THINKING TOOLS: SUPPRESSED EVIDENCE

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Thinking tools is a regular feature that offers tips and pointers on thinking clearly and rigorously.

The fallacy of suppressed evidence involves the hiding or suppressing of relevant information. It's a hard fallacy to spot because the argument itself typically contains no clue that information has been withheld.

Here's a simple example. Your company's accountant announces at a board meeting:

> *Buying a fleet of Foxhall cars from Bin Motors was certainly a good decision. The car does what we wanted it to do, has proved reliable, and cost less than we budgeted!*

This might sound persuasive, until you discover that Bin Motors is owned by the accountant, that the cars were sold to your company at almost twice the price you would otherwise expect to pay, and that an independent comparison of competitor's cars rated the Foxhall model the least good.

By cherry-picking the evidence he presents, the accountant has made what was actually a very bad deal seem like a very good deal.

This kind of cherry-picking is common in advertising. Politicians are also often guilty of committing this fallacy.

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