



Leveling The Playing Field: **The Fight Against Fake Reviews**

How Agencies Can Fight Review Fraud & Win

Jason Wortham
The Transparency Company



What's the Problem

74%

of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations

42%

of local businesses are actively harmed by fake reviews

\$100k

The financial cost of review fraud can exceed **\$100,000/year** for Small-to-Medium businesses

Due to review fraud:

each household suffers

\$2,385.43

in economic harm annually

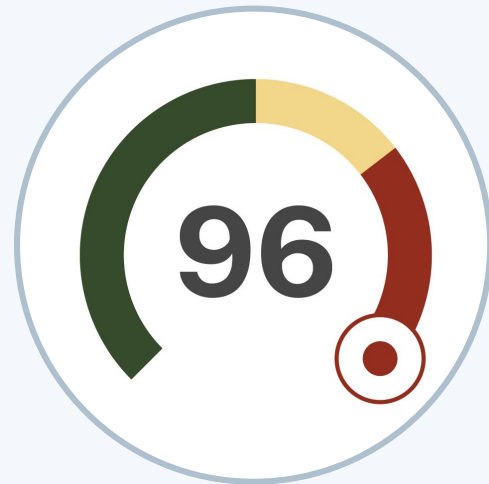


See, "The Impact of Fake Reviews on Demand and Welfare," Jesper Akesson, Robert W. Hahn, Robert D. Metcalfe, and Manuel Monti-Nussbaum NBER, November 2023.

What Does Review Fraud Look Like

Three Pillars of Fraud Detection

- **Business:** Analysis of business listing characteristics, historical review activity and underlying contributor & review analysis.
- **Contributor:** Analysis of the authors of reviews including review activity, profile attributes and historic Google transgressions.
- **Review:** Analysis of the review itself on factors such as contextual relevance, adherence to Google's User Generated Content Policies, AI detection and much more.



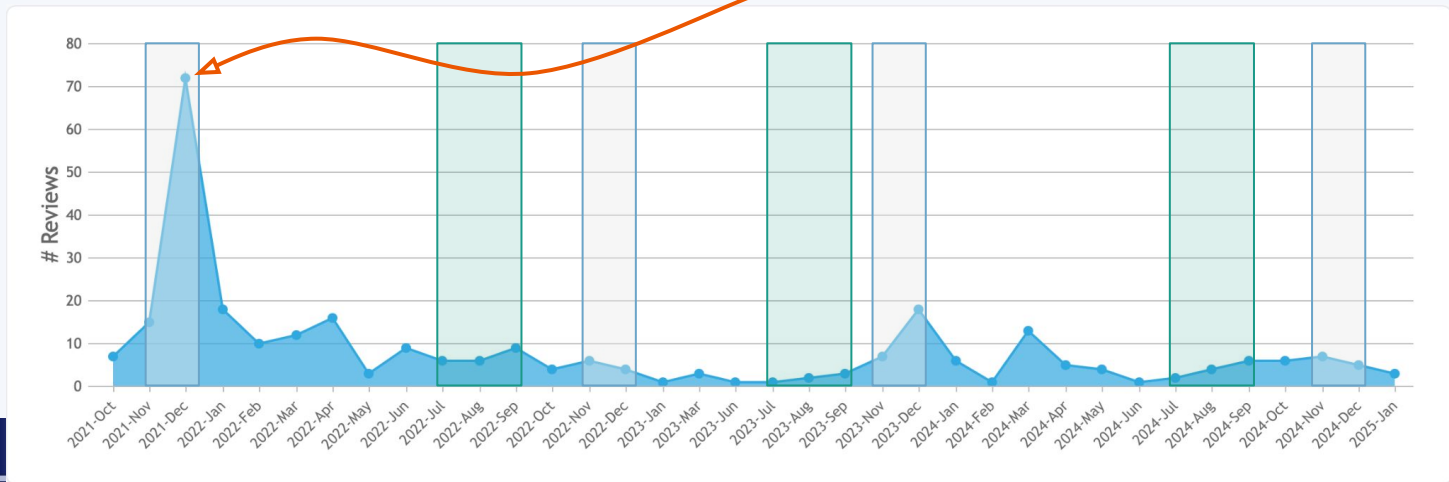
BUSINESS: Review Velocity

DEFINITION

The busiest times of year for dentist offices are typically back-to-school months (around August) when families schedule checkups for their children before the school year starts (highlighted in green below), and the end of the calendar year (December and January) when people try to utilize their remaining dental insurance benefits before they reset (highlighted in blue below).

CONCERNS

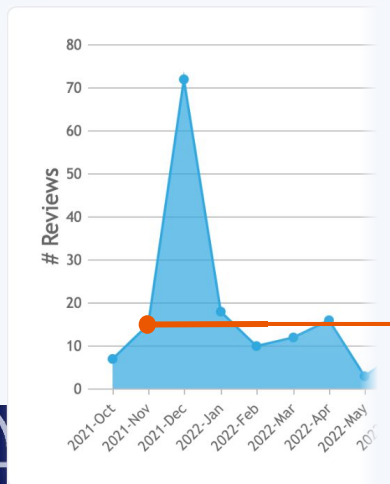
██████████ Dental *does not* demonstrate industry-standard review velocity but instead exhibits a number of anomalous review characteristics; chief of which being a massive spike of **72 reviews** in only their third month of existence in Google Maps. This represents **24% of their entire review volume** (72 of 297), meaning they **averaged only 6.4 reviews per month** over the other 35 months of operation.



BUSINESS: Review Smothering

DEFINITION

Review Smothering is when a business receives a particularly “troubling” 1-Star review that they’re worried will dissuade prospective customers and/or calls out a “truth” that the customer wishes to dampen by overwhelming it with fake positive reviews, pushing it down the review history. Often “Rating Only” reviews are used to quickly “course correct” this situation because they are easy to create and harder to identify has fraudulent with the a lack of auditable content.



12/01/2021

Jayden Bohn
3 reviews

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 3 years ago

I see the Shady Smiles Dental is back again with another new Google page as the old one had to many honest real 1 star reviews...

Got fillings done that hurt to even chew with... So many other issues with this dentist.. I don't have enough characters to write.

Stay away!

* I went to this "dentist" in June of 2021 - I have receipts to prove this... if I came back I dont trust they would actually fix the problems they caused. *

UPDATE: Learned from my new dentist that the fillings they did just over a year ago.. FELL OUT. LOL... super dentist work!!!!

CONCERNS

Dental received several 1-Star Reviews within its first two months of being present on Google Maps. These reviews were then **immediately followed by 75 reviews over the next 30 days of which 74 were 5-Star reviews and 1 was a 4-Star review. 68 of those 75 reviews were “Ratings Only” reviews!**

11/27/2021

Alysha Sloan (nature_frweak)
5 reviews

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 3 years ago

Good service!

EDIT-

10/10 would not recommend going to this place.

Although the assistants are kind, the dentists are awful.

I went in for a variety of reasons however, the main experience that stands out is my filling appointment.

● ● ●

This place is not good. And would not recommend it whatsoever.

Thousands of dollars spent and now I have to get everything fixed elsewhere.

The reviews they have are from the poster they hang up in their wall that says "receive free toothbrush if you leave a good review".

I left my review when I didn't know the truth. The \$3 toothbrush was not worth it.

11/30/2021

Dianne Evans
15 reviews

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 3 years ago

Horrible staff! Unorganized like I've never seen before. We paid cash but they still charged to our credit card. We were trying to work with them but after 2 weeks they can't figure it out. Come to find the lady that charged to our credit card no longer works there! The other lady at the front desk is argumentative and not very cooperative. So now we have to ask our credit card company to step in and help get our money back. Dishonest, unprofessional and a completely stressful situation. Never again!


CONTRIBUTOR: Review Pods

Review pod analysis measures if there are groups of reviewers who have reviewed the same businesses. This is often a sign of someone being paid to publish reviews and in doing so creates a cohort of profiles that they then use to write reviews for all of their “clients.” While Review Pods can be common amongst business such as restaurants; it is quite rare to see them for Dentists. However, there is an **egregious series of Review Pods** within local Calgary dental practices and is a likely indicator of a local fake review Service Provider working in the area. **Eight (8) Dental Practices** in the Calgary area appear in our Review Pod analysis with **131 [REDACTED] Dental Contributors that ALSO reviewed [REDACTED] Dental**. A further **4 Contributors ALSO reviewed [REDACTED] AND Saddle Creek [REDACTED] al**.

Business Name	Address	Shared Reviewers	Contributor Names
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T1Y 3R7	131	A Google User, Aakash Dusad, Abel Abi, Abrahm Mussie, Adonis Aguilon, Aiza Salman, Ali Duaa , Amel Cheraka, Andrew Alexander, Anita Safari, Annie M, Arcelle Tuan, Arlene Rigor, Atong Munggo, Audrey Ayco, Aurelia Cabang, Awet Sbhata, Azka Ashar, Badru Husvsein, Balwant Singh Dhaliwal, Bishi bishi, Canada life Vlog, Carl Basbas, Christopher Gomez, Davinder Singh , Deepak B, Esu Tesfay, Farah N, Fritzie Balague, GGM Interior & Exterior Inc., Geetika Babar, Genalyn Intal, Ghazanfar Siraj, Ginalina Luis, Grace Mosquiter, Haji Mosa, Harmandeep Sidhu , Irene, Jatinder phagura , Jeet Rana, Jephony Gomez, Joe Bailey, John Lomerez, Jojo Briones, Jomar Lusanta, Jot Gill, Joy Nacario, Karm Athwal, Kim de Chavez, Kindi Purewal, Lily Chen, Lorraine Edwards, Lynne Felipe, Mahary Abay, Marc Tucker, Marites Manuel, Mark Rosauro, Mary Grace Montoya , Masood Hasan, Meet Kaur, Meseret Yehdego, Mohammad Salman, Munawar, Na Bui, Navjot Nagra, Nickie Chow, Oqubagebrael Kelati, Pamela Aguilon, Paul Sekhon, Peter Chow, Preet Arora, Preet Sekhon, Prim Masa (SI Prissy), PrincessValerie Gumatay, Rajvir Kaur, Raven Manuel, Ravisha Pundir, Renrick23, Roh Abhi, Ruen Villegas, Ruth Loya, Sajjad Ali, Sam deol, Samantha Chudyk, Samina Tahir, Samrawit Yohannes, Saqib Ali, Sarang Rawal , Seema Rani , Sehar Ahmed, Semere Tewelde, Semhar halleeselase, Shafiq Ur Rehman, Shahed Suliman, Shaumaila Ahmad, Shirly Sebya , Shiv Ghuman, Sonia Samson, Stephen Balokey, Surinder Ranna, Susana Gracia Agustin, Temmy Tacs, Tesfaldet Teklemicael, Trisha Sarpal, Venus Arquero, Victor Lantion , Victoria Fernandez, Violeta Agmaliw, Yadwinder Randhawa, Yamuna Shrestha, Zephora Vera, Zohra Wafa, aisa tabernilla, ali, asseren garvilles, bonsitu ka, carol_out_ here, celso erwin luis, harpreet pannu, hazel villegas, jai veeru, mebrahtom beraki , philip bilgera, pingluy williams, rajkumar raj, rena bruno, rushan shrestha, shamsa Aloweis, sodhirasia sodhi, sreekumar cngr, varinder sanghera
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T3J 5M1	5	Davinder Singh , Hamna Ishfaq, Harmandeep Sidhu, Kari kvinlaug , Seema Rani
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T3J 1W3	4	Kari kvinlaug , Sarang Rawal, Seema Rani , mebrahtom beraki
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T2A 7A7	2	Jayden Bohn, Victor Lantion
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T1Y 6M6	2	Adam Duke, Sandeep Mann
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T2A 0T7	2	Ali Duaa , Debbie Ironside
[REDACTED] NE	Calgary, AB T1Y 3R7	2	RealMedz, Shirly Sebya
[REDACTED]	Calgary, AB T3J 0W9	2	Jatinder phagura , Mary Grace Montoya

CONTRIBUTOR: Review Pods

The table below visualizes this Review Pod in another way; demonstrating the *obvious fake reviews of the same locations, reviewed on virtually the exact same days and times*. The profile names can be clicked to open those contributor profiles. A notable contributor in these Review Pods is *A Google User* which is an indication that Google has *permanently suspended/removed that contributor* but they leave their reviews in Google Maps.

Contributor	 Dental	 Dental	 Dental	 Dental
Seema Rani	07/16/2023 10:53 AM	07/08/2023 12:59 PM	07/08/2023 1:00 PM	07/08/2023 12:59 PM
mebrahtom beraki	11/11/2022 11:40 AM	11/11/2022 11:40 AM	05/19/2023 3:37 PM	
Usman Dar	11/28/2021 01:58 PM	11/28/2021 01:57 PM	07/07/2023 10:34 PM	
Usmanfarooq Dar		07/07/2023 10:38 AM	07/07/2023 10:39 AM	
Preet Arora	12/29/2021 4:35 PM	12/29/2021 4:36 PM		
Peter Chow	01/25/2022 01:12 PM	01/25/2022 01:11 PM		
Nickie Chow	01/25/2022 01:10 PM	01/25/2022 01:09 PM		
Rahat Begum		05/30/2023 05:15 PM	05/30/2023 05:18 PM	05/30/2023 05:17 PM
Davinder Singh	12/31/2021 01:31 PM	12/31/2021 01:30 PM		11/28/2024 03:52 PM
A Google User	12/02/2021 05:57 PM	12/01/2021 04:26 PM		
Karamjit Kaur		05/25/2023 03:23 PM	05/25/2023 03:21 PM	05/25/2023 03:23 PM

REVIEW: GenAI Written

The following are examples of AI-generated reviews found on [\[REDACTED\] Restaurant's](#) Google Maps listing. Our analysis determined that **47% (206 out of 438) of the reviews were likely generated by AI**. A key indicator is the repetitive use of terminology, tone, and keywords, such as "Michelin." In fact, the term **"Michelin" appeared 42 times in AI-generated reviews, compared to just 15 times across the remaining 53% of human-written reviews**—a strong signal that AI was prompted to emphasize the restaurant's Michelin star rating.

S sarah gauthier

AI Score: 97.89%

★★★★★ a year ago

WOW! [REDACTED] was a sensational and highly memorable fine dining experience where from the moment you step into the restaurant you feel warmly welcomed and invited by the kind staff. For the 16 course tasting menu, every plate tells a story which would be explained before the first bite, and you never know what to expect with the flavors! It's a really fun experience as every dish is completely different and there is always a unique way to enjoy it. So authentic to Indian culture, the whole team is unbelievably talented and combine ingredients in such a creative way. The best restaurant I've ever been to and absolutely deserves its MICHELIN star. The top 5 dishes that stood out to me were: Naivedhya, Sandhita, Dalika, Ksheer and Panasa, and a special shoutout to the Jadon (root chips) sauces that were incredible! Thank you Avatara for making the experience so enjoyable and beautiful for me and my family.



Ayush Gulati

AI Score: 99.43%

★★★★★ 7 months ago

"Wow! I recently dined at this incredible restaurant, and I must say it was an unforgettable experience. From the moment I walked in, the ambiance was warm and inviting. The staff were attentive and friendly, making me feel right at home. Now, let's talk about the food – it was a culinary delight! Every dish was bursting with flavor and beautifully presented. I highly recommend trying their PASSION FRUIT; it was a true masterpiece. Overall, this restaurant exceeded all my expectations, and I can't wait to go back for another amazing meal!"



Nadine Lababedi

AI Score: 98.37%

★★★★★ a year ago

Wow, the best dining experience I've ever had!

Firstly, the atmosphere is so calming and inviting. Considering it's a Michelin starred restaurant there was no pretentiousness which is incredible. The vibe was amazing and all the staff were so accommodating and it was good energy all round.

The entire menu is so conciously and creatively designed. Every course makes you absolutely appreciate the pure artistic genius behind it. So much thought is behind every dish, it makes you appreciate food in a whole new way.

As for the taste ... Wow! Some things completely blew my mind, both my husband and I felt like standing up and clapping at some points! We were giggling with pure happiness and enjoyment, we even felt on a high from how much we were loving it. They even managed to make bitter melon and turnips delicious! Like how?!

A pure feast for the eyes, taste buds and soul.

100% recommend and can't wait to return.



Natl

AI Score: 98.42%

★★★★★ a year ago

Wow!

What an amazing experience. I've eaten at a few Michelin star restaurants but as a vegetarian it can still be a little challenging locating fine dining that truly caters for vegetarians. Especially somewhere like Dubai.

Luckily there is [REDACTED], and it's up there with the best meals I've ever had.

The setting is exquisite and the staff were all welcoming and professional without being overly formal.

The courses (all 16) were well spaced out and covered such an amazing range of tastes, colours and textures. We never felt too rushed or too full at any point. I can't say I loved every single course but there were some real stand outs, and those I didn't like we're just about personal taste and still enjoyable to try.

The presentation of the dishes was truly exceptional. Each one was a work of art.

At 495 AED per person it's expensive but again, nothing outrageous given the quality and the location. Tasting menu can be made vegan and gluten free.

REVIEW: First Person Experience

review_datetime ▾	timezone ▾	local_time ▾	days since review	review_rating ▾	review_content ▾	profile_name ▾
2024-12-15	PST	10:00 PM	71	5	Streamline your building process with our modular construction services. Prefabricated sections are assembled with precision, reducing build time and costs while maintaining high-quality standards. Perfect for residential, commercial, and industrial projects.	Madison Sanders
2024-12-13	PST	09:44 AM	73	5	Restore charm and warmth to your home with our fireplace restoration expertise. We repair and upgrade old fireplaces, preserving their character while enhancing safety and efficiency.	Julian Morris
2024-12-12	PST	01:36 AM	74	5	We collaborate with top interior designers to bring your vision to life. From concept to execution, our team ensures every detail complements your style and functionality needs.	Kimberly Reed
2024-12-10	PST	09:28 AM	76	5	Prevent erosion and enhance landscaping with custom retaining walls. Our durable, stylish solutions provide structural support and add aesthetic appeal to your property.	Layla Powell
2024-12-10	PST	02:05 AM	76	5	Create the ultimate outdoor dining experience with a custom kitchen. Our designs include grills, counters, and storage, blending functionality with luxury for perfect al fresco meals.	Graham Rosemoor
2024-12-07	PST	11:36 PM	79	5	Upgrade your property with solar-powered water systems. Ideal for irrigation or hot water needs, these eco-friendly solutions reduce energy costs and environmental impact.	Theo Sterling
2024-12-07	PST	07:29 AM	79	5	Durability meets design with our industrial flooring services. We install high-performance surfaces like epoxy or polished concrete, ensuring longevity and easy maintenance for heavy-duty environments.	Knox Holloway
2024-12-06	PST	09:45 PM	80	5	Enhance your outdoor living space with a custom pergola. Our designs provide shade, style, and functionality, creating the perfect setting for relaxing or entertaining.	Holden Carlisle
2024-12-06	PST	08:45 AM	80	5	Transform your garage into a functional space with our conversion services. Whether it's a guest suite, gym, or office, we create tailored solutions to meet your needs.	Hazel Archer
2024-12-06	PST	03:40 AM	80	5	Add tranquility to your property with our custom water features. From fountains to ponds, we design and build stunning installations that enhance your landscape's beauty and serenity.	Camille Bradford
2024-12-05	PST	04:22 AM	81	5	Harness the power of the sun with our solar heating installations. Perfect for homes or businesses, these systems reduce energy costs and environmental impact while providing reliable warmth.	Rowan Hollis
2024-12-05	PST	03:15 PM	81	5	Stay safe during severe weather with our storm shelters. Built to withstand extreme conditions, our shelters provide peace of mind and protection for your family or employees.	Sienna Clarke
2024-12-04	PST	10:10 AM	82	5	Make a lasting impression with a custom-designed entryway. From grand double doors	Hazel Vaughn

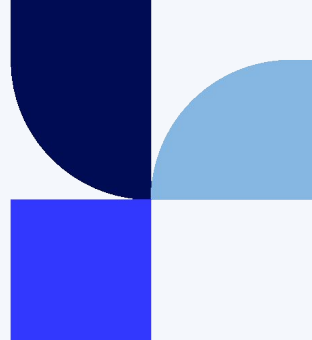
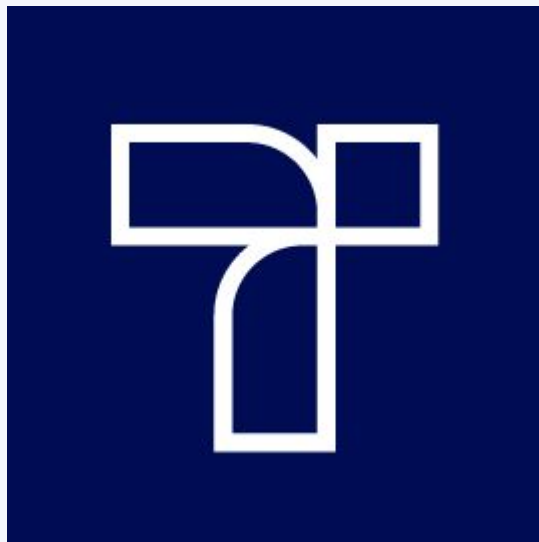
2024-10-26	PST	09:24 PM	121	5	Evolve Construction's focus on using top-notch materials sets them apart from the competition.	MUHAMMAD NA
2024-10-19	PST	07:07 PM	128	5	The strength and longevity of Evolve Construction's projects are a result of their materials expertise.	Muhammad Ali
2024-10-20	PST	09:23 PM	127	5	The use of premium materials by Evolve Construction is a testament to their dedication to excellence.	MUHAMMAD AHMED
2024-10-24	PST	02:11 AM	123	5	Evolve Construction's materials selection process is a reflection of their commitment to excellence.	MUBASHAR AMMAR

2024-12-29	PST	08:15 AM	57	5	After Hurricane Ian, Evolve Construction helped us with a seamless roof replacement. Ahmed was responsive and professional, guiding us through the insurance process. The team completed the project efficiently and cleaned up afterward. Our roof looks amazing, and we're grateful for their exceptional service. Highly recommend Evolve for roof repairs!	Aria Nelson
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2024-10-19	PST	07:07 PM	128	5	The strength and longevity of Evolve Construction's projects are a result of their materials expertise.	Muhammad Ali
2024-11-01	PST	09:30 PM	115	5	The strength and longevity of Evolve Construction's projects are a direct result of their materials expertise.	EMAN ASAD
2024-09-24	PST	08:43 PM	153	5	The quality of materials used by Evolve Construction is unmatched, ensuring your project will last for years to come.	Rebecca Scott
2024-10-22	PST	08:58 PM	125	5	The quality of materials used by Evolve Construction is a crucial factor in their success.	SHAHROZE NAEEM
2024-09-24	PST	09:12 PM	153	5	The materials used by Evolve Construction are of the highest standard, ensuring your project will last for years to come.	Amanda Adams

Why This Matters to Agencies

- Fake reviews impact SEO and rankings
- Misleads customers, resulting in review-driven churn/avoidance for fake negatives or lost revenue to competitors with fake positives
- Undermines your clients' ROI on legitimate reputation efforts
- You're judged not just by what you do, but what their competitors get away with



What You Get

DETECTION

- Detect fake reviews across customers and competitors
- Flag by suspiciousness level
- Score reviews, contributors, and listings
- Impression insights and trends

ACTION

- Dispute fake reviews using formal + proprietary methods
- Daily audits of customer reviews
- Weekly audits of competitor listings
- 90%+ takedown rate on illegitimate negative reviews
- 80%+ takedown rate on competitor's fake positive reviews

When You Get It

Day 1:

Customer + competitor listings audited and scored

Day 5:

Very Suspicious reviews entered into dispute

30 Days:

Fake negative reviews begin coming down

90 Days:

Competitor fake positives begin coming down

Ongoing:

- Daily reviews rescored
- Rolling disputes
- Weekly competitor audits

Case Study

Overview:

12 month pilot subscription with a large North American plumbing services provider covering 32 business listings across 3 cities (Atlanta, Columbus and Phoenix). Also encompassed monitoring 2,598 competitors in those same service areas.

Customer Listing Analysis *(first 90 days)*:

- **35,126** Reviews Analyzed
- **97 Fake 1-Star Reviews Removed**
- 3 Additional Reviews Removed: (Two 2-Stars and one 3-Star)
- **24,348 False Impressions Eliminated**
- **28 of 32 Listings** saw at least one fake negative removed
- **Star Rating Improvements at 6 Locations:**
 - 5 listings improved from **4.9** → **5.0**
 - 1 listing improved from **4.7** → **4.8**

Competitor Listing Analysis *(first 90 days)*:

- **546,038 Reviews Audited** (avg. 211 reviews/location)
- **20,000+ Fake Positive Reviews Disputed**
 - 10,000+ marked as “Highly Suspicious”
 - 10,000+ marked as “Likely Suspicious”
- **3,177 Competitor Reviews Removed**
 - **1.61M False Impressions Eliminated**
- Star Breakdown of Removed Competitor Reviews:
 - ★★★★★: 2,866
 - ★★★★★: 68
 - ★★★: 10
 - ★★: 21
 - ★: 212

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