

## COMBINE YOUR INTERESTS TO FIND THE RIGHT PATH

**Summary:** *Want to enter the international business community? Learn how in this article.*



**Question:** I am a student who is interested in running my own import/export business. I am good at art and like drawing, fashion designing, and painting. In the field of business, however, I am not good at math. I finished my bachelor's degree in English in Thailand and intend to pursue my master's degree in the U.S. What is the best way to combine my interests?

**Answer:** Most successful business owners aren't good at everything. The key is finding people who can partner with you as advisers or hiring employees whose skills complement yours. For example, be knowledgeable and involved enough to monitor your finances, but hire or partner with someone to manage the most complicated aspects.

The import/export business can be lucrative, but it generally takes time to build a business. Your artwork and fashion design may be marketable enough to get you started, but most struggling artists find that they have to support their art with some other full-time job. A proven strategy is to initially work for a successful business to learn and gain a strong foundation.

In selecting your master's program, look for a curriculum that has an entrepreneurial bent and, in some way, allows you to combine your business interests with art. Seek opportunities to work or volunteer with a business, preferably in the import/export field, through alumni of the school or with a business you identify on your own. Make persistent use of the resources of the college's career-services and international-students departments.

Finally, refer to:

- **Print materials** like *Building an Import/Export Business* (John Wiley & Sons) by Kenneth D. Weiss.
- **Internet** resources like the International Trade Administration.
- **People** working in the import/export arena whom you interview to learn more about this line of work.
  
- See **Consider Your Likes When Picking a Career Path** for more information.