

A LOOK AT BUSINESS SCHOOL RANKINGS

Karl A. Boedecker, University of San Francisco
Fred W. Morgan, University of Kentucky

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of MBA program rankings by prominent business trade publications in recent years has generated almost as much controversy as publicity. This particular manifestation of the American obsession with "Who's number one?" in the context of management education would, at first glance, seem to raise the question, "Who cares?" Many people apparently do, judging from the reactions triggered by such rankings.

Thus, this paper offers an overview of the business school and MBA program evaluations published by *Business Week*, *Forbes*, *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Although other sources also rank management education programs, these are the highest profile in terms of both their own

circulation and the resulting attention beyond the business trade press. The authors also consider the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of law schools, along with the responses from the legal community, as a basis for comparison.

The first section provides a description of each publication's index, focusing upon the criteria used and the weight accorded to each. With this understanding, it becomes possible to assess what the evaluations are attempting to do and the degree to which they accomplish those objectives. A brief consideration of the implications for management educators follows in the hope that this preliminary exploration will generate further consideration of the impact of these rankings upon business schools and management education.