

In summary, in listening tests where the audible differences between products were not difficult to hear, knowledge of product identity while listening had profound effects on listener opinions. In some instances, altered listener preferences resulted from listeners being less responsive to audible differences in the sighted tests than they were in the blind tests. For example: (a) they were less responsive to differences caused by loudspeaker location in the room, and (b) they were less responsive to differences associated with program material.

Overall, though, it was clear that the psychological factor of simply revealing the identities of the products altered the preference ratings by amounts that were comparable with any physical factor examined in these tests, including the differences between the products themselves. That an effect of this kind should be observed is not remarkable, nor is it unexpected.

What is surprising is that the effect is so strong, and that it applies about equally to experienced and inexperienced listeners.

Since all of this is independent of the sounds arriving at the listeners' ears, we are led to conclude that, under some circumstances, believing *is* hearing!

The bottom line: if you want to know how a loudspeaker truly sounds, you would be well advised do the listening tests "blind".