

**"This book will help you craft, visualize, and deliver your big ideas by honing the most powerful presentation tool in your communication arsenal—you."**

—**JOSH LINKNER**, founder and former CEO of ePrize and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Disciplined Dreaming*

THE  
**BIG FISH**  
EXPERIENCE

**CREATE MEMORABLE PRESENTATIONS  
THAT REEL IN YOUR AUDIENCE**

**KENNY NGUYEN • GUS MURILLO • ROBERT KILLEEN • LUKE JONES**  
of Big Fish Presentations

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CHAPTER

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**CONTENT**

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# THE BIG IDEA



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We cannot stress this enough: all presentations need a big idea. *The big idea defines the purpose of the presentation.* It is essentially an argument. It can be inspiring, challenging, or controversial. The big idea is the basis for the content of your entire presentation. It will determine the way you approach your argument, message, overall tone, and the feeling you wish to convey. Behind every great presentation is a big idea. Its importance cannot be underestimated.

We're going to show you how to pick not only a good big idea but the best one.

First, it's important to note that big ideas are not topics. While the topic "how to change your presentation game" might sound interesting, to truly succeed, it needs a big idea, such as "to change your presentation

game, you must deliver a presentation you would want to sit through yourself." Big ideas are statements that relate to the topic but also offer a solution that may challenge the audience's way of thinking.

However, a big idea can't be effective on its own. The impact of your big idea depends greatly on the quality of your supporting content and the context in which you are presenting it. In other words, you need to know exactly who the people in your audience are and then give them a reason to believe you.

For example, if you deliver a speech with a big idea to "increase sales by hiring the best talent, training them, and letting them do their work" to a crowd of seasoned sales managers, they probably will tune out because this idea isn't going to change the way they think or

feel. However, if you were to propose this big idea to a group of brand-new, inexperienced sales managers, this might be something that opens their eyes. It may be new to them, and it may motivate them to learn more. You are giving them value with your idea.

Another example is Drew Dudley's TEDx talk, "Leading with Lollipops." Dudley didn't state his big idea until the end of his presentation about leadership: "We need to redefine leadership as being about lollipop moments, how many of them we create, how many of

## CASE STUDY

In Kenny's TEDx talk, "The Art of Saying No," he told the audience how saying no can lead to future opportunities. He set the stage by recounting the story of how saying no prevented him from injury when he was a child. The subject was established. He needed a way to make people see the words "yes" and "no" with new eyes. This is what his big idea led to: "Today I want you to think of something very differently when it comes to the word 'no.' I want you to think of 'no' as a protective shield in opposition to the sword of 'yes.'" This big idea contained an analogy that allowed his audience to easily remember him and his presentation.



**KENNY NGUYEN**

*TEDx LSU*  
Big Fish Presentations

them we acknowledge, how many of them we pay forward, and how many of them we say thank you for.” This was a powerful call to action that was delivered after a story about a lady who thanked him for breaking the ice between her and a classmate (spoiler alert: they ended up getting married). He moved his listeners and then called upon them to act on his big idea.

The big idea of this book is: *to be among the top 1 percent of presenters, one must take on the ambitious goal to make each presentation an experience for the audience by combining engaging content, memorable and simple visuals, and powerful delivery.*

Remember, it’s better to focus on one powerful idea than multiple ideas. You want to rally the audience around a central idea. Always choose quality over quantity. Having too many big ideas can distract your audience and dilute your message.

Here are some examples of famous TED talks that focus on one big idea backed up by solid content (you’ll find the big idea in italics):

**MELLODY HOBSON, “Color Blind or Color Brave”:**

So I think it’s time for us to be comfortable with the uncomfortable conversation about race: black, white, Asian, Hispanic, male, female, all of us, if we truly believe in equal rights and equal opportunity in America, I think we have to have real conversations about this issue. *We cannot afford to be color blind. We have to be color brave. We have to be willing, as teachers and parents and entrepreneurs and scientists, we have to be willing to have proactive conversations about race with honesty and understanding and courage, not because it’s the right thing to do, but because it’s the smart thing to do, because our businesses and our products and our science, our research, all of that will be better with greater diversity.*

**CHRIS HADFIELD, “What I Learned from Going Blind in Space”:**

... looking at the difference between perceived danger and actual danger, where is the real risk? What is the real thing that you should be afraid of? Not just a generic fear of bad things happening. *You can fundamentally change your reaction to things so that it allows you to go places and see things and do things that otherwise would be completely denied to you . . .*

**SHAWN ACHOR, “The Happy Secret to Better Work”:**

And the problem is it’s scientifically broken and backwards for two reasons. Every time your brain has a success, you just changed the goalpost of what success looked like. You got good grades, now you have to get better grades; you got into a good school and after you get into a better one; you got a good job, now you have to get a better job; you hit your sales target, we’re going to change it. *And if happiness is on the opposite side of success, your brain never gets there. We’ve pushed happiness over the cognitive horizon, as a society. And that’s because we think we have to be successful, then we’ll be happier.*

These speakers masterfully captivate and inspire the audience with big ideas that are supported by powerful stories or strong data, which enable the speakers to make more convincing arguments. This is at the core of all great presentations.

Keep in mind that the presenters may not have revealed their big ideas at the same point in their talk. If you structure your talk well and use the tenets of storytelling, the unveiling of the big idea will be the moment that your audience feels emotionally challenged.

The big idea does not just state your thesis; it inspires and creates action. Boiling down your message into one simple idea means reaching deep down into your topic and pulling out what matters most. Only then can you truly touch the hearts and minds of your audience. Remember, everything that’s ever been achieved started from a single idea.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**KENNY NGUYEN** is the founder and CEO of Big Fish Presentations, a company whose mantra is “turning presentations into experiences.” Kenny and his team work daily with clients nationwide, from startups to

Fortune 100 companies, providing high-quality presentation design, presentation training, and creative video production. He was named the 2012 CEO Student Entrepreneur of the Year by Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization (CEO). Under his leadership, Big Fish Presentations was recognized as one of the top 50 student-led startups in the world by the Kairos Society and one of *Inc. Magazine’s* “Coolest College Start-Ups of 2012.” Kenny has been featured in popular news outlets such as *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *Yahoo*, *Business Insider*, *Mashable*, the *Huffington Post*, and the *Washington Post*. He has spoken at TEDxLSU and HubSpot Inbound and has taught presentation workshops at General Assembly. A curator of 99u Baton Rouge, he is a member of AIGA New Orleans and the host of the online cooking channel You’ve Got Meal. Kenny is passionate about helping his home city of Baton Rouge become a hub for creative talent in the South. He dreams of owning a corgi one day.



**GUS MURILLO** is the cofounder, president, and COO of Big Fish Presentations. Since he and Kenny attended the “worst presentation they had ever seen” together, they have been working to rid the world

of such experiences. His work at Big Fish includes producing and directing commercial videos. Before graduating from Louisiana State University with a degree in biological sciences, he was recognized as a Kairos50 member for his innovative college startup and was awarded for this achievement at the New York Stock Exchange.



**ROBERT KILLEEN** is the lead copywriter and creative director at Big Fish Presentations. He has been writing his entire life—short stories and fake TV scripts that will never see the light of day, journals that

are best kept private, and blog posts for public consumption. This, however, is his first book. He has a bachelor's degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University and serves as Student Outreach Committee Chair for the American Advertising Federation of Baton Rouge and Marketing Coordinator for 99u Local: Baton Rouge.



**LUKE JONES** has the distinction of being the first copywriter of Big Fish Presentations. He is now a copywriting associate at DEVENEY Communication. A born entrepreneur, he started a T-shirt company

and a neighborhood newspaper in his youth. He has worked at production studios, design firms, and advertising agencies. Luke received his bachelor's degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University. He loves words, movies, cream soda, and his miniature schnauzer, Albus—not necessarily in that order.

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