Visual Aids

Why should I use a visual aid?
Good visual aids will highlight your speech. Good visual aids communicate that you are professional and are prepared.

How does my visual communicate my professionalism?
- Make slides and overheads easy to read by avoiding too many words per line, too many colors, and designs that are too busy or too small.
- Make your visuals simple, and have them convey the emotion you wish your audience to feel about your topic.
- Check text for spelling errors and grammar mistakes.
- You can’t check the working condition of the slide or overhead projector too many times.
- Bring an extension cord and adapter (or make sure one is available for your presentation).

What do I do to create a professional presentation?
- Plan your talk first, and then create your visual. Visual aids exist to illustrate what you say—they are not the main event
- Use a minimal amount of text in a large, clear font. Avoid full sentences.
- Resist the temptation to use fancy/cool fonts.
- Font color should contrast sharply with background (yellow/very dark blue, black/white)
- Be consistent with the background and avoid backgrounds that are difficult to read from.
- Proof your slides for spelling, repeated words, and grammatical mistakes.

How do I present the visual?
- Practice to make sure the slides are well integrated into the speech and that you know how to work the technology.
- Plan placement of slides prior to the speech.
- Do not display the slide until the relevant moment. When finished remove it, cover it, or add a blank slide.
- Do not stand directly in front of the slide; stand to the side and face the audience at a minimum of a 45-degree angle.
- Present from notecards so that you aren’t reading from your slides, and in case your technology doesn’t work for any reason.
For each slide, ask these questions:

- Why is it there?
- What does it communicate about my topic and me?
- Does it support the main point or key message?
- Is there anything that doesn’t need to be there?
- When will it be shown? When will it be removed?
- Can the people in the back row see it clearly?
- Is there too much text on this slide?