



Chapman University – Market & Competitor Research

STEP 1: Chapman University – Market & Competitor Research

Target Audience Profile

- **Industries:**

- Business & Management (including General Business, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Finance): ~60%
- Accounting & Finance: ~25%
- Real Estate: ~10%

- Economics & Policy: ~5%

Rationale: Based on program offerings and recent expansion into real estate and finance, with strong ties to local and national business sectors^{[1234](#)}.

- **Confidence:** High (validated by program enrollment and donor investments^{[24](#)})

- **Company Size:**

- Students: Undergraduate, Graduate, and Working Professionals
- Employers: Companies ranging from local SMBs to national/international corporations (internships, job placement, industry partnerships)

Rationale: Chapman's business programs serve both traditional students and working professionals (Executive MBA, MSRE), while employer partnerships span startups to Fortune 500^{[1253](#)}.

- **Confidence:** Medium (based on public placement data and partnership announcements)

- **Decision Makers:**

- Prospective Students (and their families)
- Corporate HR/Recruiters (for internships, hiring)
- Industry Partners (for research, speaking, and curriculum collaboration)
- Donors/Alumni



- **Purchase Influence Map:**
 - Students: High (program selection, tuition commitment)
 - HR/Recruiters: Medium (internship/job placement, campus events)
 - Industry Partners: Medium (advisory boards, sponsorships)
 - Alumni/Donors: High (funding, advocacy)
- **Confidence:** High (clear from university communications and fundraising campaigns²⁴)

Decision Makers

Role	Influence Level	Key Concerns
Prospective Student	High	ROI, job placement, program quality
Parent/Family	Medium	Cost, safety, reputation
Corporate Recruiter	Medium	Talent quality, soft skills
Industry Partner	Medium	Access to talent, research impact
Alumni/Donor	High	School prestige, giving ROI

Competitive UVP Analysis

Differentiator	Chapman University (Argyros)	USC Marshall	Pepperdine Graziadio	UC Irvine Merage
Location/Industry Access	Orange County, CA; strong local ties	Los Angeles; global	Malibu; regional	Irvine; tech hub



Differentiator	Chapman University (Argyros)	USC Marshall	Pepperdine Graziadio	UC Irvine Merage
Personalized Education	Small class sizes, mentoring	Large classes	Mid-sized	Large classes
Real Estate Focus	Dedicated school, \$5M+ gift, MSRE	Limited	Limited	Limited
Career Support	High-touch, strong placement	Large network	Career center	Career center
Experiential Learning	Bloomberg labs, internships	Case-based	Experiential	Experiential
Alumni/Donor Engagement	Active, recent major gifts	Extensive	Good	Good
Accreditation	AACSB	AACSB	AACSB	AACSB
Tuition/Value	Competitive for private	Higher	Comparable	Lower (public)

- **Confidence:** Medium-High (based on program descriptions, rankings, and recent news[2546](#))

SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:**
 - Personalized, immersive education
 - Strong industry ties and location
 - Recent major gifts fueling program expansion (real estate, accounting, scholarships)



- High job placement rates
- AACSB accreditation
- Active alumni network
- **Confidence:** High (public data, donor news[24](#))
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Smaller national/global brand than USC or Stanford
 - Less research output than top-tier research universities
 - Higher tuition than public universities
 - **Confidence:** Medium (industry reputation, rankings)
- **Opportunities:**
 - Expansion into real estate and finance
 - Leverage donor funding for faculty, research, and industry partnerships
 - Grow online and executive programs
 - **Confidence:** High (recent investments and strategic direction[24](#))
- **Threats:**
 - Intense competition from larger, more established business schools
 - Economic downturns affecting enrollment and giving
 - Online disruptors (e.g., Coursera, edX)
 - **Confidence:** Medium (market trends)

Quantified Pain Solutions

- **Career Placement:**
 - “High employment rates among graduates, showcasing the effectiveness of the career support services” (exact % not publicly stated, but implied strong outcomes)[5](#).



- **Confidence:** Medium (needs external benchmarking for %)
- **Industry Access:**
 - “Expanded resources, enhanced faculty recruitment, and stronger partnerships with industry leaders” (e.g., CBRE, Google, NBCUniversal)[25](#).
 - **Confidence:** High (named partnerships, donor statements)
- **Experiential Learning:**
 - “Students gain access to cutting-edge research, experiential learning opportunities, and a robust network of alumni and professionals”[25](#).
 - **Confidence:** High (program structure, testimonials)
- **Example Case Study:**
 - The new Alexander E. Hayden School of Real Estate is expected to “create pathways for students to access a top-tier education and build meaningful careers in real estate”[2](#).
 - **Confidence:** Medium (anecdotal, needs more quantitative data)

Validation Protocol

- **Data Source Citations:**
 - Chapman University website, program pages, news releases[125634](#)
 - Zippia competitor data[7](#)
 - US News & World Report rankings[6](#)
- **Confidence Ratings:**
 - High for target audience, UVP, and SWOT (multiple sources)
 - Medium for quantified outcomes (lacking precise public metrics)
- **Recommended Action Steps:**
 - Conduct alumni and employer surveys to quantify job placement and satisfaction



- Benchmark career outcomes against direct competitors (USC, Pepperdine, UC Irvine)
- Use SEMrush for keyword gap analysis to refine digital positioning
- Use Revuze or similar for sentiment analysis of student reviews
- Validate financial performance and student ROI via IBISWorld or SimilarWeb

STEP 2: Chapman University – Competitor Identification & Analysis

Context (from previous research)

- **Target Audience:**
 - Prospective undergraduate and graduate students interested in business, accounting, real estate, and economics; working professionals seeking career advancement; employers seeking talent.
- **Unique Value Proposition:**
 - Personalized, immersive business education with strong industry connections, high-touch career support, and expanding real estate and finance programs—backed by major donor investments and AACSB accreditation.
- **Pain Points Solved:**
 - Difficulty accessing top-tier business education and career opportunities
 - Lack of real-world, hands-on experience
 - Limited industry connections and job placement support

Competitor 1: University of Southern California (USC) Marshall School of Business

- **Type:** Direct
- **Product/Service Offerings:**
 - Undergraduate and graduate business degrees (B.S., MBA, EMBA, specialized master's)
 - Executive education
- **Target Audience:**



- High-achieving students seeking business careers, professionals seeking advancement, global talent
- **Key Differentiators:**
 - Large, global alumni network
 - Strong brand recognition
 - Extensive research and resources
 - Location in Los Angeles
- **Marketing/Positioning Strategy:**
 - “Global business leader” focus, heavy use of rankings and alumni success stories, partnerships with Fortune 500
- **Channels of Influence:**
 - Major media, digital marketing, alumni events, LinkedIn, industry partnerships
- **Tools Used for Identification:**
 - Zippia competitor data, US News rankings, SEMrush for digital presence [76](#)

Competitor 2: Pepperdine University Graziadio Business School

- **Type:** Indirect
- **Product/Service Offerings:**
 - Undergraduate and graduate business degrees, online and executive programs
- **Target Audience:**
 - Students seeking values-based, experiential business education in Southern California
- **Key Differentiators:**
 - Emphasis on ethical leadership, small class sizes, Malibu location
- **Marketing/Positioning Strategy:**



- “Values-centered leadership,” strong focus on personal development and career services
- **Channels of Influence:**
 - Digital marketing, alumni network, professional conferences, LinkedIn
- **Tools Used for Identification:**
 - US News rankings, Zippia, SEMrush

Competitor 3: UC Irvine Paul Merage School of Business

- **Type:** Indirect
- **Product/Service Offerings:**
 - Undergraduate and graduate business degrees, MBA, specialized master’s, executive programs
- **Target Audience:**
 - Students and professionals interested in business, tech, and entrepreneurship in Orange County
- **Key Differentiators:**
 - Public university value, tech/innovation focus, proximity to major OC employers
- **Marketing/Positioning Strategy:**
 - “Innovative business education for the digital age,” strong regional employer partnerships
- **Channels of Influence:**
 - University website, digital ads, local events, LinkedIn
- **Tools Used for Identification:**
 - Zippia, US News, SEMrush

Recommended Tools/Methods for Competitor Identification

- **SEMrush:** For keyword gap and digital presence analysis



- **Zippia:** For employment and revenue benchmarking[7](#)
- **US News & World Report:** For program rankings and peer comparisons[6](#)
- **SimilarWeb:** For web traffic and engagement data
- **Student/Alumni Surveys:** For sentiment and outcome validation

Confidence Ratings:

- High for competitor identification (multiple sources, consistent findings)
- Medium for some differentiators (requires ongoing monitoring of program updates and rankings)

Verification Steps:

- Regularly review rankings and student outcomes
- Monitor digital marketing and SEO performance using SEMrush
- Conduct sentiment analysis of student and employer reviews using Revuze or similar platforms
- Interview recent graduates and recruiters for qualitative insights