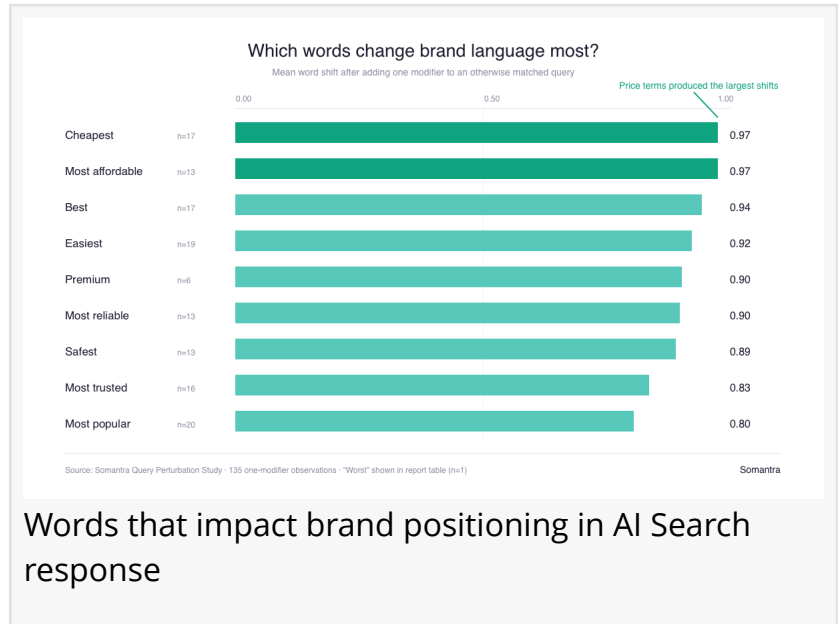


New Somantra Study Finds that even a single word added in a query can change how AI Search describes a brand.

Somantra's analysis of ChatGPT responses shows that adding a single word like "cheapest" or "safest" to an AI search query changes a brand's positioning.

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, August 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Somantra](https://www.somantra.com/), the Sydney-based AI Search brand mindshare monitoring platform, today released a new study showing that small changes to a search query can substantially rewrite how ChatGPT positions a brand, even when the brand's presence in the answer does not change.



The study analyzed 4,445 ChatGPT responses to Australian insurance shopping queries that contained brand comparison tables. Somantra isolated 135 matched query pairs where a single decision word, such as "cheapest," "safest," or "most trusted," was added to an otherwise identical query and the same brand appeared in both the original and modified response. This method, known as perturbation testing, measures how sensitive an AI engine's brand narrative is to a single word change.

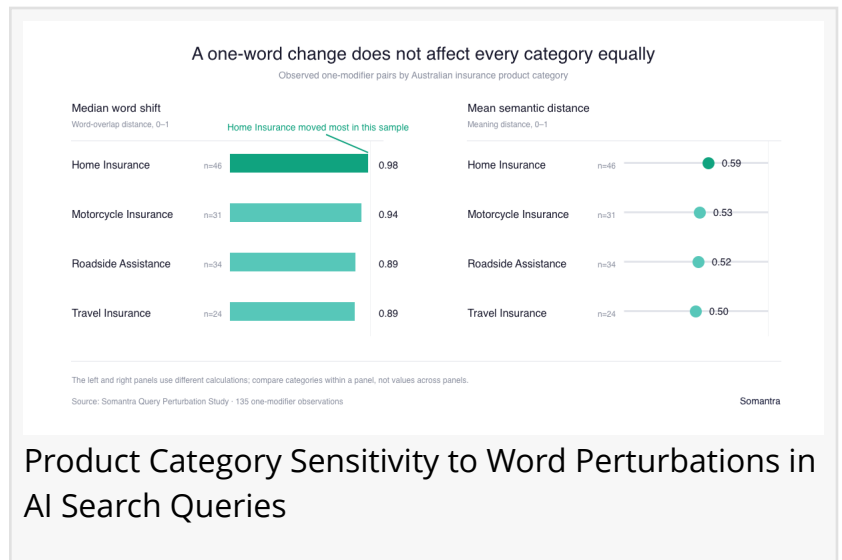
The median word shift across all 135 observations was 0.94 on a 0 to 1 scale, meaning a typical modified query rewrote almost all the visible text used to describe a brand. The median semantic distance, which measures how far the underlying meaning moved rather than just the wording, was 0.53.

“

Most brands are measuring whether they get mentioned in AI Search, not whether the mention helps them get chosen. Brands have to manage how AI Search positions their brand to get chosen by consumer.”

*Arun Prasad, Founder,
Somantra*

Price-related modifiers produced the largest rewrites. Adding "cheapest" or "most affordable" drove an average word shift of 0.97. "Best" caused the largest shift in reasoning, with a median semantic distance of 0.60. "Most trusted" produced the largest positive sentiment movement, lifting net sentiment by 0.50 across 16 observations.



In one matched Home Insurance pair, ChatGPT described an Australian Insurance brand AAMI, without a modifier, as a large mainstream insurer offering home and contents cover. Adding the word "safest" to the same query produced a detailed value and coverage rationale tied to Queensland performance and a named industry award. Another brand, QBE, evaluated in the same pair, saw a smaller shift and remained framed as a general option. Both brands stayed visible in the response with only one gained a stronger reason to be chosen.

"Most brands are measuring whether they get mentioned in AI Search, not whether the mention helps them get chosen," said Arun Prasad, Founder of Somantra. "A brand can survive a query change and still lose the argument. That is the gap this study measures."

Home Insurance queries showed the largest observed movement of any category tested, with a median word shift of 0.98 across 46 clean observations. Roadside Assistance, Motorcycle Insurance, and Travel Insurance each showed measurable but smaller shifts, reinforcing Somantra's finding that a single AI visibility score cannot explain how different product categories are evaluated by AI search engines.

Somantra frames perturbation testing as a complement to its existing temporal monitoring, which tracks brand inclusion and citation patterns across repeated market snapshots over time. Temporal analysis shows what changed across months. Perturbation analysis shows how sensitive a brand's positioning is to a single wording change within a single moment.

The company recommends that marketing and SEO teams should build query neighbourhoods around core customer decisions such as price, trust, protection, ease, and audience fit, and track word shift, semantic distance, and sentiment movement for each brand across those variants.

Availability

The full study, including the complete dataset, brand-by-brand results, and methodology, is available at somantra.ai/post/ai-search-repositions-brand. The underlying code and query data

are public on GitHub at [Somantra/AEO-research](https://github.com/Somantra/AEO-research).

About Somantra

Somantra is a Sydney based AI Search Brand Visibility and Answer Engine Optimisation (AEO) platform. Somantra tracks how brands are represented across AI platforms including ChatGPT, Google AI Overviews, Claude, and Perplexity, using proprietary Brand Mindshare, Brand Engagement, and Brand Consideration metrics to help organisations understand and improve how they are discovered in the age of AI search.

Learn more at somantra.ai.

Arun Prasad

Somantra Pty Ltd

arun@somantra.ai

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/934436560>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.