

WHAT CAREERS ARE AVAILABLE IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS?



Dear Genie,

Could you please tell me what types of job positions are available in the international business field? I am an International Business major with a minor in German and I am not quite sure where I will head after graduation. I am looking at the possibility of international management, but I would like to know what else there is.

Going Abroad

Dear Traveler,

First, I encourage you to contact your university's career services to make an appointment to discuss your concerns and clarify your focus regarding the future. While you state "International Management" as one option, you are smart to clarify what this might involve and other options associated with International Business and German.

I very often state "If you can describe a job, you can get that job" and "If you have met someone who has a job you would like, you can get a similar job." Well, it seems as if you may not be able to do the first, nor the second. I encourage you to find someone, anyone, who identifies with this title. Role models, mentors, and potential employers are what you should be looking for, in addition to general information on the field. International Business seems to be an "academic specialization" rather than a job title. If possible, when you meet someone in a field (in person, by phone, by fax, or via email) generate discussions on particular job capabilities, most likely addressing how your studies provided skills-building experiences. Fields include, but are not limited to: accounting, advertising, banking, consumer product sales, consumer brand management, etc. Anyone can overcome a lack of experience with increased knowledge and increased focus. Know as much as possible about your field(s) of interest, meet as many people as you can within those fields (information conversations and shadowing experiences), and offer to help with as many projects as you can over the length of your job search. The key to unlocking your dilemma is a sense of focus. What do you want to do? Those seeking ANYthing, often find NOTHING. You must identify and prioritize areas of interests. Would marketing research, advertising, public relations, retail or sales be of interest to you? Could you see yourself teaching English as a second language here or overseas? Would you like to teach German, political science, or any other subject in a private secondary school? What would you find "intriguing?" More importantly, once you have identified "role models," and gained their advice, you can use your sense of focus to build your portfolio of skills one course and one internship at a time, then gain some sense of future focus. Find persons to emulate or, ideally, to join. Offer to help with "a project or two you would like some help with for the next 3-6 weeks." You can establish a foundation upon which to build career focus and, someday, a career one project at a time with local firms. Also, almost all colleges, universities and community colleges offer some form of "career counseling." The ideal progression from your stage of uncertainty to focus includes: self assessment (identification of Values, Interests, Personality, and Skills), Research (paper and pencil then people to people research pertaining to career fields and job functions); Exploration by Experience (information conversations, shadowing, externships and internships), then Job Search, Undergraduate or Graduate Study. Progression through these four stages, facilitated by workshops, individual counseling, or group activities can be achieved through various experiences. Examine which are readily accessible to you.

I would like to be more helpful, but I would need to know your fields of interest. Email me directly or through Genie.com. Look forward to hearing from you soon. Also, someone associated with your university, a faculty member, career counselor, etc. should be able to assist. Let's work together to identify them and, more importantly, act upon options. Get focused and go for it!

No matter the case, the more internship experiences you have, particularly in Washington D.C., or overseas, using the language, geo-political knowledge, and basic business skills, the better. Washington is the nation's capitol as well as the internship capitol. Overseas options are a bit more difficult to find, but they do exist. Use national internship directories like "The Internship Bible," "America's Top Internships" and "Peterson's Guides Internships" to identify many exciting options. Call these potential sites and explore deadlines, actions required and, if any, special circumstances regarding international students. Also, contact the German and Swiss embassies in Washington for information regarding internships or post-graduation opportunities. You could begin now, building a challenging and rewarding career, by simply communicating directly with and offering to work as an intern for these embassies. Also, German-American Chamber of the Southern US at 3475 Lenox Road NE, Suite 620, Atlanta, GA 30326 PHONE (404) 239-9494 FAX 264 1761 and Swiss American Chamber of Commerce One Atlantic Center, Suite 3000, Atlanta, GA 30309, (404) 881-9708, FAX 876-4578, could provide some insight regarding German or Swiss firms expanding to US markets and US firms expanding to Swiss or German markets.

Obviously, there is so much you could (should) do. In summary, "if you can describe a job, you can get that job" is best phrased "if you can describe a field of business or communication without using the phrase international, you can begin a viable job search." More succinctly, think about the field you wish to enter (i.e. advertising), then leverage your language skills, geo-political focus, and knowledge of specific cultures and regions. You'll do great! Also, write resumes in English as well as German. Show and tell of your bilingual abilities. Keep in touch.