Purpose:

This guide is intended for students interested in exploring business related majors outside of the Carlson School of Management.

Description:

There are many ways to study business at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The Carlson School of Management (CSOM) offers a path to traditional business majors for those students admitted to the school, as well as the Management Minor for which students across campus can apply. However, CSOM is not the only path to a career in business. Many colleges at the U of M offer majors, even certificates, related to business.

So... “What is Business?”

Dictionary.com:

1. an occupation, profession, or trade.
2. a person, partnership, or corporation engaged in commerce, manufacturing, or a service; profit-seeking enterprise or concern.

It seems as though business is a lot of things and it can be an integral component to many facets of our society.

How do you fit into Business?

With a definition like the one above, it would seem you need to know a lot about everything to work in business. That’s where your major comes in, right? Can your major teach you everything about everything? Obviously not, so how can you move toward a career in business through education? The answer: it’s your choice. Does it matter what you major in if you want to work in business? The short answer: it depends.

What type of job are you looking for? If you want to be a certified accountant, you need a degree or program that will prepare you for the certification exam and a good major for that is... you guessed it, Accounting. However, many entry level positions in business require a degree, but not necessarily a specific major.

Research types of careers using the resources on this guide and additional online resources listed below to further explore the types of jobs you would enjoy, and the knowledge and skills that are required for these types of positions. Then, ask “What major would help me develop those skills and acquire that level of knowledge?”
Directions:

Reflect on the questions below as it relates to three areas: academics, interests, and values. By exploring these areas, you may find a different major that shares many common elements you find rewarding. For some of you, it may be an opportunity to explore completely new interests or passions.

Interests and Values:

- What activities do you enjoy? When are you at your best?
- What values are important in your life?
- Does your family have expectations for you regarding career options?
- What causes or issues do you support?

Action Items

- Complete a career assessment such as the Strong Interest Inventory, which can help you identify additional majors and careers that match your interests. CAPE and the college career services offices administer this inventory along with other assessments such as StrengthsQuest.

- If you have been strongly influenced by family or friends to pursue a major in business, you may need to think about how you can discuss your decision with them from a strengths-based perspective. Check out the Family, Culture and Identity Influences Action Guide as a starting point and also consult with a CAPE coach, career counselor, personal counselor, or trusted mentor for additional feedback.

- Try the Identifying Values activity in the CAPE Action Plan.

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are the competencies you have gained from your work, classwork, and extracurricular activities that can be applied or “transferred” to the area of business. Whether we’re talking about skills that are “soft”—communication, interpersonal skills, leadership, critical thinking—or “hard”—technical skills such as ability to manage/create databases with specific software applications, you already have some. If you are considering changing majors or looking for a parallel plan, identifying your transferable skills can help find programs that can be a good fit for you while helping you continue to achieve your academic and career goals.

Consider the following:

- What skills do you currently have? What experiences helped you acquire them?
- What skills do you want to develop further?
- How would you classify your skill set? What are your “soft” and “hard” skills?
- What are ways to develop your skills outside of the classroom?
Transferable Skills (continued)

Action Items

- Go to iSeek’s Education Search Tools and ‘browse by career cluster’ and view the fields of study in all career clusters. [http://www.iseek.org/education/educationSearch#](http://www.iseek.org/education/educationSearch#)
  - Note: Our definition of ‘business’ above can fit into all career clusters.
- Explore career options by skills needed to get the job. Go to O*Net Online’s ‘Skills Search’ and select the skills you have or you plan to acquire. Note the wide variety of career titles and fields. [http://www.onetonline.org/skills/](http://www.onetonline.org/skills/)
- Check out the Engage Search for ways to develop skills outside of the classroom: [http://www.engage.umn.edu](http://www.engage.umn.edu)
- Meet with a CAPE Coach, Career Counselor or Advisor to discuss setting academic and personal action plans to help you acquire skills that you need for the jobs you’re interested in, as well as continuing to develop the skills you already have.

Additional Resources:

- Center for Academic Planning & Exploration: [www.cape.umn.edu](http://www.cape.umn.edu)
- Your college career services office: [http://www.career.umn.edu](http://www.career.umn.edu)