teachers, and other appropriate school personnel. Participating schools will be recruited by a variety of means, including mailings, phone calls, presentations at meetings, and personal visits. The project will consist of various presentations, activities, and materials offered to K-12 students according to an advisory committee of educators from participating school districts. Presentations, materials, and activities will be incorporated from existing sources, and original materials will be developed as needed. Presentations, materials, and activities will emphasize active student involvement and will be appropriate for each age level of children served.

MEASURABLE RESULTS

During the oral presentation of this paper at the AARST symposium, a visual presentation of some of the final products produced will be shown. As was mentioned two best mini-grants were awarded certificates of excellence from the Kansas Secretary of Health (see illustration 3). The first award of excellence went to Emporia's USD #253 Village Elementary School. The video they produced and the website were outstanding. The video was shared with EPA Region VII and they touted it as one of the most original and refreshing ideas they had seen in some time. This class also entered their webpage in the Cyber Fair. The competition was stiff, with more than 20,000 entries. Village Elementary was considered for first place. The other contenders were Singapore, England, Hawaii, Japan, and France. All of the other contenders for first place were high school classes. Village Elementary received fourth place in the overall competition and received 16,578 hits on their website at last count. It is notable that this small Kansas based radon project probably educated people far outside the established state lines.

The second award went to Larned Middle/High School. It is believed at this time they maintain website the only website that teaches the viewer how to build a radon-resistant home. It is hoped this website will be intriguing to the construction industry and at least reviewed. Hopefully this will encourage the construction industry to undertake this simple (dare we say childish) task. Within the first week of this website's operation it received 234 hits. This is quite
amazing when you understand that Larned Kansas is very rural in nature and at least one hour from any major city.

To further visually measure the success of the mini-grant program a graphical representation is included (see illustration 4). This graph depicts totals regarding audiences per mini-grant, projects, and monetary award per grant. It quickly becomes apparent that the mini-grant program is very cost effective.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The State of Kansas Radon Program intends to continue their mini-grant program into the next SIRG year. Many of our current mini-grant recipients have decided to either do another mini-grant or enhance or broaden their existing projects. We are hoping to attract additional mini-grant applications in the coming year. Questions about the mini-grant handbook, or products produced by mini-grantees please feel free to call 1-800-693-KDHE and ask to speak to Bruce Snead.
It creeps while you sleep.

ILLUSTRATION 2
Fish-Bone Diagram
(Pictorial Business Tool)

Networking

Identifying Niche Markets

Communication Vehicle

Continue efforts to increase public awareness about radon through public speaking and presentations.
Fish-Bone Diagram
(Pictorial Business Tool)

Continue efforts to increase public awareness about radon through public speaking and presentations.

*Objectives depicted are the established EPA radon objectives

ILLUSTRATION: 1:2
Wake up to Radon!

FRONT OF T-SHIRT

ILLUSTRATION 2

1999 International Radon Symposium 7.14
Bring New Focus On Radon

Michelle Strong

The KDHE Radon Program has experienced tremendous growth this year. This growth includes a new program and a new marketing strategy. In September 1998 KDHE launched a new mini-grant program. This mini-grant program was utilized as a vehicle to network with non-profit organizations to further disseminate educational information about radon. Four hundred invitations to apply for radon mini-grants were sent out to non-profit organizations across Kansas.

Village Elementary School from Emporia U.S.D. #253 was one of the first participants in the grant program. A fourth grade class submitted the idea of creating a radon video geared towards kids. Who better to make a video for children than the children themselves? The video was full of animation, original music and valuable information about radon. The project was chosen as one of the finalists. All of the other finalists were high school entries. The other contenders for first place were from Singapore, France, Netherlands, and Hawaii.

If you are interested in viewing this website, the address is http://www.usd253.kansas.net/~noradon.

Because this class did such an exceptional job, KDHE Acting Secretary Clyde Graeber graciously agreed to host a ceremony for this class and present the teacher and students with a certificate of recognition. Each student and teacher also received a new radon awareness t-shirt. These t-shirts were researched and designed this year with children as the target audience.

This is just one example of how the creativity of others can help promote issues important to us here at KDHE. A relatively modest mini-grant to a group of kids in Emporia has sparked worldwide exposure. The students involved will always remember their good experiences with KDHE, and they learned important information about radon in the process.

Employee Health and Wellness Promotions

Jenny Ransom

DHE employees continue to participate and support both the “Lunch Talks” and “Walking Kansas - Be Fit” program.

In May, Walking Fitness was presented at Forbes Field and Tai Chi: A Gentle Way to Exercise and Stress Reduction Tips were held at Landon State Office Building (LSOB). Plan now to attend the June lunch talks. On June 23, Nutritious Tips for Busy People will be held at Forbes Field in Building 283 and tasty food samples will be available. On June 30, the Look Good, Feel Good Self Image program will be held in LSOB, Room 106. This talk will cover how to maintain healthy hair and easy hair styles for busy people on the go. There will also be a special program available for those who have lost their hair during cancer treatments or other chronic illnesses. Samples of toiletries will be available. Participants at lunch talks may enter the free drawing for a mystery gift. All speakers are volunteers from the community. Invite a co-worker and join us for an informative talk at the location nearest you. Your attendance is appreciated.

As a reminder, there is still time to sign up to participate in the KDHE Walking Kansas - Be Fit program. Participants will receive an award for their efforts and you only have to compete against yourself. Prizes include attractive ribbons, insulated lunch carriers, and water bottles. For an information packet, contact Customer Relations.

Take charge of your health and participate in the KDHE Employee Wellness and Fitness program activities!

I Was Just Thinking . . .

A bus station is where a bus stops.
A train station is where a train stops.
On my desk I have a work station . . .
# MINI-GRANT PROJECTS & AWARDS

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Illustration 4