The following appeared in a letter from a homeowner to a friend.

"Of the two leading real estate firms in our town — Adams Realty and Fitch Realty — Adams Realty is clearly superior. Adams has 40 real estate agents; in contrast, Fitch has 25, many of whom work only part-time. Moreover, Adams' revenue last year was twice as high as that of Fitch and included home sales that averaged $168,000, compared to Fitch's $144,000. Homes listed with Adams sell faster as well: ten years ago, I listed my home with Fitch, and it took more than four months to sell; last year, when I sold another home, I listed it with Adams, and it took only one month. Thus, if you want to sell your home quickly and at a good price, you should use Adams Realty."

*Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on these assumptions and what the implications are for the argument if the assumptions prove unwarranted.*

The argument attempts to inform its reader about the wiser choice between two real estate firms in the town. It reaches the conclusion that Adams realty is better than Fitch realty, but does so using arguments that are fallacious in nature, making its assessment unreliable.

The author begins by assuming that Adams has a superior workforce because it has

more employees than Fitch, and on top of that several of Fitch’s employees work part time. This argument makes the unsupported assumption that Adams employees are more efficacious in selling homes simply because they work full time. The higher number of employees in Adams is assumed to be a mark of the firm’s superiority, while it might simply be a result of lower standards for hiring.

The next point put forth by the author is that of revenue. More specifically, how Adams realty generated almost twice the revenue generated by Fitch realty, with an average price per house which was $24,000 greater than that of Fitch realty’s sales. Here, the author again assumes that the higher average is a testament to the sales skills of the Adams realty salesman, and that there was no substantial difference in the desirability of the houses sold by both real estate firms. It is feasible that Fitch realty salesmen used their acumen to garner high prices for houses which are significantly inferior than those sold by Adams realty salesmen. Higher revenue for Adams realty over the past year is a consequence of a higher number of houses listed with them being sold. No comment can be made about the percentage of the houses that were sold. The author simply assumes without substantiation that Adams realty sold a greater percentage of houses listed with them - this could be argued as a mark of superiority if the houses listed under both firms are similar - than Fitch realty.

Finally, the author makes the cardinal error of comparing scenarios in two different

periods. The fact that it took four months for Fitch realty to make a sale ten years ago has no

relevance to their quality now. The author assumes that Fitch realty has maintained a similar

quality of workforce as it did ten years ago. Additionally, no comparison has been drawn

between the real estate market last year and the market ten years ago. It is possible that the

author put a house on sale under Fitch realty during a period of recession, while he put the

house on sale under Adams realty in a period when real estate was a desirable commodity. No information has been provided regarding the conditions of the two houses, as well as their location and other relevant factors that people consider while purchasing houses. Hence, commenting on the quality of the two firms based on the sales of two different homes in two different periods is clearly fallacious.

Overall, while it might be true that Adams realty is the superior firm in the town, the

author certainly doesn’t make a cogent argument for it. There are several unstated assumptions and fallacies, which should be identified by any prospective seller before making a decision to go for Adams realty based on the author’s pitch.