

Signal-vs-Noise Decision Filter

A competitor did something — is it actually worth reacting to, or just noise? A quick filter before you act.

Tracking competitors generates a constant stream of small observations. Reacting to all of them wastes effort; ignoring all of them means missing the ones that matter. This filter is a quick gut-check before deciding either way.

Work through these in order

1. Is this a one-off, or part of a pattern?

A single positive review, one GBP post, or a single ranking fluctuation is usually noise. The same thing repeated over 2-3 months is a real pattern.

2. Does it touch something that actually drives enquiries?

A cosmetic website redesign rarely matters much. A new service offering, a meaningfully better review response time, or a ranking change on your actual target keywords does.

3. Is it something you can realistically act on?

If the honest answer is “no, not right now,” log it and move on — don't let an unactionable observation take up ongoing mental space.

4. What's the cost of waiting a month to see if it's real?

For most signals, this is low — confirm the pattern holds before committing real effort to react. For a few (a major service launch, a big review cluster), waiting has a real cost — those are worth acting on sooner.

If it clears all four, it's a signal — add it to your Monthly Scorecard notes and decide on a specific action. If it doesn't, that's fine — most things won't, and that's exactly the point of the filter.