



A Closer Look At Trip Advisor's Ranking System

By Neha Pithani



Every factor has a certain amount of weightage in determining a spot's official ranking, but some are weighed much more heavily than others.

Surprisingly, the average score a place receives from reviewers seems to be the least important.

```
SELECT RESTAURANT, RANK, SCORE, USER_NAME, USER_REVIEWS  
  
FROM TRIPADVISOR  
  
WHERE SCORE = '5';
```

The highest-ranked restaurants only have a rating of 5. Running the above query shows that restaurants with highest score are all ranked 9th or worse. This means that Trip Advisor is placing higher importance on some other determinants.

Another strange case: the number of 5-star reviews

```
select RESTAURANT, REVIEW_STARS,  
RANK, count(REVIEW_STARS)  
from TRIPADVISOR  
where REVIEW_STARS = '5'  
group by RESTAURANT, REVIEW_STARS,  
RANK  
order by RANK  
;
```

- The number of 5-star reviews does not matter much either

Example: (this is one of many such cases)

Prologue Restaurant & Bar is ranked 2nd and has 76 5-star reviews

BUT

Goldwasser is ranked 26th and has 203 5-star reviews

Total number of user reviews and Total reviews that are considered 'helpful'

Both of these factors have significantly greater impact on the final ranking than SCORE. In general, restaurants with higher rankings have higher numbers of both total user reviews and total 'helpful' reviews.

RANK	USER REVIEWS	SCORE	HELPFUL REVIEWS
1	144	4	1778
2	98	4	1198
3	260	4	3201
4	45	4	440

However, it is important to note that the weightage of these two categories should not be considered perfect measures of which restaurants will rank highest, for there are exceptions that show that other factors may balance these two categories out at times. Looking back, rank 3 is an anomaly in terms of user reviews, and rank 2 breaks the pattern within helpful reviews.

Conclusion

- Score and high-star reviews are not weighted much
- Total number of reviews, and total number of reviews by users that are consistently more helpful have a higher weightage, but not so high that they are rendered all-powerful in determining a spot's final ranking
- Every factor is ultimately important, but some are definitely more so than others