

4 The strategy that
more than
QUADRUPLED
X my salary
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

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I was good, but not the best

I was laid off in a “workforce reduction” in April 2009. Losing my job was the best possible thing for my life and career.

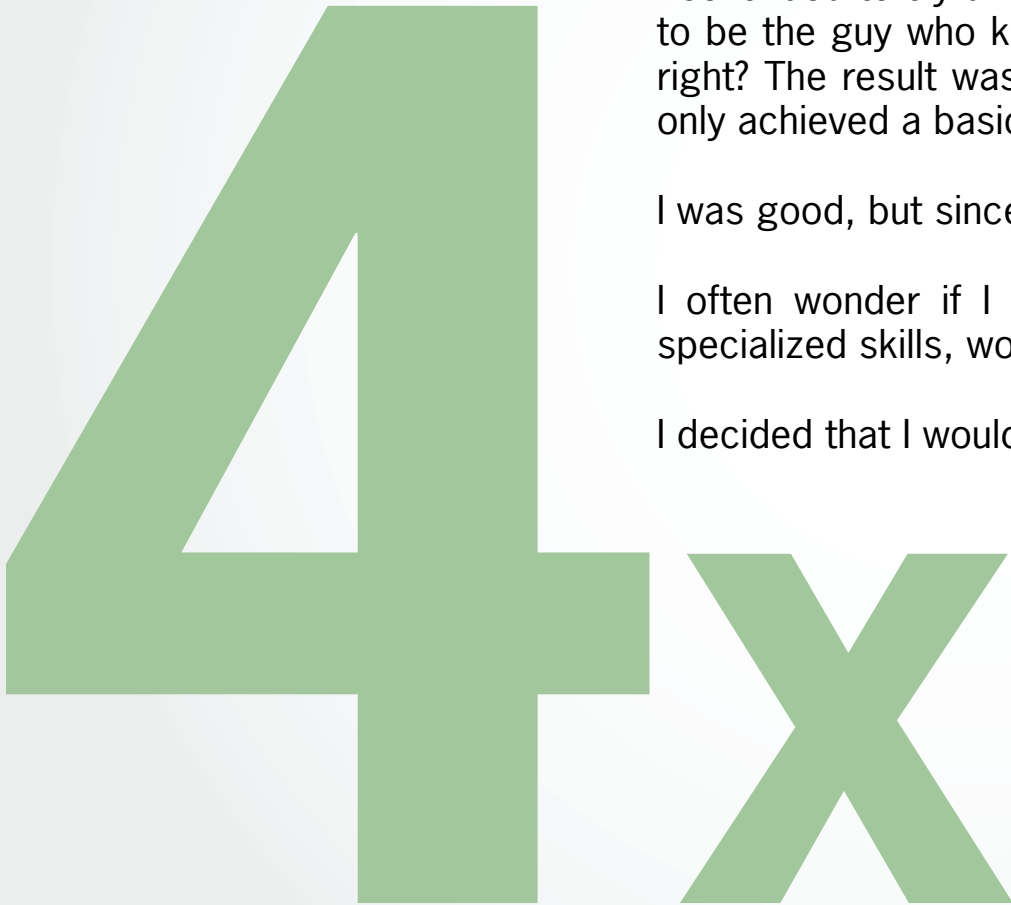
The company I was at was good for my career...in the beginning. I started at nearly an entry level position and was allowed to learn some very valuable skills. After a time, I developed a few specialized skills.

I continued to try and learn more skills to become well rounded; I wanted to be the guy who knew a bunch of stuff. That would make me valuable, right? The result was that my specialized skills stopped developing and I only achieved a basic to intermediate level in a bunch of different skills.

I was good, but since I wasn't the best I was disposable.

I often wonder if I had instead chosen to keep developing those few specialized skills, would I have been more difficult to let go?

I decided that I wouldn't make that mistake again.

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How school let us down

We've been trained since a very early age that we need to be well rounded.

School is set up so that it is better to get all C's than all A's and one F. The first scenario allows you to advance a grade, the second one does not. The F got the attention and the focus; the A's were taken for granted.

School taught us to focus on our weaknesses even if meant neglecting our strengths.



Why my boss now loves me

I work in the technology field. I design large databases that hold a company's data. I organize that data so that they can report off of it and know how their business is doing. I take data and numbers and organize them so that people can get answers in seconds instead of after weeks worth of hard work. I save companies hundreds of man hours with what I do.

Basically, I remove headaches. And companies pay me well for that. (I'll tell you how well in just a few paragraphs.)

But there are seemingly basic things about technology that I don't worry about at all. I can tell you the best ways to organize millions of lines of data, but I couldn't tell you what type of hard drive I have if my life depended on it. I can show a company where millions of dollars can be saved (have done it numerous times) but I don't know which processor is in my desktop computer. Ask me to identify where 80% of your profit comes from and I'll show you; ask me about the best security solution for your computer and I'll give you a blank stare.

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It doesn't matter



My boss knows that there are some basic areas that I don't bother learning. It doesn't matter though; he's hired other people who DO know those things. Other people who have specialized in that knowledge. However, I know my area of expertise really well! I was able to provide my boss with a complete working solution in my first month when a previous team of "well rounded" people couldn't complete it in four months. He has made it a point multiple times to tell me how valuable that has been.

How have I changed since the job I was let go from? I no longer try and be well rounded; I specialize. I focus on my strengths.

What's the difference

This is important, don't miss it:

- I've identified things in my field that matter to make me successful.
- More importantly, I can identify those things that have little to no impact on my success.

You should also know that I more than doubled my salary at two separate times once I started focusing on my strengths.

- The first time was in the company where I went from entry level to having some specialized skills. I was let go with a salary that was close to triple what I originally started at.
- The second time was when I changed my strategy entirely and only focused on my strengths. That change landed me in a six figure job that was more than double the salary I lost when laid off! (Now you can see why I think being laid off was the best thing ever!)



I'm a college drop-out!

I'm now making more than five times my initial salary at the first company! That's well into the six figures!

Seriously? People, I'm a college drop-out making this much! You can't convince me this strategy doesn't work.

Don't think I'm bragging or showing off; I'm so amazed and thankful. I tell you because I know that I couldn't believe this if the numbers hadn't existed for me.



What are you doing?

If you aren't the best at what you do, ask yourself these questions:

- Are you hoping that you are chosen because no better option shows up?
- Are you still living like you are being graded on all subjects?
- Are you focusing on weaknesses that don't matter?
- Are you neglecting a strength that DOES matter?
- Are you trying to be a well rounded person?
- If so, why?

Instead of being good at a bunch of things, be the best at one thing. Focus. Stop neglecting your strengths. Stop wasting your gifts and your life!

Choose to be amazing.



What's in it for you?

That's the bottom line, isn't it? You want to know what you'll gain from focus. You want to know where the money is going to come from.

- It's going to come from you being the best.
- It's going to come when people think of your name first.
- It's going to come when you are so good at something that you can name an extravagant price and people will pay it because you will do it like no other.
- It's going to come when you can do something almost effortlessly while the competition struggles to get to first base.
- It's going to come when people start wishing they were you!

Screw being well rounded!!!

Become amazing! Be the best! (Trust me, the pay is much better!)

Heroes don't settle for well rounded.

**What weakness are you focusing on
at the expense of becoming amazing
at a strength?**

What is it costing you?

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About the author

DAVID CRANDALL

David Crandall is a **Business Intelligence** professional who helps companies and individuals reach their goals. While identifying as a “techie”, he specializes in communicating in plain English the benefits of business and technology for the “non-techies” of the world.

*Thank you for reading!
Feel free to share.
- David Crandall*

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