Madison Hibner
Assignment: IS Interview Story
March 1, 2022
Character building through failure
Communication Values: proximity, human interest

Failure: rejection or redirection?

Maggie Bartig has been an overachiever her entire life, and her diligent work usually pays off. Until she began studying at the University of Wisconsin-Madison she had never been faced with failure and its accompanying sense of panic, misdirection and frustration.

All through high school, Bartig excelled in science and math-oriented subjects, receiving high grades and excellent standardized test scores. Even though the School of Engineering at UW-Madison had a reputation for its extremely low direct-admittance rate among incoming freshmen, Bartig had no issues defying the difficult odds.

As Bartig progressed through the rigorous coursework associated with a degree in mechanical engineering, her interests altered to fancy the field of business.

Similar to many college students, Bartig encountered numerous roadblocks during the redirection of her studies. For the first time in her life, the overachieving student was faced with rejection from the School of Business, the program she wished to study through.

"When I got rejected from the business school, I started panicking," Bartig said. "I didn't know if I would stay at UW-Madison or not."

Shortly after her rejection, Bartig explored fields related to political science, economics, communication arts and even reapplied to study mechanical engineering. All before uncovering the data science program.

Despite the fact that Bartig was accepted as a direct-admittance student to the School of Engineering as a senior in high school, she was denied from the program upon her second application.

"I was weirdly not upset about my denial from [The School of] Engineering," Bartig said. "That kind of showed me that I picked the right route after getting [denied from] the business school."

Reflecting on the past two years, Bartig says that this experience has made her learn to view rejection not as failure, but as redirection— an essential perspective when she applied to internships during the spring semester of her sophomore year.

Bartig said she received rejection from many positions she applied to, but didn't feel discouraged. She knows it's normal due to the competitive nature of internships among college students.

"Sometimes you just don't have the skill set that [the company] is looking for," Bartig said. "I guess I didn't have the skill set the business school was looking for."

Ultimately, Bartig says she's glad she didn't get accepted into the School of Business. It forced her to explore other fields of study, and ultimately lead to her uncovery of the data science program.

When giving advice to others facing failure, the data science student says to analyze your skill set and keep exploring your interests.

"It's cliche, but what's meant to be will be," Bartig said. "There's a reason for [failure]."

Notes

- Accepted into first choice UW-Madison direct admit to the school of engineering to study mechanical engineering
  - Never faced failure or denial before
  - School of engineering known for being very difficult to get accepted into directly upon admittance to the university
  - Reapplied later on and got denied
- Currently studying data science in the college of letters and science
- Applied to business school to potentially study marketing and international business
- Believes it worked out in her favor long term
- "When I got rejection from the business school, I started panicking. I didn't know if I would stay at Madison or not. Then once I found this other program, I feel like it's probably for the best."
- "[interpreted denial as a sign] to reroute"
- Discovered data science through her internship at JAMF
  - Work in purchase order processing sector
  - No interest in computer science
  - Company sells management software for Apple products
- "I was weirdly not upset about the [second] denial from [the school of] engineering"
  - "That kind of showed me that I picked the right route to go after getting out of business school."
  - "I'm glad I didn't get into the business school because this exploration has also led me to joining the racing club." (Formula SAE)
- "I feel like it's helped me accept rejection better"
  - "I applied to a lot [of internships] and got rejected from a lot and like, I wasn't very upset about it, because I know it's normal. Internships are very competitive.
  - "Internships are very competitive and sometimes you just don't have the skill set that they're looking for. I guess I didn't have the skill set that the business school was looking for."
- Agreed that process has made you view rejection not necessarily as failure but as something that's just meant to help you find where you're supposed to end up
- "I started finding ways I can build my own skill set to match [the skills needed in a certain field], but not in a direct way. So I can take a few things and then kind of have my own twist on it."
- "It's cliche but what was meant to be will be. There's a reason for it, just keep exploring your interests."
- "Analyze your skill set, compare it to what they want, and then try to build those skills."
  - One pathway is redirect
  - One pathway is develop yourself and try again
- "Keep going man."
  - "They're going to hate to hear it. If someone would have told me that I would have said 'screw you man'".
- "You just gotta give it time."
- "Put yourself where there's opportunity for failure."

- ○ "It sucks to get the, 'no sorry', but you're not going to go through life without failure at some point."

Transcription
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Madison Hibner 0:03
Okay, is this working? Let me make sure Yeah, great. Fantastic. Okay, can you spell your name out and give your pronouns

Unknown Speaker 0:11
entire name or just first and

Unknown Speaker 0:13
last name how you want to be referred to

Maggie Bartig 0:15
Okay? And a GG? I E, B A R T IG. My pronouns are she her hers?

Unknown Speaker 0:27
Right, beautiful. Okay, let's just start with a little bit of background info. So where are you from?

Unknown Speaker 0:33
I'm from Wisconsin.

Unknown Speaker 0:35
Okay, what year are you currently at UW Madison? I'm a sophomore. Alright, and then was UW Madison, your first choice in universities upon your acceptance here?

Unknown Speaker 0:44
Yes, it was. Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 0:45
Did you have any other schools you're considering?

Unknown Speaker 0:49
Technically Minnesota, but as a safety

Unknown Speaker 0:53
as a safety Yeah. Did you get into Minnesota? Yeah. Okay. Why did you attend to choose to attend UW Madison over Minnesota?

Unknown Speaker 1:02
I don't know. I just like the school, like the school and how it's more of a college town and less of like city city. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 1:11
And what are you studying? Currently here?

Unknown Speaker 1:13
I'm studying data science.

Unknown Speaker 1:15
Was that your first choice of field of studies? No, no. Okay. What programs were your first choice program or programs?

Unknown Speaker 1:24
I started with mechanical engineering. Okay. Yes. And then do I go through the entire list? Sure. It's kind of lengthy. After mechanical I thought about doing Polly sign econ. And then I thought about dropping Polly sign just doing econ. And that led me to apply to business school to potentially do marketing and international business. But then I did not get into the business school. So then I was like, I don't know what to do. And then I looked into communication arts as a replacement for marketing but then I found data science, which I seem to like so far.

Unknown Speaker 2:11
Okay. So did you ever apply to the School of Mechanical Engineering, or School of Engineering?

Unknown Speaker 2:17
I was direct admit and then I actually applied the last round to like see if I would get back in I did not

Unknown Speaker 2:28
okay. So you left just to clarify your direct admits Mechanical Engineering decided you didn't want to do that one through poly site you can't ended up applying to the B School got denied from the B school and now you're a data science major. Yes. Which is in college. of letters and scientists, right? Yep. Okay. And then you ended up reapplying to the School of Engineering just to see if you would get in again and you got denied the second time. Okay, that's interesting. Okay. Why were you initially interested in the mechanical engineering program?

Unknown Speaker 2:59
I honestly didn't know much about it, but I thought I wanted to do free wine. I liked math and physics in high school. And it seemed like, that's a lot of what engineers do. So I was like, I'll try it and mechanical was the most broad. So I figured if I get at least get into that one, then I can see I can explore my interest and if some other engineering or another major comes to mind, then I would switch to that was mainly just like a experimental

Unknown Speaker 3:38
little exploration thing. And so then you were in the School of Mechanical Engineering, you

decided you didn't like that. So your exploration you decided you want to go to business right? And then you apply to the B school. How do you think that like starting a mechanical Do you think that beginning in mechanical engineering and not knowing from the get go that you wanted to go business hurt you in the long run?

Unknown Speaker 4:01
No, no, in a weird way? No, because it has put me in data science and I've, like, this is what I want to do. Now. Like, I know that so I think, even though, like when I got the rejection from the business school, I started panicking. And I didn't know like, if I would stay at Madison or not. Then once I found this other program, I feel like it's probably for the best that I stuck

Unknown Speaker 4:30
with. This. Okay, so you think that like long term, this ended up working out in your favor? Yes. Okay. Um, so you kind of highlighted this already, but just like talking about it again. Um, so let's focus like initially with like your denial from the B school you said that you kind of you were like panicking was there any other like, besides panic being like, I only have four years here. What am I supposed to study now? Did you feel like you had, like, did you understand why you were denied upon getting your denial? Do you think that like when you got the news were you like this is meant for me to reroute or did you feel that it was meant for you to try again?

Unknown Speaker 5:07
I thought it was meant for me to reroute, uh, partially because of the I only have three more years left. I don't know why, like, I don't want to apply and get denied again, and have to scramble together and maybe add on another year. Yeah. So like prior, I didn't really have a parallel plan. Like they always emphasize in the academic meetings, like I talked to advisors and I explored other majors but there wasn't anything that really caught my eye. So after I got the, the rejection, I was like, shoot, I don't have a good parallel plan like I had an idea, but it just wasn't as interesting to me. What was that parallel

Unknown Speaker 5:47
plan?

Unknown Speaker 5:48
It was the communication arts. And I hadn't looked too much into it. But then I started looking more into it. And I realized maybe not. So

Unknown Speaker 5:58
yeah. And then how did you discover data science?

Unknown Speaker 6:01
I started looking into that area because my internship at Jamf right now, where how do you spell J M F? Because I work in the more like, purchase order processing sector, but I started talking to some of the people in software and business intelligence and I started to get a feel of how data isn't as boring as I thought it was, like going through processing things and making making

new ways to organize the data. And so at first here, I was like, no computer science like no, I don't like computer science, whatever cuz I never really had any computer classes in high school. So I never stepped foot into any of that. But then I was messing around on the guide and I came with this data science and I talked to some of the people at jamp and their job like I think it would be a good degree to pursue if you want to do something like this. I just kept going.

Unknown Speaker 7:12
Okay, and can you tell me a little bit more about what jamp is, like, how did you come across your position there and what is company?

Unknown Speaker 7:19
So the company sells management software for Apple products, and so to schools, hospitals, that sort of thing. Businesses who want to use Mac products for their employees and for their businesses, and I knew someone from my high school, who worked there the previous summer, and he kind of told me what he did there. And I ended up applying for that position since he was leaving

Unknown Speaker 7:51
and when you apply for that position, were you studying mechanical engineering at that time?

Unknown Speaker 7:55
I was undecided slash potentially pursuing PolyScience econ. All right, all right. All

Unknown Speaker 8:03
right. Um, and then kind of going back to that denial just because this topic of the story is like character building through denial. I'm so receiving denial from your business school and then I still think it's intriguing that they denied you from engineering even though you had already been in there. So you can focus on either of these for this question, but how did you like view denialists? Did you view denial as failure upon receiving the news? Or did you viewer the

Unknown Speaker 8:33
business school? Yes, okay. But for the engineering No, I'm, I was weirdly not upset about the denial from engineering again. I don't know why. I can't really like pinpoint that but I got it. And I was like, okay, cool. Like I'll stick with data science. So I would say that that kind of showed me that I picked the right route to go after getting out of business school and looking back. I'm glad that I didn't get into the business school. Because then this like exploration has also led me to joining the racing club. That formula essay, which I really enjoy, and it gives me stuff to do outside of school.

Unknown Speaker 9:23
What's the name of that club

Unknown Speaker 9:24
Formula SAE.

Unknown Speaker 9:30
Well, that's good. Okay, that actually gives me a lot of seconds to work with and so then how do you think your character developed as a result of like receiving rejection? Because a person how did your outlook on like life or what you view as important change?

Unknown Speaker 9:48
That's a deep question. Question. Before okay, I'm a real before the business school I hadn't like had much rejection because I got into both schools I applied to and like even though people were like, oh, like engineering up with the schools are so hard to get into like you have to have such good AC T scores and AP scores and have the grades and, like, I obviously, like I got into both, so I was like, okay, cool. Um, and then, after the business school, I just like hadn't had that sort of rejection before. So I was like this is different. This is weird. I don't like it. But then, once I, like knew what that felt like. I think that also played into the engineering. Like if I wouldn't have done that, I would have been more upset about the rejection to engineering if that makes sense. Yeah, but yeah, I don't know. I feel like it's helped me accept rejection better. And with like, internships this time around, like I applied to a lot and I got rejected from a lot and like, I wasn't very upset about it, because I know it's normal. Internships are very competitive. And sometimes you just don't have the skill set that they're looking for. And I guess I didn't have the skill set that the business was looking for.

Unknown Speaker 11:23
Okay, so is it safe to say that you like this process has made you view rejection, not necessarily as failure but as something that's just like meant to be to help you find where you're supposed to end up? Yes. Okay. So you trust the results that you get? I do. Okay, yeah. That's okay. Um, and so just like generally speaking, you said you talked about like, you're in like a lot of rejections from different internships and obviously like finding a career pathway. So maybe focusing more on like your internships. How did you use like failure denial to channel your success to my success, like how do you do I let me rephrase that that's pretty broad. Um, do you use failure? When you receive failure? Do you use it constructively to look like when you receive failure your B school, you read the rejection letter? You said okay, this isn't for me. Are there certain aspects about that filter that you decided to use constructively to Okay, so business is it for me, why is it business for me? How can I do you understand you understand what I'm saying? Kind of?

Unknown Speaker 12:29
I think so. So, like, so the rejection, like helps me analyze what your own skill science skills Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 12:44
Or was it more so just like not for me, I'm gonna continue to just experiment with other things and see what I find out.

Unknown Speaker 12:49
I would say it's a mix of both. Okay. I'm analyzing the skill set definitely. Like played a role in the

exploration because then if there was a if I found like a career or a degree path that I wanted to pursue, then I would find out the skills that I need to be successful in that area. And by talking to people in those positions or talking to people who are who went through the degree program who are currently doing the program right now. And then I started finding ways that I can build my own skill set to match that but not in a direct way. So I can take a few things and then kind of have my own twist on it. I feel like that's what sort of led me to join the racing club too, is that I could improve my skill set in that aspect.

Unknown Speaker 13:41
So you took a few strengths that you already had, and then develop them and develop some of your weaknesses alongside with that, yes, that's make sense. Okay, and what is some advice that you would give to other students who have been denied from their first program of choice?

Unknown Speaker 13:58
No. If they're more go with the flow person, I would tell them that cliche like was meant to be will be like, there's a reason for it and just keep exploring your interests. Like if there's something like a certain aspect of that degree you wanted to pursue that you want to be present in whatever you do, then find something else that has that aspect. You can always adapt to the other ones and decide what you don't like or you do like, and if it's someone who doesn't go with the flow, I don't really know. Because I like I would feel better. Like I'll go with the flow and they're just they can't like they have to have that plan. So for them, I would say, analyze your skill set, compare it to what they want, and then try to build those schools through. Like for instance, pre business clubs if you want to find a bit. Business again. Talk to advisors, work on getting your resume built up and then apply again. Okay,

Unknown Speaker 15:06
so there's like two pathways. One is take it as redirect the other one is, take that continue to develop yourself and try again. Yeah, okay. Um, and then what is some advice that you'd give to any person in general who feels like they have failed or received news of failure?

Unknown Speaker 15:26
Give just give going like, if I they're gonna hate to hear it, because last summer, if someone told me that I'd be like, Screw you, like now? Like, I feel like I don't have like any valance slip. You know, like if I can't get into the thing that I wanted to get into then I feel like this is like this is it like I need to, I need to completely flip my life and just go somewhere where I could pursue this. But you just got to give it time.

Unknown Speaker 16:01
Um, is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience that you think would be relevant to failure developing your character finding out who you are as a person?

Unknown Speaker 16:14
Put yourself in positions where there's opportunity for failure. I love that. Thank you. It sucks. To get the no sorry. But you're not gonna go through life without failure at some point.