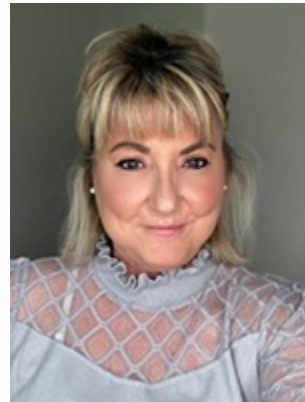


The Big Idea is Hidden in This 5-Point Checklist

By Sandy Franks

- Too many ideas is a turnoff
- The Big No-No
- Understanding the Big Idea
- Use David Ogilvy's 5-point checklist
- Released: Bootcamp video footage



Sandy Franks

Excuse me for using this word, but I haven't yet figured out a better way of describing this common mistake most new writers make: Vomiting on the page.

What I'm talking about is when writers don't have a clear idea of what to focus on in their writing and the copy they turn in is just a bunch of unorganized ideas splattered on the page.

This approach simply doesn't work. It confuses your reader. Worse yet, it places the burden of making sense of your copy squarely on their shoulders.

And that's a Big No-No. The harder you make the prospect work, the less likely they will respond. In fact, most will delete the email or throw your sales letter in the trash can.

Instead, you need a framework to focus your message. A framework that allows you to focus your writing on one idea, or what we call the Big Idea.

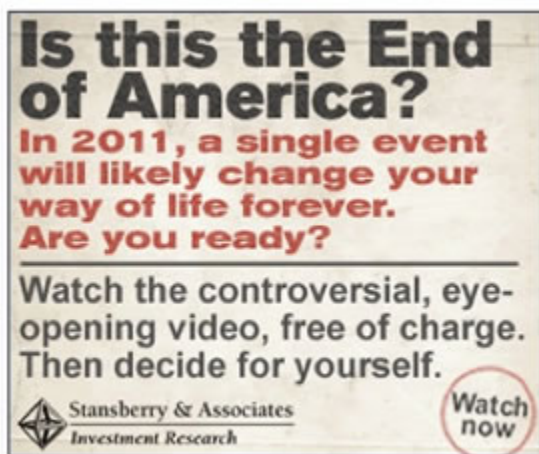
Famous ad man and copywriter, David Ogilvy was a master of coming up with Big Ideas. In his book, *On Advertising*, David wrote:

"You can do homework from now until doomsday, but you will never win fame and fortune unless you also invent Big Ideas. It takes a Big Idea to attract the attention of consumers and get them to buy your product. Research can't help you much, because it cannot predict the cumulative value of an idea, and no idea is big unless it will work for 30 years."

Think of the Big Idea as the theme of your sales letter. Essentially, it's the reason the prospect buys. Sometimes you can use the Big Idea as the hook in your headline. (A hook creates intense curiosity.)

Another way to understand the Big Idea is how you can use it to play up what is missing in the prospect's life. The Big Idea shows how the product will improve the quality of your prospect's life.

Here's an example of one of the best-performing Big Idea sales letters from Stansberry Research, written by their own A-list copywriter, Mike Palmer:



Notice how the copy alludes to a single event that will change your way of life. Not only will this event alter your way of life, it will shake the very foundations of our country. Talk about a Big Idea.

So you know what the Big Idea is all about, but when you have several ideas that could be contenders for the Big Idea, which one do use?

Luckily, Ogilvy created a checklist to determine if an idea could be qualified as a BIG IDEA:

- Did it make me gasp when I first saw it?
- Do I wish I had thought of it myself?
- Is it unique?
- Does it fit the strategy to perfection?
- Could it be used for 30 years?

I'm going to add two more questions to his checklist that will help you isolate the Big Idea from all your other ideas:

- What's all the fuss about?

- Why does this matter to me?

Your takeaway: The next time you sit down to write sales copy and can't decide which idea is the Big Idea, answering these seven questions will make that task a no-brainer.

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3 Responses to "The Big Idea is Hidden in This 5-Point Checklist"

The idea list by David Ogilvy and Sandy Franks is a good reminder to write outstanding copy.

Plus, it helps to avoid the blank page.

Catherine – over a year ago

Hopefully, this is an opportunity for Nana to share her thoughts and truthful opinions. NanaGoneRogue4Real is more concerned with the truth, than being politically correct. However, one should always try to achieve both if possible. Society has changed so much over time, the people, technology, kindness, even the evil of the world has changed significantly. My goal is to make life a little more fun and enjoyable, a lot simpler and hopefully clearer for those who feel their thinking is a bit clouded, or just looking for an opinion other than their own. The greater goal is to initiate communications, to learn and share our thoughts. Most of all share and spread laughter! Provide sympathy and empathy for those in pain as well. Nana

NanaGoneRogue4Real – over a year ago

Awesome post! Just one question, I don't quite understand what #4 means: "Does it fit the strategy to perfection?"

Can you elaborate on that please? Thanks!

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