

Business Minded

So, you want to go into business after you graduate? Want to know what to do now and in college to help you succeed, in any business field? Keep these tips in mind.

1 Your skills, not your undergraduate major, determine how far you'll go in the business world.

Corporations value critical thinking and communication skills that will help you manage people and resources. A degree in business doesn't guarantee you'll get a management job after college. Focus on colleges that will help you strengthen the top five skills that hiring managers look for in college graduates:

- Work in a team environment.
- Solve problems and make decisions.
- Communicate verbally with people in an organization.
- Plan, organize and prioritize work.
- Obtain and process information.

2 Major or minor in what you're passionate about. There's more than one path to a business career, and many of the careers you might choose may not even exist yet. When you're planning what to study in college, think about what you love (or don't love) as well as your strengths and experiences. Look for universities that incorporate dynamic undergraduate business programs and a great business culture so you can develop the skills employers value, regardless of what you end up studying. You may want to:

- Major in a field you love and minor in business.
- Pursue an interdisciplinary program or double major to help you think in different ways and use the combinations to create new ideas.
- Seek internships and other activities that connect you to business leaders.
- Earn an M.B.A. after you gain experience in a career you enjoy.

3 Focus on core academic courses in high school. Build a solid academic background to give yourself the flexibility to pick a major you love and succeed in college.

- Challenge yourself. For example, don't skip calculus to take a business elective

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER cont.

4 Look at universities in cities with a booming business climate and abundant internship opportunities. Business is global and spans multiple disciplines – so a major city with

strong business opportunities can be a terrific launching pad for anywhere you want to go in the world.

- Pick schools with internship and experiential learning opportunities – they open doors to your career and life after college. Ask college representatives about the availability of internships and whether professors are well-connected to businesses in their fields of expertise.
- Select a school in an international hub that offers valuable experiences, including study abroad, where you can practice what you learn and make valuable business connections.

5 Think about strong alumni and student connections. Your peers influence your personal growth – from your academic experiences and leadership skills to how you solve problems – in college and long after graduation. Your peer network can also influence your career choices. In a competitive job market, your social network and your school’s alumni network have the power to launch your career. Ask college representatives about:

- The size and quality of the student body – a community of ambitious peers from across the country and around the world can help you strengthen your thinking and communication skills.
- The depth and breadth of the alumni network.
- Opportunities to connect with notable alumni in business, regardless of your major.

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Life expectancy

The best universities that strengthen business skills give students opportunities – and resources – to tackle out-of-class projects that showcase initiative and effort. At SMU, enterprising students:

- Choose from more than 100 majors, including specific business majors in the Cox School and many business-oriented majors in four other undergraduate schools.
- Combine majors and minors from diverse disciplines and even double or triple major.
- Compete for funding in The Entrepreneurship Club to turn an idea into a real business.
- Work in teams in the Big iDeas Competition to win seed money for innovative ideas.
- Launch business ideas in The CUBE, an incubator and studio space.

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