

Business Careers

Thinking About a Career in Business?

As you think about pursuing a career in Business, there are several things you should consider... What should my major be? What kinds of skills will I need to be successful? What options are available to me? How can I find out what Business is all about? These questions are a good foundation to begin exploring a future career in business. This handout is designed to provide information to assist you as you ponder whether or not Business is really for you.

What do Employers Seek in the "Perfect" Candidate?

According to the Job Outlook 2004, the top 20 qualities sought by employers are:

1. Communication skills (verbal & written)
2. Honesty/Integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. Motivation/Initiative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
7. Analytical skills
8. Flexibility/Adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Detail-oriented
11. Leadership skills
12. Organizational skills
13. Self-confidence
14. Friendly/Outgoing personality
15. Tactfulness
16. Well mannered/Polite
17. Creativity
18. GPA (3.0 or better)
19. Entrepreneurial skills/Risk-taker
20. Sense of humor

How do Employers Identify the Qualities and Skills of Potential Candidates?

Employers have various ways of assessing the qualifications of candidates, from reviewing resumes to formal interviews. Employers use these tips to assist them in candidate evaluation:

- Cover letters and writing samples are a great way to identify a candidate's writing skills.
- Students who have been involved in courses that require presentations or who have held leadership positions can demonstrate strong verbal communication skills.
- Athletic teams, student organization committees, and class group projects are excellent ways to show teamwork skills.
- Courses that have problem solving or research in their structure are great ways to demonstrate analytical skills. Also, organizing events and seminars provides ample opportunities to problem solve.
- Depending on the type of position, computer skills can be assessed in various ways. For most employers the ability to demonstrate basic knowledge of a database program (Access), spreadsheet program (Excel), and word processing is enough. These programs are used in various classes, but can also be learned in introductory Computer Science Courses. Keep in mind that positions with more advanced technical responsibilities will require more advanced technical skills.
- Interpersonal skills can be demonstrated through volunteer activities (tutoring, after school buddies), serving successfully in a leadership role in a student organization, or working through a problem with a classmate while in a group assignment.

Is Experience Necessary?

According to the employers surveyed for the Job Outlook 2004, it is! Employers report that the perfect candidate has some relevant work experience when coming into the organization. They also rated their internship programs as the number one place to find full-time hires.

How do I Gain Relevant Experience?

Internships are a sure fire way to gain relevant work experience. Internships are also a wonderful way to see what Business is all about. Internships are designed to provide you with real world experiences while teaching you how they relate to the success of the company. In many Business internships, interns contribute to projects that are actually used with corporate clients and customers. In addition, employers are increasingly using internship programs to train and source future employees.

There are several resources available to assist you in identifying and applying for Business internships.

- **Career Center Accounts** house the Hopkins internship database. In collaboration with peer institutions we have developed a database listing of over 11,000 internships both locally and throughout the country. In that list, more than 2,000 internships are specifically for Business experience.
- The Career Center also offers an **On-Campus Recruiting** program. This program allows students to interact with employers and conduct interviews here on campus. Many employers use this program to identify interns.
- Career Fairs are another great way to meet Business employers and apply for internship programs. The Career Center organizes three fairs a year (one in the fall and two in the spring). This is a chance to talk with employers one-on-one and make a great first impression.

To find out more about these resources, Students can come to the Career Center and meet with a Peer Assistant, Front Desk Staff, come to Drop-In Hours, or make an individual appointment with a Career Counselor.

What should my Major be?

You don't have to major in Economics or Math Sciences with a minor in Entrepreneurship and Management to be a successful Business candidate. The Office of Academic Advising and Engineering Academic Advising are wonderful resources to assist you in identifying a major you will enjoy that can also keep you on track to attain your goal.

How do I find out what Business is all about?

In addition to internships, contacting individuals currently working in Business is an excellent way to find out what all the talk is about.

- InCircle is the JHU alumni database. More than 90,000 alumni have graduated from Hopkins to go on to amazing careers. You can find their contact information in InCircle at <http://alumni.jhu.edu>. Many have volunteered to talk to you about their careers, organizations, etc.
- Another way to find out about business is to participate in the Introduction to Business course offered through the Entrepreneurship and Management Program that is open to all students.

Tips...

The bottom line is, in order to find out if Business is right for you, you must explore! Take initiative, use the resources available to you, and start early. With these tips in mind, you are destined for success.