

How review signals feed AI recommendations

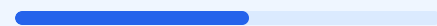
What a language model weighs when it decides which local businesses to name

THE FOUR SIGNALS A MODEL READS



Volume

"Is this a real, established business with enough history to name?"



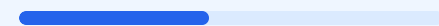
THRESHOLD SIGNAL

Works like a floor, not a scoreboard. **9 reviews vs 300 matters. 400 vs 600 mostly doesn't.** Compare yourself to the companies AI already names in your city.



Rating

"Is this business credible, and does the profile look organic?"



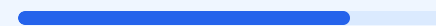
BAND SIGNAL

Below ~4.0 hurts. **4.3 to 4.8 is the credible band.** A 5.0 on 22 reviews reads as a campaign, not a business. Chasing 4.6 → 4.9 is wasted effort.



Recency

"Is this business still operating and still doing the work well?"



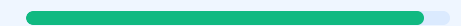
FRESHNESS SIGNAL

The one most businesses lose quietly. **A few new reviews every month beats 60 in one quarter, then silence.** A 14-month-old newest review answers nothing.



Wording

"What exactly does this business do, and where does it do it?"



HIGHEST LEVERAGE

Models read the sentences, not just the score. **"Same-day water heater swap in Collierville" earns a specific recommendation. "Great service!" earns none.**



THE MODEL BUILDS A SHORT LIST — THERE IS NO PAGE TWO



User asks an AI assistant: "Who should I call for same-day water heater replacement near Germantown?"

Business A

280 reviews · 4.7 · newest 3 days ago · reviews name water heaters and the suburb

Business B

190 reviews · 4.6 · newest this week · several mention same-day service

Business C

340 reviews · 4.5 · steady flow · strong on plumbing repair generally

Not named: the 5.0-rated company with 22 reviews, and the 4.8 with 400 reviews whose newest one is from last year.

EFFORT THAT DOES NOT MOVE AN AI RECOMMENDATION



Review gating

Screening out unhappy customers breaks Google policy and creates the too-perfect pattern.



Bought reviews

Short, generic, five-star clusters are legible as fake to a system built to read language.



Chasing a perfect score

Moving 4.6 to 4.9 is the most common wasted project in local reputation work.



Replying to every review

Worth doing for the humans reading your profile. Don't expect it to change an AI answer.