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The Essential Military-to-Civilian Transition Resource

JANUARY 07

## Women Joining Forces supports transitioning vets

**W**omen Joining Forces: Closing Ranks, Opening Doors (WJF) is a program created by Business and Professional Women/USA (BPW/USA) to support women veterans as they transition from the military into the civilian workforce. BPW/USA, the first and only national non-governmental organization of its kind, is a leading expert on work-life effectiveness and career transitions for working women. Through the WJF program, transitioning veterans receive a one-year dues waiver for BPW/USA membership (veterans receive a 50% discount) which grants access to the organization's resources.

"Since the launch of WJF, we have had an enormous response from women veterans," said Deborah Frett, CEO for BPW/USA and BPW Foundation. "They thank us for the work that we are doing, and my response is always, 'No, thank you.'"

At a Washington, DC, luncheon on Oct. 18, WJF Advisory Council members, veterans, business leaders, policy staff, BPW/USA leadership, and government representatives met to celebrate the one-year anniversary of Women Joining Forces. BPW/USA President Nancy Jackson welcomed guests, and veterans Stacy Vasquez and Antoinette Scott



COURTESY OF BPW/USA

**Lt. Col. Young discusses her transition with BPW/USA member Cindy Heflin at a veteran job fair on Scott Air Force Base in Missouri.**

spoke about the importance of support for women veterans and programs such as WJF. Scott, the first District of Columbia woman to receive a Purple Heart, is featured in "When Women Go To War" in the Fall 2006 issue of *BusinessWoman* magazine. She received one of the first WJF memberships when the program launched last year and credits BPW/USA's program for linking her with valuable resources.

BPW/USA members are the heart of the WJF program and offer a core deliverable: support. Through mentoring relationships, professional skills training and grassroots advocacy, members have rallied to make WJF successful. Many state federations have waived dues for women veterans, career fairs are conducted on military bases, and special coaching and training has been offered.

WJF is garnering attention from the national media, and a media partnership with Lifetime Television has been implemented to spread the message of the

importance of supporting women veterans. In November, BPW/USA participated with its new partner the *New York Times* in their annual Salute Our Heroes veterans' job fair and career expo. Because of partnerships and barter/trade agreements developed during the last year, web sites including the US Department of Labor's Working Women in

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## Drivers, maintenance & more in demand at job fair

**F**ORT BENNING, Ga. — Companies from just down the street in Columbus and from as far away as New York participated in the Military-2-Civilian Job Fair held at Fort Benning on Nov. 9, which drew job seekers from the base as well as from Fort McPherson, Robbins Air Force Base and Maxwell Air Force Base. Opportunities were available in a wide range of career fields from human resources to heavy equipment, in offices and on oil rigs. There were sales and finance jobs, positions for production supervisors and management, as well as small business ownership opportunities.

Judie Myers-Gell, multicultural recruitment manager at the University of Rochester, said, "When you think about the quality of the people who transition from the military, there's reliability, quick learners, drive, diversity, drug free, leadership, mature, goal-focused and so much more. And their service to our country — how could a company not include the military in their strategic recruiting effort?"

Employment wasn't limited to the local area. Both Northrop

Grumman and ITT had positions available overseas. American Barge Lines and Military Sealift Command had a number of shipboard positions available across the country, while Atlantic Marine was looking for welders, pipe-fitters, and more for shipboard repair and overhaul facilities in Mobile, Ala. Clean Harbor had multiple environmental field technician and chemist positions around the country. Barloworld came looking for technicians and sales representatives to fill positions throughout the southeast.

Aflac had several positions available in sales, accounting, and human resources, mostly in the Columbus area. Ameriprise Financial came from Atlanta to find individuals looking to launch new careers in financial and investment advisory services, and the MassMutual Financial Group had similar positions. Jill Jacques, field vice president of Ameriprise Financial said, "I look for high achievers and people who enjoy helping and working with other people. The military is a great resource for finding documented high achievers."

The healthcare field was well



COURTESY OF M2C JOB FAIRS

**Aflac representatives Sondra Calhoun (left) and Charisma Johnson (center) speak with candidates during the Military-2-Civilian Job Fair in November.**

represented by St. Francis Healthcare and East Alabama Medical Center. In addition to their obvious staffing needs, support positions were available in maintenance, food service, customer service, and more.

Pursuing a career in law enforcement? Police departments from Cobb and Cherokee counties in the Atlanta metro area and from Chatham County in eastern Georgia made the trip.

Many companies were looking to find CDL (commercial driver's license) drivers. "The military is a great resource for finding qual-

ity people to start new careers as drivers," said Dean Scruggs, line-haul manager for Old Dominion Freight Line. "We like people in the military because most already meet our minimum requirements. Many here in Georgia can become licensed with virtually no out-of-pocket expenses. Most first-year drivers can earn \$50,000 a year or more." Other companies looking for drivers were BOC Gases, Speedco, Clean Harbor, Energy Dispatch, Holland Company, and Cintas.

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# Are you an entrepreneur ... despite FUD factor?

by **BILL WILLIAMS**  
Contributing Editor

**E**ver have any of those daydreams about being your own boss? About not having any schedule to meet, except your own? Perhaps you have some misgivings about corporate jobs — too structured. How about all that downsizing you have been reading about in the paper, is that what you want? Probably not.

Now, if you had your own business, none of that would be an issue. If you owned a business, you would be the boss. If you owned a business ...

Your mind races. What do I know about business? What do I know about getting a loan? What does it cost to have a business? Do I start something from scratch? Do I buy into a franchise? What do I do next? Do I even know what I don't know?

## ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS

Before falling asleep, I often think of new ideas concerning my future.

When I start a task, I usually see it through to the end.

Give me a problem and I will more often than not figure out a solution.

I am able to handle many things at one time.

I set and stick to long term goals.

I am able to discuss wrong decisions in an analytical, rational manner.

I like talking to people and helping them with their problems.

I am a good judge of character.

I have the courage to move ahead.

I am NOT a good loser.

corporate job seems a better choice. And those "friends" who are jealous of your drive and resolve who will discourage you because of their own FUD factor.

It can be rather easy to get talked out of pursuing business ownership. So what to do? First, know thyself! Consider the entrepreneurial traits in the grey box. Do these sound like you?

## Starting from scratch

You could start a business from scratch — "your" idea, with the potential for much personal fulfillment. There is high potential for financial gain, and the business can expand and be sold or be passed on to your heirs. Entry costs could be lower, but ongoing investment is required to sustain the business.

With the greater chance of fame and fortune, though, comes a higher risk of disillusionment and loss. Only 37% of start-ups are viable after five years. The public could reject "your" idea. The concept might not be easily duplicated, so expansion is limited or not feasible. The business may simply not build value. And you must have sufficient cash reserves; undercapitalization is the most common reason for business failure.

## Buying a business

If you buy an existing business, the owner may be willing to participate in financing and provide training and support. There may be an existing client base and an established revenue flow, and you can audit the books to determine what you are buying. You may even be able to take out compensation immediately.

There is no organized buying market for businesses, but you can use a business broker. However, the business broker is not your friend, and the current owner is motivated to sell, so take any information with a grain of salt. Financial disclosure standards are not regulated — it takes a professional evaluation to get an accurate picture of the business's health, and financing may be difficult.

## Securing a franchise

In a franchise, the franchisor provides a proven business plan, systems, support and training. Franchise prices are fixed and regulated by government disclosure requirements. Cash requirements as low as \$30,000 and a net worth of \$100,000 are all that are needed for many business concepts. Plus, franchises have a higher success rate: more than 85% are still open with original owners after 5 years.

On the down side, true entrepreneurs can be frustrated by having to follow the system, and start-up costs can be comparatively high. Significant effort to conduct due diligence is required before closing to be certain of all the business facts, good or bad. You should also consider that franchisors make their profits from continuing royalties.

## Resources

Of course, money is vital to making

your business dream come true. Savings and credit cards, home equity loans, cash value of life insurance policies, family and friends, Small Business Association (SBA) loans, grants, bank loans, venture capitalists, silent partners, and other business owners can all be sources of financing. Many franchisors offer special financing for military veterans as well.

What really matters is self-education. Web sites like [www.thefranchiseanswerinc.com](http://www.thefranchiseanswerinc.com), [www.allbusiness.com](http://www.allbusiness.com), [www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com), [www.eventuring.org](http://www.eventuring.org), [www.morebusiness.com](http://www.morebusiness.com), and [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for a wealth of information on many aspects of starting and managing a business. The books *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What To Do About It* by Michael Gerber, *The Entrepreneurial Mindset* by Rita McGrath, *Self-Employment from Dream to Reality* by Linda Gilkerson and Theresia Paauwe, and *Franchising for Dummies* by Dave Thomas and Michael Seid are also recommended.

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The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that 9 out of 10 Americans dream of being business owners, but only 3 of 10 take any action, and only 1 in 10 will actually accomplish that dream. Most people do not know their own strengths, skills and interests and how to best apply these when looking for a business — this "not knowing" is normal.

Many people who go down this path allow themselves to be ambushed by the FUD factor: fear, uncertainty and doubt. What is the source of these obstacles? Spouses who think a corporate job is more secure. (Although that is not what the statistics show, we have been taught to think that way.) Well-meaning friends who do not want to see you fail when a

## OFF THE MARKET!

**anonymous, Army SFC: 88M40 Transportation (Truckmaster/Operation Center NC0IC), 92Y40 Supply**

*What resources did you use in your job search?*

Internet — MilitaryResumes.com, Job Seekers, Monster, etc., and the local newspaper's web site

*What resource led to the interview that got you the job?*

a local TV ad led me to apply at the company I work for today

*What factor led the company to make you an offer?*

my military career

*What advice would you give to other military members?*

Look outside of your talents; there may be a diamond in the rough just waiting for you to snatch up. I found that the civilian sector, in my area at least, is needing good strong leadership skills and good strong work ethics — use what you learned in the military. Also, I picked things up fast and was nosy and asked a lot of questions. I have been at this company for 30 days and I am already getting a raise and a promotion.



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# Small businesses are big employers

## Despite culture shock, a great opportunity for some

by CAROLYN HEINZE  
Contributing Writer

For those who have spent their entire professional life in a large organization such as the military, working for a small business may seem chaotic. There is little, if any, hierarchical structure, and the processes are often less formal. Although working for a small business may not be right for everyone, to some it is a liberating experience.

Candace Moody, vice president of WorkSource, a workforce services agency in Jacksonville, Fl., put it this way — in a small business, there are no passengers on the ship, only the crew. “Very often in a small business, you are a generalist rather than a specialist,” she said. “You have to do a bit of everything.”

According to the Small Business Administration, small companies (less than 500 employees) make up 99.7% of all private-sector businesses in the United States, and they employ half of all private-sector employees. Over the last 10 years, they have created about 70% of new job growth.

And, Moody added, working for a small firm can serve as a stepping-stone to future professional endeavors. “It is a wonderful opportunity, and just because a business is small today does not mean that it is going to be small tomorrow,” she noted. “It can be a great opportunity to help a business to grow, and it can be very satisfying and great preparation if you want to be a business owner someday, too.”

### No more “not my job”

Often employees have direct access to the business owners and that can speed up the implementation of new ideas. “In a very large corporation — and the military is a very large corporation — you wind up having to go through a lot of levels of management to get things done,” said Moody. “In a small business, if the owner likes the idea, it may be implemented the very next day.” This access allows innovative employees to become a part of the leadership team quickly, because the impact on a small firm is

greater and more immediate.

Conversely, this also means that employees in a small business have a hard time hiding when they are not doing their job. “Absenteeism or being a slacker hurts more in a small company,” Moody said. “If you are not pulling your weight, or if you have a negative effect on the team, a small team feels that really quickly. There are fewer resources to cover it up.”

Those working for small businesses must eliminate the “not my job” phrase from their vocabulary. “In a small business, everything is everyone’s job,” said Moody.

In fact, many small business owners not only expect their employees to do their jobs, but to also determine what needs to be done throughout the company on a daily basis. “In the military, there is always someone above you who knows what has to be done, and who tells you what to do and gives you orders,” Moody said. “In a small business, you may not be given specific guidance.” This lack of structure can be disorienting to some, but for self-starters it is a very comfortable situation.

For those interested in climbing the corporate ladder, working for a small business can be frustrating. There is often a lack of upward mobility, either because these organizations are small and there is no “up,” or they are family-owned and the succession plan usually dictates that the company will be handed down to other relatives.

In many small businesses, “the people in the head positions are the owners of the company or the family members of the owners,” said Joan M. Koffler, veteran career consultant at Iowa Workforce Development in Waterloo, Iowa. “Sometimes that can be frustrating for

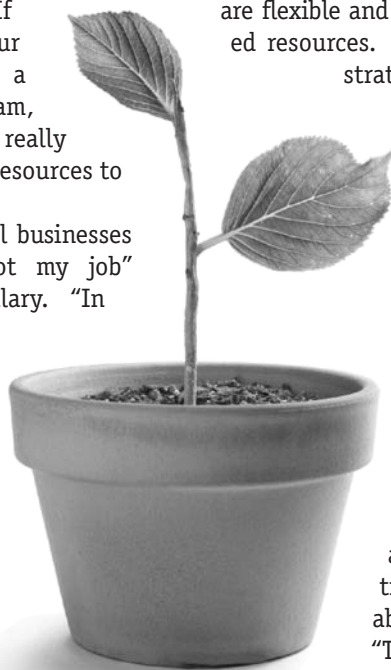
veterans if they have been in the military for any amount of time, because they are so used to taking leadership roles.”

### Flexibility is key

Those who are happiest in small firms are flexible and ready to work with limited resources. This is not only demonstrated in how and when projects are executed, but also in compensation and benefits.

The trick to determining whether you are cut out for a small business is to ask yourself why you go to work every day. “One of the most important things people can do is to understand themselves really well: to know their personal attributes and inclinations, and their skills and abilities,” Koffler advised. “The critical key to success in a small business is knowing what makes you satisfied on the job.”

Carolyn Heinze ([carolynheinze.blogspot.com](http://carolynheinze.blogspot.com)) is a freelance writer/editor.



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# Fastenal: A company culture for vets

*continued from page 1*

integrity and can be seen in the people who make up Fastenal."

"Fastenal is the ideal company for me," said Terry Owen, "because the values that we lived by in the Marine Corps are the same values that we live by as a company: Employees who exhibit ambition, innovation, integrity and teamwork are rewarded." He served in the U.S. Marine Corps for six years, and after being discharged, returned to school. On his first day of class, he met a former Marine and part-time Fastenal worker who explained the opportunities at the company and the benefit of a flexible schedule for students.

Owen was hired part-time, by a former Marine, in Fastenal's distribution center and continued to work there throughout college. Upon graduation, he began a career as a teacher and coach, while continuing to work part-time for Fastenal. After two years of teaching, he accepted a management position and was promoted to increasing management positions until reaching regional operations manager.

"Fastenal is also similar to the Marine Corps in the camaraderie of its employees. After leaving the military, that camaraderie was the biggest thing that I missed," Owen said. "I found it in Fastenal."

It is easy to see that congruence of values is extremely important in terms of career satisfaction and success for both a company as well as the individuals who represent it. Qualified candidates can join the organization in an entry-level capacity, and Fastenal provides extensive hands-on training to promote employee confidence and ensure exceptional customer support. The company supports promotion from within for those who demonstrate dedication to company values and strong performance.

"The experiences [that former military personnel] have had while in the service have equipped them to be successful with Fastenal," said Brian Flanders, district manager. "They are used to working with multiple types of people in multiple positions. They are hard-working, but, more importantly, smart-working. They have a 'can-do' attitude and will always find something to help the store to do the right thing."

"As you think about your career in the service, reflect on the things you have done that fit our cultural values," he challenged. "I am sure your list will be long, and I am sure we are interested in talking with you."

To learn more about exciting career opportunities, visit the company's web site at [www.fastenal.com](http://www.fastenal.com).

# The soft approach to networking

by BERNARD SHAW

You may find this surprising, but studies suggest that 60% of all positions secured in the U.S. were gained through networking. Therefore, you should devote 60% of your time to establishing an effective network to assist you in landing your second career.

Start your network with all of the people you know, within and outside of the service. Ask for contacts who may be able to share "career advice" with you — do not ask if they have any openings or state that you are looking for a job. Your objective is two-fold: to gain their permission to contact them in the future if you have further questions, and you want them to provide you with additional contacts who might advise you on more career options. When you take this indirect approach, your contact is less likely to pull back or refer you to someone else.

What should you actually say to someone you have never met and who may not have any interest in helping you? Remember, most people love giving advice and talking about themselves and their jobs. Quite often, people will give advice even when it is not wanted! Take advantage of this inclination and appeal to their ego by letting them talk about themselves and their job. You could say, "My name is Larry, and I was given your name by (a prior contact) who said you would be a good person to seek career advice from as I transition out of the military. Have I caught you at a good time?"

Approach each new person with the same tactic of looking for career advice. Before you know it, you will reach the point where you are speaking to three or more new people daily. Keep a log and detailed notes of each conversation, and keep a record of their contact information for future reference. Send each new contact a note thanking them for their time and the information they shared with you. Each contact you make invests some of his or her valuable time in you, too, and

that makes you more memorable.

Once you have honed your networking skill, it is time to go after the big fish! Focus on your contacts in the industry or even specific companies you are interested in. Use the internet and your other resources to determine the names of decision-makers within companies you are targeting. Then call them — before 8:00AM, between 12:00 and 1:00PM, or after 5:00PM. These timeframes reduce the likelihood that your call will be intercepted by a call screener.

After you have spoken to as many people in an organization as you can, go back to your first contact and thank him or her again for the assistance. This is the time you can mention that, based on the quality of the people, the strength of the organization and your background, you would like to be considered for a position with the company. Ask your contact if you could send them your resume and if they would let you know when an appropriate position becomes available. (Now they are more likely to help you because of the relationship you have established.) Follow up with each of the people you believe could assist you in landing a position with your desired company.

With the right approach and a good plan, networking is a very powerful tool in your career search arsenal.



Bernard Shaw, CPRW & CFRW, is quality director for MilitaryResumes.com and spent over 12 years as a military-to-civilian recruiter. For professional assistance on creating your resume, contact him via e-mail at [bshaw@militaryresumes.com](mailto:bshaw@militaryresumes.com) or call 877-641-8318.

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# Application forms are more than a formality

by TOM WOLFE  
Senior Contributing Editor

Career transition and job hunting require a tremendous amount of paperwork. But like all mechanical preparations, paperwork only becomes an issue when done improperly or left undone. Many companies treat the application form as a formality, but you would be ill-advised to do the same — proper completion of the application form ensures that it will not be a cause of rejection.

The first step is to **make copies** of the uncompleted form. It is nice to have a working copy to play around with before you go final, and, in case you make an error, a clean application is always preferable to one with correction fluid.

Next, **read it!** More specifically, read it cover-to-cover before any ink hits the page. Why? Sometimes there are instructions in the document that impact what you may have already written.

The extreme example is the company that begins their application form with, "Before you complete this application form, please read it in its entirety" and later in the document randomly inserts the phrase, "After you have read this application form in its entirety, do not complete any of it. Sign and date the

final page and return in the envelope provided." Did you follow instructions? Thank goodness for the copies you made!

Now you are ready to begin, maybe. Do you have the **proper materials**? Did the instructions specify black or blue ink? Number two pencil? Do you have access to the information requested? Previous addresses? Contact information for references? Gather your resources, then get down to business.

**Be thorough!** Unless instructed otherwise, you should leave nothing blank.



You do not want to be interpreted as lazy or lacking attention to detail. Never use the phrase "See resume": that is code for "I am too lazy to restate what I've already written elsewhere." Be careful with phrases like "open" or "flexible" because some companies treat those responses the same

way they would if the space was blank.

You can accomplish the goal of appearing flexible and keeping open as many doors as possible yet still filling in the blanks by being a little creative. For example, if the opening is in Atlanta, use "southeast" in the geographic preference box. Rather than a specific dollar amount, put down an acceptable salary range.

For an objective, make sure your response indicates something you are both interested in and also qualified to do for that company. And make sure the position is available.

Checking for **accuracy** has two parts. First, everything you put on the form should be truthful, correct, verified, and documented. No guessing! If you use estimates or approximations, make sure you qualify that information accordingly. Second, there is no excuse for typographical errors, spelling errors, poor grammar, or other mistakes that would reflect badly on you.

Many application forms are not designed to take into account the number of different assignments typical service members have during their time in the military. Some application forms have a special section for **military service** and it is usually a relatively small space. What to do? Consider the space available and summarize your total military history in the space allotted — do not overflow to an attachment unless the instructions give you that option. Do not succumb to the "see resume" temptation!

Assuming you have your final product in your hands, **make more copies**. There are several reasons for this. One, potential employers have been known to lose them and your foresight will be rewarded. Two, once you have completed one company's form, you probably have gathered together much of the information requested for another's. And, three, you might need to recall exactly what you put on the form when you submitted it months or weeks ago.

For some companies, you receive the application form as the very first step in the evaluation process. For others, you

are only asked to complete one as the final step before receiving an offer. Still others wait until your first day in the new job to have you complete one. Regardless of when you receive it, **treat it like a time bomb**. You need to return it before it explodes. Unless the company representative specifically states that you are not to complete and return it immediately, then you should do so.



Although timeliness is important, do not sacrifice accuracy, neatness, and completeness in your desire to return it promptly. Consider using an express delivery service. This can both make up for lost time and also send a strong "I am interested" signal.

Do you need **assistance**? If you are completing the application form at the very beginning of the process with a company, you are probably on your own. The exception would be the availability of a personal advocate in that company. For instance, your Uncle Harry works for the company and is responsible for your interview. If a recruiting firm sponsored you to this company, then one of their counselors will have guidance for you. If you are filling out the forms at the end of the recruiting process and you either have the offer or one is highly likely, then take advantage of the fact that you now have allies in the company — people who want you on the team — and ask your questions of them.

Successful completion of application forms should be no big deal. Just use the skills you already have in place due to your military service: accuracy, neatness, thoroughness, attention to detail, and a back-up plan.

*Tom Wolfe is a senior partner at a military-to-civilian transition company. He served for six years as a surface warfare officer in the Navy and has been providing career guidance to military personnel since 1978. For more coaching, visit [www.tomwolfe-careercoach.com](http://www.tomwolfe-careercoach.com).*

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# Job fair calendar

**NOTE:** Events are listed chronologically, then alphabetically by state within the same day.

Date	Location
Jun 21	Ft. McPherson, GA.....ACS & ACAP 404-464-2129 Norfolk, VA.....CivilianJobs.com
Jun 28	Ft. Polk, LA .....ACAP Career Day
Jul 11	Live Oak, TX.....NCOA
Jul 12	Gulfport, MS .....FFSC
Jul 20	Ft. Lewis, WA .....ACAP
Jul 23	Wright-Patterson AFB, OH .....CivilianJobs.com
Jul 27	Ft. Myer, VA .....ACAP Spates Community Center
Aug 7	Newport News, VA .....NCOA
Aug 10	MCAS Miramar, CA .....MCCS 858-577-6491 Robbins AFB, GA .....A&AFR 478-926-1256
Aug 14	Ft. Rucker, AL .....ACAP
Aug 23	Ft. Bragg, NC .....CivilianJobs.com
Aug 30	NAS Whiting Field, FL .....F&FSC 850-623-7177 darryl.johnson2@navy.mil

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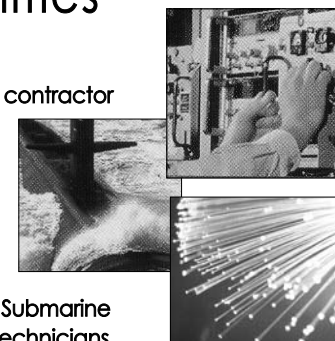
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