Alternatives to a Business Major: How to Prepare for a Business Career Without Majoring in Business

Is your GPA preventing you from majoring in Business at NIU? Are you no longer eligible for a Business major because you failed a required class twice? If you have set your sights on a career in business but cannot major in Business at Northern, consider the following:

1. First, realize that many successfully employed businessmen and women did not major in Business as undergraduates. Majoring in Business is not the only pathway to the career you want. You do have options.

2. Investigate the career you are interested in and plan the best route for getting there. Stop by the Career Resource Center at Campus Life Building 235 and/or explore NIU Major Weblinks at www.niu.edu/crc/major/weblink.htm. Discover the best majors for the career you want and consider majoring in those areas.

3. Consider tutoring and/or getting help with your study skills. NIU offers many services for helping students who are struggling with their GPA. Coaching for Academic Success can help you learn study skills, time management, and test taking strategies. To learn more, call the The A+ program through ACCESS or visit http://www.niu.edu/access/ for more information.

4. Consider majoring in a field that has a business component incorporated in it. Examples include:
   - Economics
   - Communication Studies (especially the Organizational/Corporate Communications emphasis)
   - Computer Science (especially the Applied Computer Science emphasis)
   - Foreign Languages/Literatures (especially the Translation and Business emphases)
   - Hospitality Administration
   - Public Health (especially the Health Administration Emphasis)
   - Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising

5. Consider minoring in a field that has a business component incorporated in it, such as Applied Communications, Communications, or Economics.

6. Consider taking business-related classes open to non-business majors. Even if you do not major in Business, you can demonstrate your commitment to business by taking classes in the College of Business that are open to non-Business majors.

7. Even if your major does not involve a business component, you still can have a successful business career. The key is to take a proactive approach to your career development while at NIU by seeking out experiences that help you develop skills that employers values. These skills include leadership, public speaking, sales, customer service, interpersonal abilities, relationship-building, appreciation of diversity, computer skills, and teamwork. It is not enough to tell employers that you have these skills. Instead, you must demonstrate your skills through meaningful experiences that you have derived at NIU. These experiences include:
   - Full-time or (more likely) part-time employment in a field related to the career you seek
   - Working at a career-related internship
   - Participation and assuming leadership positions in student organizations
   - Volunteering for a charity or other non-profit organization in a business function (e.g., publicity and promotions, fund raising, membership drives)
   - Studying abroad and/or learning a foreign language.
   - Gaining experience with as many computer programs as possible (e.g., word processing, databases, spreadsheets)

8. Meet with a career counselor. Everyone’s situation is different, and sometimes it is a good idea to discuss your career concerns with a professional counselor who can help you sort through your issues. We also offer career testing, which might be helpful. Call Career Services at 815-753-1641 to make an appointment!
Listed below are a sampling of occupations obtained by recent NIU graduates.

Insurance Claims Rep  Inside Salesperson  Trade Checker
Freight Sales Account Rep  Broker  Cost Control Associate
Marketing Assistant  Export Agent  Public Affairs Assistant
Travel Consultant  Commercial Underwriter  Credit Correspondent
Scheduler  Collections Agent  Commodities Broker
Title Searcher  Personnel Clerk  Pharmaceutical
Sales Order Specialist  Corporate Trainer  Representative
Accounts Receivable Representative  Office Manager  Training Specialist
Recruiter  Catalog Writer  Visual Merchandiser
Customer Service Rep  Assistant Trust  Zone Administrator
Administrator  Cash Receipts Supervisor  Senior Production-Scheduler
Student Loan Administrator  Closing Officer  Raw Material Analyst
Mercantile  Consumer Relations  Media Assistant
Exchange Runner  Specialist  Account Coordinator
Store Manager  Field Auditor  Commercial Credit Analyst
Actuarial Analyst  Investment Analyst  Benefits Consultant
Sales-Service Manager  Stock Option Clerk  Cost Control Associate
Advertising Coordinator  Real Estate Analyst  Escrow Administrator
Sales Engineer  Pricing Specialist  Operations Manager
Service Representative  Marketing Representative  Payroll Specialist
Financial Consultant  Portfolio Delinquency  Management Trainee
Warehouse Receiver  Manager  Contracts Specialist
Antique Dealer Expeditor  Bookkeeper  Bid & Quote Analyst
Insurance Agent  Public Relations Assistant  Funding Assistant
Claims Examiner  Plan Processing Consultant  Closing Officer
Finance Manager  Claims Adjuster  Administrative Assistant
House Auditor  Parts Pricing Specialist  Consultant-Programmer
Forecast Administrator  Technical Recruiter  Tax Consultant
Job Developer  Purchaser/Rebuyer  Computer Consultant
Office Manager  Technical Writer  Collection Manager
Operations Teller  Medical Records Insurance  Lease Administrator
Stockbroker  Clerk

Any sound interesting?
Do you know enough about these and other business positions to select a major and start planning a career?
If not, visit the Career Resource Center (235 Campus Life Building) to examine career literature, visit the NIU Major Web-Links at www.niu.edu/crc/major/Weblink.htm or schedule to meet with a Career Counselor
To access all Career Services’ handouts, visit: www.niu.edu/careerservices/handouts.shtml