Checklist for Creating Visual Aids

When deciding whether to use PowerPoint, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I need to present information that I cannot easily say?
- Does this information need to be presented visually?
- Would I be able to give this speech as well as or better without visual aids?
- Will visual aids enhance the speech?

If you answer yes to these questions, then use this checklist for creating your visual aids:

____ Choose the information that only can be presented visually.
____ With this information, create a visual aid that is neat and professional.
____ If using written words, use dark font against a white or light neutral background.
____ If using a chart, graph, or map, use only the crucial information and make sure that the information is easy to interpret.
____ If using a picture, make sure that the resolution is high to avoid pixilation.
____ Avoid clutter. If it is not crucial to your message, do not include it. This includes bullet points of your key ideas.
____ Avoid unnecessary borders, shapes, or any other tangentially related images. The focus of the speech has to be on you and your message; do not have distractions.
____ Avoid distracting sound effects or entrance/exit effects. Simplicity is usually the most elegant and visually pleasing.
____ Cite the source for your information or image at the bottom of each slide in slightly smaller font (but be sure you can still read it).
____ Practice with your visual aid so that you know the timing of your speech.
____ Know how to use the technology.
____ Have a back-up plan in case the technology is not working.