WALKING THE AUDIENCE ROUND THE SLIDE

The audience needs time to adjust to and digest complicated visual aids (slides). The speaker needs to ‘walk the audience’ round the visual aid when it is first shown.

COMPLICATED SLIDES

If a slide (visual aid) in a presentation is complicated then the audience will need time to adjust to the slide and to understand the layout. The presenter (speaker) can help the audience by ‘walking them round’ the slide at the start before making the main point. Walking the audience round the slide is like walking a guest round your house the first time they visit, so they feel at home.

Consider the following slide which might be part of a business presentation. The slide is actually quite complicated and at first sight it is difficult for the audience to understand the various components of the slide. The audience requires time to digest the slide and to understand how it is laid out.
The presenter can help the audience by walking (guiding) the audience round the slide before making any significant points. The key parts of the slide are:

- A title ‘Sun Microsystems, Inc. (SUNW)’
- An x-axis (in this case the first few months of the year 2000)
- A y-axis (the stock price)
- A line that is black and red

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A presenter could walk the audience round the slide like this:

This slide shows the stock market price for Sun Microsystems
Along the bottom we have the first few months of 2000
Up the right hand side we have the stock market price
The line shows price rises in black and price falls in red

*As you can see, despite some falls, the stock market price has risen significantly since 2000*

The first four lines of this speech is the ‘walk round’. It aims to orientate the audience towards the slide and gives them time to adjust to the various features. A skilled presented will also use gestures to point to and trace the various aspects on the slide.

The last line of the speech (in bold) is the ‘main point’ that the speaker wants to present to the audience. It is important to note however that a good speaker always needs to walk their audience round the slide before they deliver the main point. This gives the audience time to adjust to the slide and to provide a context for the main point to be delivered.