



# *Six Invaluable Factors*

Dave Crenshaw

*Are you Invaluable? In terms of your value as a human being, clearly the answer is yes. In terms of the marketplace, however, you will likely find a very different answer. Are you someone that others in the market can't live without, or are you easily replaceable?*

Every day, the market you work in—regardless of the industry—asks “Are you invaluable?” Did you answer the question satisfactorily today? Well done. Get ready to answer it again tomorrow.

As the speed of innovation and information ever quickens, so does the need for you to have clear answers for this “invaluable question.” It is no longer enough to simply have a job. It is no longer enough to simply advertise to attract customers to you. Loyalty to employees, to brands, to personalities and media disappears the instant one's attention is switched to new, shinier options.

## The Burden of Now

Can you feel the increasing burden of this demand to perform, to attract, to inspire, to bribe, to incite, to entice, to titillate, to just plain grab whatever you can from whoever's in front of you at the moment? This burden will only increase with no imaginable end in sight. The marketplace has become a never-ending, marathon sprint with little time to sleep, eat, or drink, let alone spend time with family, friends or hobbies. This burden can be crushing.

Yet some have learned to play by a different set of rules. They have a system to rise above the chaos. You can see it in individuals who continue to succeed while others around them struggle for survival. You can see it in companies that attract and retain customers with ease while other companies battle for market share. Those that shine have made themselves Invaluable. They have set themselves apart from the rest by providing genuine, infinite value in a world filled with hype.

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Did you answer the question satisfactorily today?

## The Six Factors

I wrote my latest book, *Invaluable*, primarily with individuals working in business in mind. It is a parable of how employees, managers and CEOs can work together to make each other Invaluable—and, in turn, the company as a whole. Since the book's completion, however, I've more clearly defined six Invaluable Factors that anyone can use in today's market.

### #1 » Demand

Demand is something that is determined by market forces outside of you, including advancements in technology, changes in culture, the weather, the country you live in and so on.

Because Demand is not something you can control directly, it is critical for you to become a student of it. What does it mean to be a student of Demand? Quite simply, it is to seek to understand current and future market trends. Keep yourself informed of what cultural and economic forces are causing the demand for certain services and skills to change. Stay on top of the latest technological advances, particularly within your industry, as new technology is often a signal of upcoming changes in Demand. If you can spot the trends, you can then work to align your actions with those trends—or jump out ahead of them.

Most importantly, though, examine the trend for sales of certain products and services within your company over the last two years. (Your marketing, sales, or accounting department should be able to supply those numbers.) Which products and services have you seen people are buying more of? And which products and services have you seen people buying less of? That usually is a strong indicator of where the trend is going overall and what you can do as a worker to improve your skill set to stay in harmony with Demand.

- » *Question for employees:* What is the current and future market demand for your personal skill set?
- » *Question for businesses:* What is the current and future market demand for your products and services?

## #2 » Ability

Ability is simply how well you do what you do, and how much value you actually provide.

When you first began your current position, you had a certain skill level that you brought with you. You had just enough talent, experience and education to get the job. However, just getting the job does not make you Invaluable.

You must take your current Ability level and magnify it. You must increase your overall capacity to provide real, tangible value when you work. Ability is a rough estimate of that capacity.

There are several different areas in which you can improve your Ability.

First, you can improve your personal productivity. This includes increasing the overall quality of the work you create, and also increasing your rate of quality output.

Second, you can improve your knowledge of your skill set. This requires a schedule and a strategy to continually immerse yourself in new materials and practice new techniques. This continuing education strategy does not necessary require returning to school, although that may help. You have a limitless opportunity to read books, magazines, subscribe to newsletters, participate in discussion groups and attend live and virtual seminars.

Third, you can become a systems expert. A systems expert knows how to not only perform the tasks required, but also how to teach it to others. They set the standard of performance, document that performance and then share that documentation with others freely.

- » *Question for employees:* What are you doing daily to improve your ability to perform for the company you work for and the market as a whole?
- » *Question for businesses:* What is an area where you are performing below customer expectations? What steps can you take to start performing above those expectations?

### #3 » Irreplaceability

Irreplaceability measures how difficult it is to replace you. It considers the next best alternative to you or your company.

Irreplaceability is all about the next best alternative. The next best alternative is the person who could be doing the job instead of you, or even an upcoming technology that could replace the need for your labor.

Ask yourself this question, “What is in the way, right now, of my current employer or my customer replacing me with someone else? What is it that’s keeping me in this position?” Typically, there are two main things that make you irreplaceable.

Number one is supply. What is the supply of the available alternatives to working with you? How many people are willing to fill the position? While you cannot affect supply directly, you can leap over the potential competition by emphasizing what makes you unique. What is it that you can do better than anyone else? What are your greatest strengths? How are you using those to position yourself as unique?

Number two is understanding. The more you understand someone, the better you can customize what it is that you’re providing to their unique needs. How well do you understand the company you work for? How well do you understand the wants and the needs of your boss? How well do you understand the wants and the needs of your customers? Take advantage of every opportunity you have to ask for feedback or suggestions. Survey your co-workers, your boss or your customers and find out what it is they truly want that you’re not giving them. When you find out the answer, give it to them!

- » *Question for employees:* What is the biggest thing keeping your boss from firing you right now?
- » *Question for businesses:* What is the biggest thing keeping your customers from firing you right now and going with the next best alternative?

## #4 » Focus

Focus is all about time, and requires you to avoid anything that gets in the way of you spending time in your Most Valuable Activities (MVAs).

There are many activities you can do during work hours, but to become truly Invaluable, you must focus your time on your MVAs. When you focus on those activities, both your ability and the difficulty of replacing you are vastly increased.

It is no longer enough to simply have a job.  
It is no longer enough to simply advertise  
to attract customers to you.

So, how do you identify your MVAs? Make a list of everything you do throughout the day. MVAs are the two activities that bring the biggest bang to the bottom line, both for you personally and the business as a whole. They are the skills you have and the activities you do that are the most difficult to replace. And, when you spend time working in your MVAs, you create a very real impact to the bottom line of your company.

After you identify your MVAs, then what? Focus requires you to learn the art of saying “no.” First, you must learn how to gracefully say no to others. Second, you must learn how to ruthlessly say no to yourself.

When it comes to saying no to others, this doesn’t necessarily mean that you tell your boss, “No, I won’t do that.” What it does mean, however, is that you become very conscious and truthful

with yourself and others about how long projects and activities take. Remember, when you say yes to one thing, you're saying no to something else. By judiciously saying no to Less Valuable Activities, you free up time to make a bigger impact.

Saying no to yourself is a practice and an art. When ideas pop into your head, rather than running wildly off in whatever direction they take you, write them down. Then, at a predetermined regular time, review that list and decide when, or even if, you want to take action on them.

» *Question for both employees and businesses:* How well do you focus your actions on your Most Valuable Activities?

## It is not enough to have many acquaintances who know “of” you—or vice-versa.

### #5 » Connection

Connection assesses your ability to connect personally with others, in terms of both quantity and quality.

The value you bring to the market is directly affected by your ability to work well and share resources with others. Connection is an absolutely essential part of becoming Invaluable. In order to increase Connection in the 21st century, you must not only master the art of face-to-face interaction, but digital interaction as well.

It is not enough to have many acquaintances who know “of” you—or vice-versa. The people you meet must feel a personal connection to you in some way.



To accomplish this, you must develop systems that help you build connections in three areas: in person, recurring, and social media. Making connections in person requires you to get out in the public. Be involved in the community, in networking groups, at company parties and other social opportunities.

Recurring connections require you to have a regular system of follow-up and re-connecting with the people that you meet in person. For example, you can send cards to the people you meet on a regular basis. The friendly, unexpected thank you card is still the most powerful—and often least used—system for recurring connection.

Finally, you can use the technology of social media to increase Connection. When used wisely, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other developing social media sites are effective tools to maintain connections with large groups of people in real time. These resources are best used when sharing your knowledge and expertise (and the occasional personal event) with your connections.

The fastest, easiest way to build connections in person is to give selflessly. Give first, give quickly, and give freely. Give your attention to others. Give sincere praise and encouragement. Give gifts. Give of yourself, with no thought of return. When you follow this simple rule, you'll begin to experience the power of Connection naturally.

- » *Question for employees:* How many people feel personally connected to you?
- » *Question for businesses:* How many people feel personally connected to your company culture as a whole and your employees individually?

## #6 » Authority

Authority evaluates how strongly the current market considers you to be the top expert in your field.

An employee that is recognized both inside and outside of the company as a leading expert dramatically improves his or her value. Authority is often neglected, especially among employees who do not consider themselves to be a part of the public eye. However, it is a strategic mistake to ignore Authority, as this Invaluable Factor is a dramatic market value multiplier. Individuals who properly leverage Authority are among the world's top income earners.

The marketplace has become a never-ending, marathon sprint with little time to sleep, eat, or drink, let alone spend time with family, friends or hobbies.

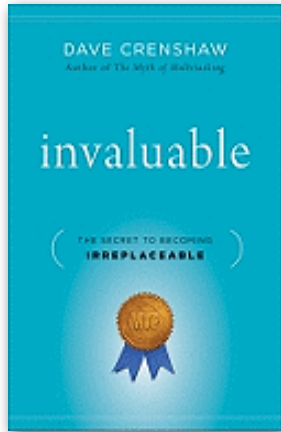
The world we live in is saturated with information. Most people are paralyzed because they have too many choices. An Authority is a decision leader. People feel the process of decision making can be shortened by listening to the recommendations of an Authority.

Authority is not necessarily celebrity, although the two may accompany each other. You have many mini-decision leaders in your life. They are your mentors, your teachers, your community leaders, your favorite Internet writers, your friends—even perhaps your boss.

Every person has the potential to be an Authority and decision leader—even you. The question is not whether you have expertise to offer to the world, but rather what is the best expertise to offer, and how you will go about developing that Authority. It can be as simple as being the leading authority on the ordering system you use at work, or becoming a widely sought-after expert on viral marketing campaigns. Most importantly, as you develop Authority, your opportunities to serve others will increase, and your self is the most valuable thing you can offer.

- » *Question for employees:* Do my peers, both inside and outside of my company, consider me to be a leading expert in my field?
- » *Question for businesses:* Are we widely recognized as the leading source for knowledge and advancement in our field?

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## BUY THE BOOK

Get more details or buy a copy of Dave Crenshaw's [Invaluable](#).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Crenshaw has appeared in *TIME* magazine, *Forbes*, and on MSN Money. He has been interviewed on radio and TV stations across North America and is the President of the National Association of Productivity Coaches. His first book, *The Myth of Multitasking: How 'Doing It All' Gets Nothing Done*, has been published in six languages and is a time management best seller. Dave is an expert in helping you and your business become invaluable and has helped thousands of clients worldwide. For more information, visit [www.InvaluableInc.com](http://www.InvaluableInc.com).

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