

Six Steps for Choosing and Using a Big Idea

By Christina Gillick

Every time I sit down to write anything — an article, a blog post, an email, or a sales letter — I start by asking myself the same question:

What is the Big Idea?

A Big Idea is basically a theme that ties your project together. Copywriter John Forde says the Big Idea is an "*idea that can be sorted, absorbed, and understood instantaneously.*"

Strong copy comes from focusing on ONE Big Idea.

This is also known as "The Power of One." If you haven't heard of this concept before, I recommend reading this [article](#) by Mark Ford (written under his pen name, Michael Masterson).

Here are the steps I now go through for choosing and using a Big Idea. You can follow along:

1. Research like crazy so you'll have a lot of Big Ideas to choose from.
2. During your research, write down anything that *could* be a Big Idea. (If you don't know how to tell, [review this article](#).)
3. Choose three of your best Big Ideas and write a headline and a lead for each. A great Big Idea should stir one big emotion, emphasize one good idea, tell one captivating story, and direct your reader to one inevitable response.
4. Submit the headlines and leads to your client to get feedback before moving forward. This way you won't have the whole project finished and hear that the Big Idea isn't strong enough. Also, you'll have the confidence of knowing that you're writing something your client will like.
5. Remind yourself of your Big Idea as you write. I write mine at the top of my notes and highlight it. This keeps me on track during the entire project and ensures all my copy is consistent and clear.
6. Don't let other ideas wiggle in. If you do have other ideas while writing, put them somewhere else because you might be able to use them for other copy.

What tips do you have for choosing a Big Idea? Share them here.

Tomorrow I'll reveal the reason I ultimately decided to become a copywriter instead of pursuing fiction writing and how it inspired my favorite basic technique.

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1 Response to "Six Steps for Choosing and Using a Big Idea"

This is fantastic advice! What tips would I add? My client told me he how he wants his clients to feel about themselves, regardless of using his product and of course, after using it. I realized this is the "Big Idea" for this video script. So, asking your client to answer this: "What are your clients hopes and dreams? And what are their greatest opportunities that you can provide?" Can give you great insight into not only the big idea for the end user, but for your client. Carrie :)

carrieglenn – over a year ago

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