

The SIGNAL Method

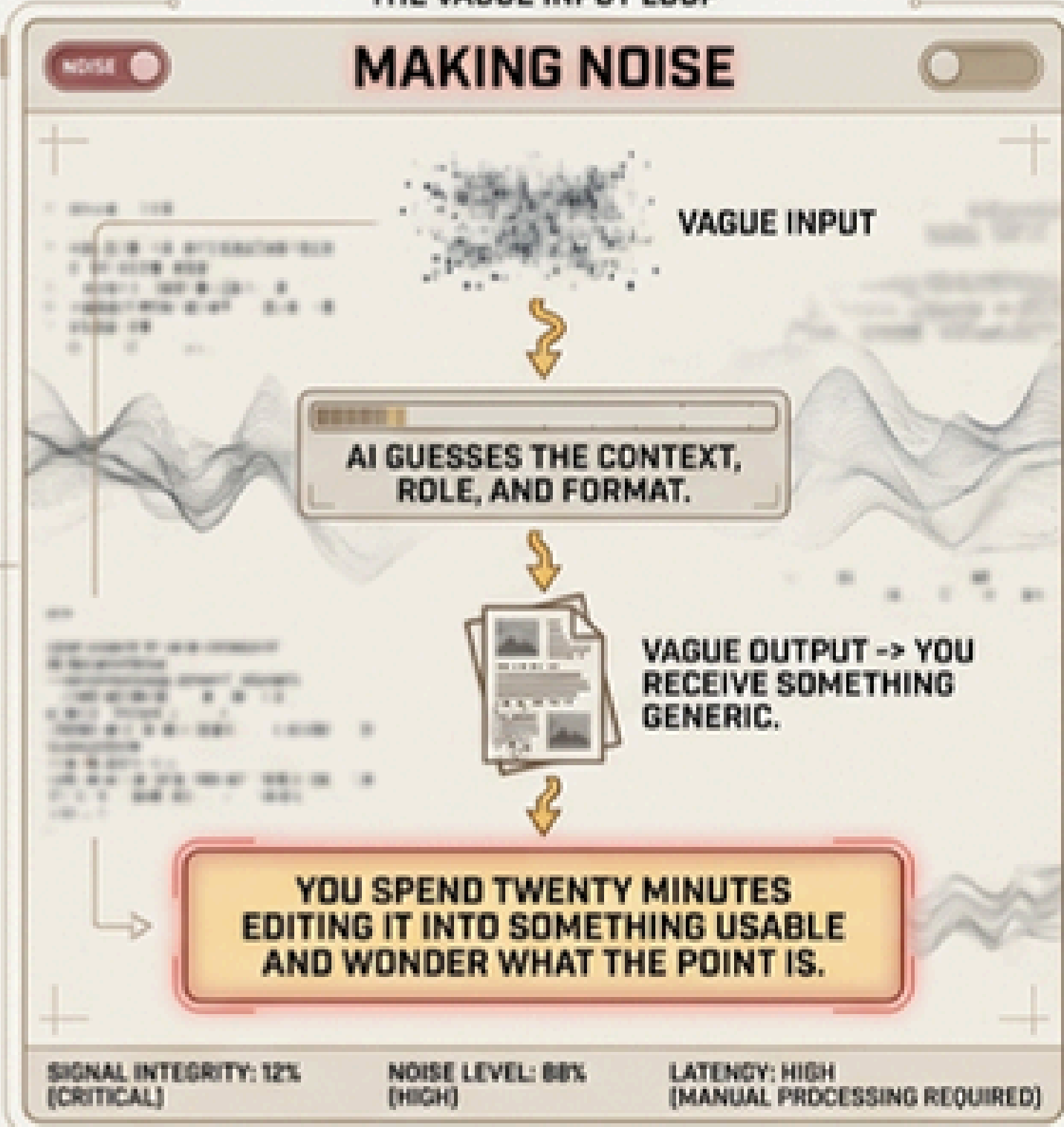
[A 6-Step Prompting System for Professional Services Businesses]

[By Phillip Twyford | philliptwyford.com]

DIAGNOSTIC FLOWCHART: AI INTERACTION PATHWAYS

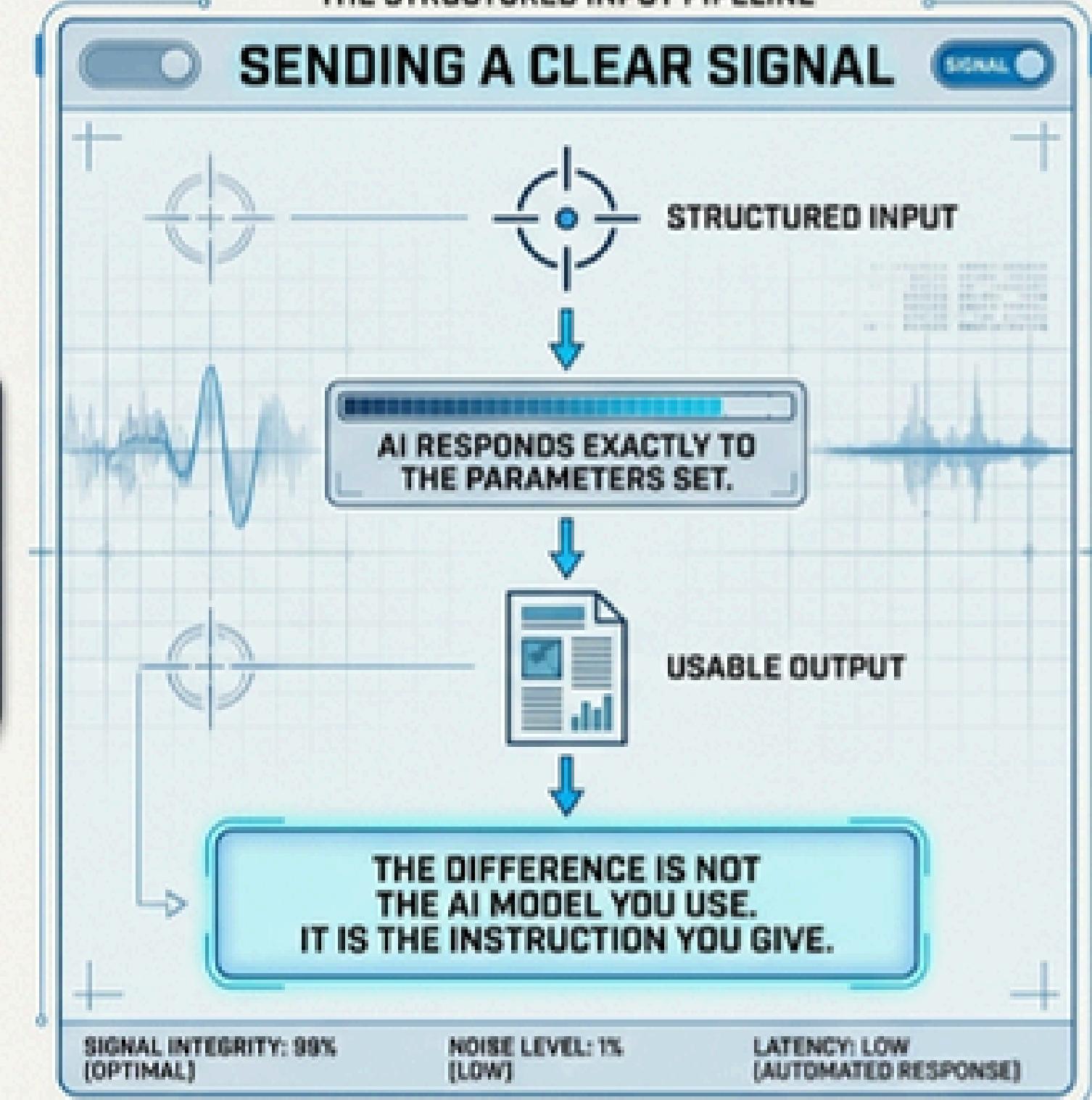
THE VAGUE INPUT LOOP

MAKING NOISE



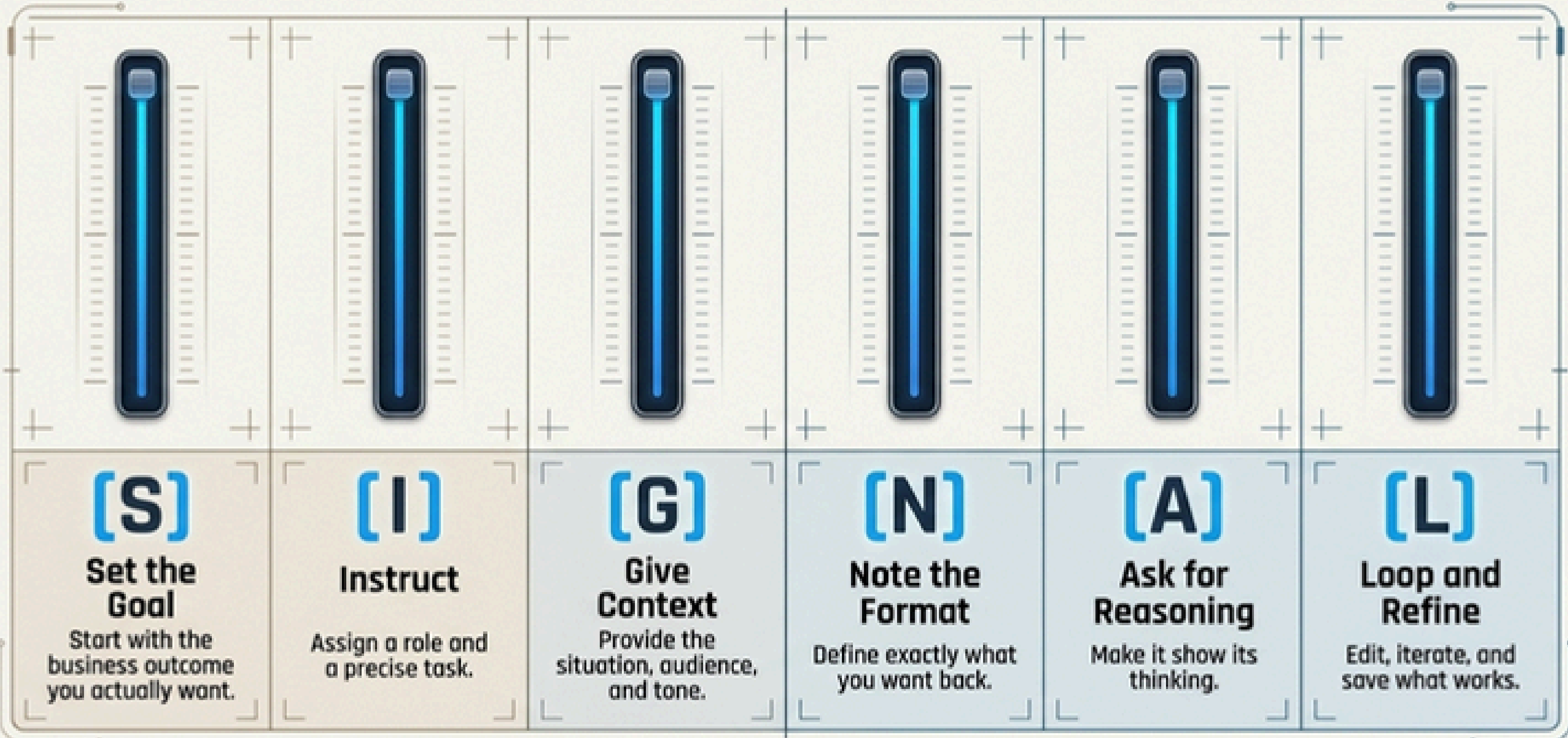
THE STRUCTURED INPUT PIPELINE

SENDING A CLEAR SIGNAL



**THE TOOL IS NOT THE PROBLEM. THE INSTRUCTION IS.
AI RESPONDS TO THE QUALITY OF WHAT YOU PUT IN.**

6 PREMIUM EDITORIAL DASHBOARD SLIDES



Each step builds on the last.
Skip one and the whole thing loses focus.



PARAMETERS

[S] SET THE GOAL

Start With the Business Outcome. This is the step most people skip, and the one that matters most. Do not define what the AI should write; define what you want to happen as a result.

REQUIRED DEFINITIONS



The business outcome you are working toward.

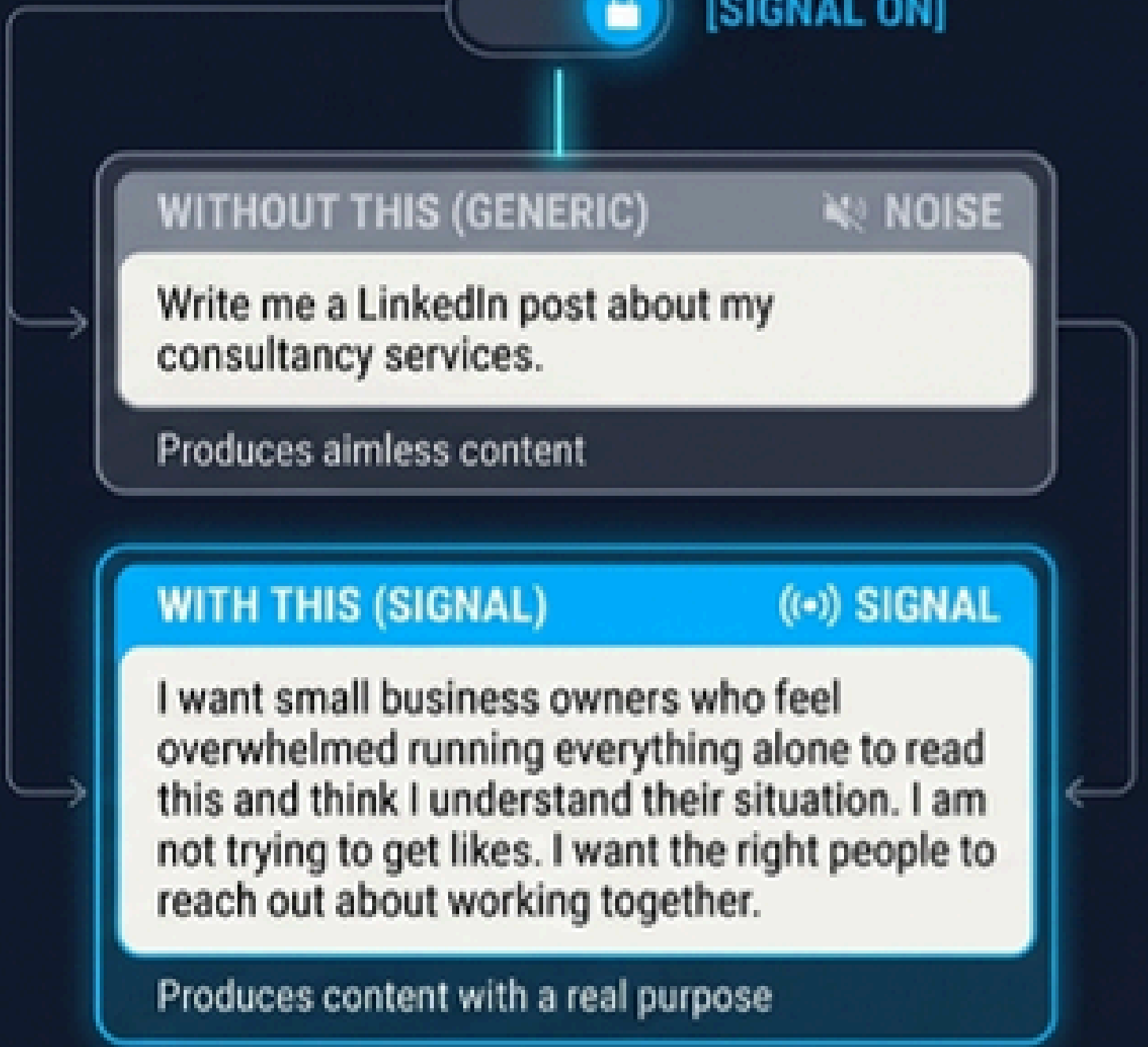


Who specifically needs to respond to this.

THE CONTRAST TOGGLE



[SIGNAL ON]



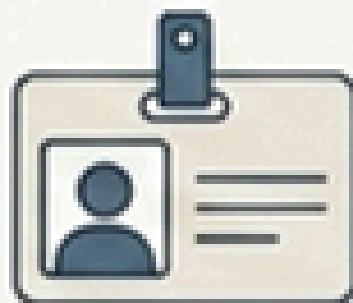


PARAMETERS

[I] INSTRUCT

Assign a Role and a Precise Task. AI has no default perspective. Assigning a role gives it a viewpoint to write from, removing the neutral, generic tone.

REQUIRED INSTRUCTIONS



The role you want it to play.

The exact task you need done.

What matters most in the result.

THE CONTRAST TOGGLE

 [SIGNAL ON]

WITHOUT THIS (GENERIC) NOISE

Write me a follow-up email.

WITH THIS (SIGNAL) SIGNAL

You are an experienced business development consultant. Write a follow-up email to a prospect who attended my free strategy session but has not responded in five days. The priority is to re-open the conversation without sounding pushy.

Each step builds on the last. Skip one and the whole thing loses focus.



PARAMETERS

[G] GIVE CONTEXT

Provide the Situation, Audience, and Tone.
Context separates a response that sounds like your business from one that could have come from anywhere.



The situation or challenge you are dealing with.

|

Who the audience is.

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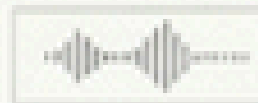
The tone you want.

EXAMPLE OUTPUT

I run a small HR consultancy with eight staff.
My clients are SME owners who find employment law confusing and stressful.
I want the tone to be straightforward and reassuring, not corporate or legalistic.

PRO TIP: AI learns quickly from examples. Paste in a paragraph you have written yourself and command: "Match this tone." **Faster and more accurate than describing your voice from scratch.**





[N] NOTE THE FORMAT

Define exactly what you want back. If you do not specify a format, the AI chooses one—usually wrong.

Format
(bullet points, email, table)

Length
(word limit)

Exclusions
(what to leave out)

“ Example Prompt: “Give me three short paragraphs under 200 words. Do not use corporate language or buzzwords. No generic advice about posting frequency.”

TASK	TARGET FORMAT PARAMETER
Client proposal summary	Short paragraphs, 300 words
LinkedIn post	Single paragraph, 150 words
FAQ answer	Plain language, 100 words
Job listing	Structured sections, 400 words
Follow-up email	3 short paragraphs
Service page intro	2 short paragraphs, 200 words

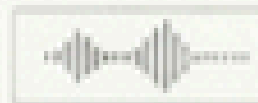
[A] Ask for Reasoning

Make It Show Its Thinking. AI can sound authoritative and still be wrong. This is your ten-second quality check.



Risk Mitigation Tactics

- ✓ Ask it to briefly explain the key choices it made.
- ✓ Ask it to flag anything it is uncertain about.
- ✓ Include the explicit instruction: "If you do not know, say so. Do not guess."



Example Prompt

After your response, note any assumptions you made and flag anything you are not certain about.



Why This Matters

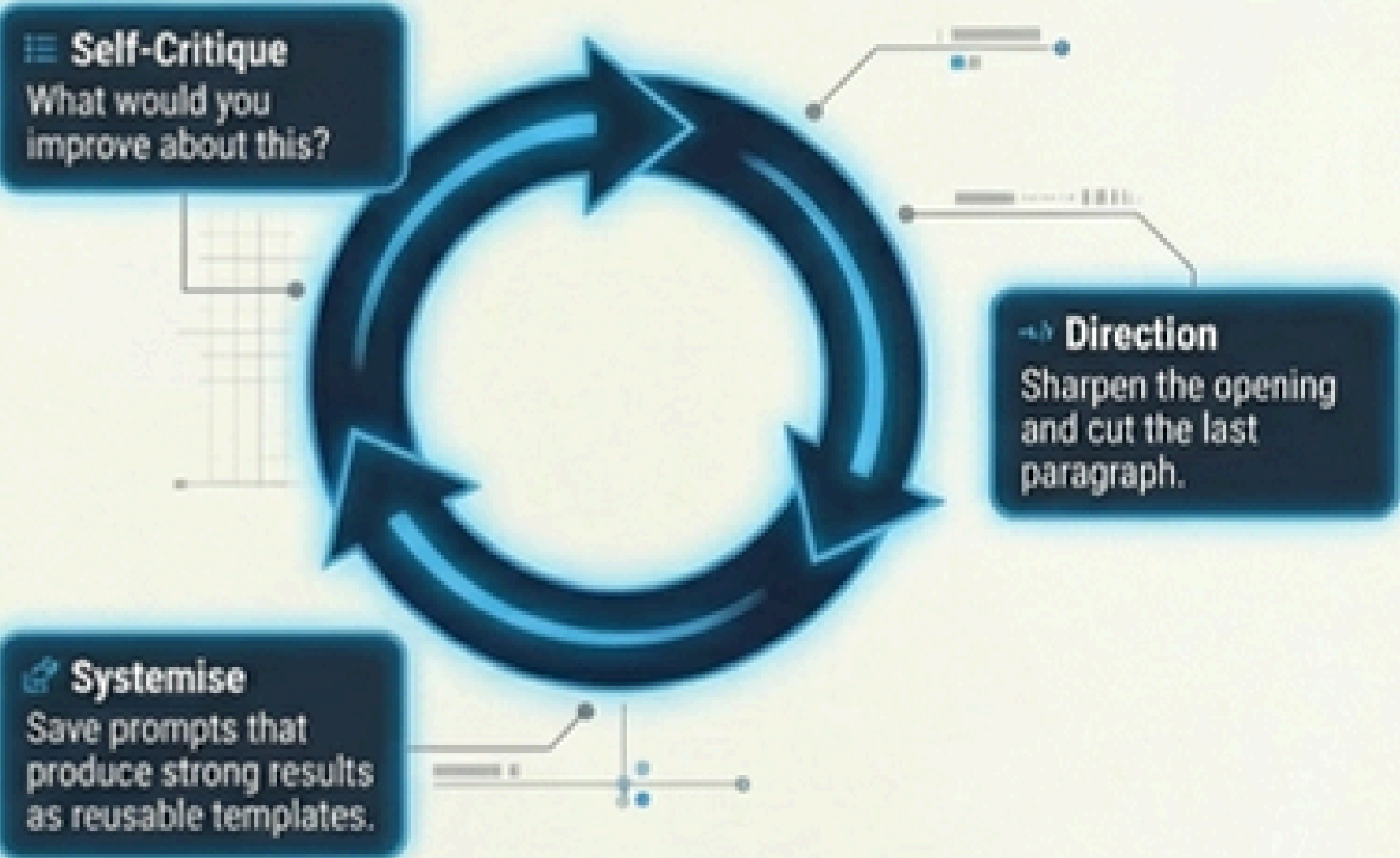
Your reputation is built on accuracy and trust. A wrong statistic, a misread situation, or an off-brand recommendation in a client document is a serious problem. This step meaningfully reduces that risk before it reaches a client.



[L] Loop and Refine

Edit, Iterate, and Save What Works.
The first response is just a starting point.

Refinement Triggers



The Mindset Shift

The Division of Labour

You are the editor. The AI is producing the first draft.

Treat it like a capable junior colleague providing useful raw material that needs your professional judgement applied to it.

The skill is knowing when the draft is good enough and when it needs another pass.





Exploded View

[S] Goal

A I want solicitors and HR managers who are anxious about employment law changes to read this and feel confident enough to reach out. I am not trying to build a following.

B You are a professional services content strategist. Write a LinkedIn post for a small employment law firm that has just launched a new service for SMEs with under thirty staff.

C The audience is business owners who are nervous about getting employment decisions wrong. Tone: professional but approachable, not legalistic.

D Three short paragraphs, under 150 words. No legal jargon. No generic calls to action.

E After writing it, tell me what you would improve and flag any assumptions you made.

[I] Instruct

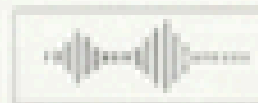
[G] Context

[N] Format

[A] Reasoning

[L] Loop & Refine (Implicit in the workflow)

The output of this single prompt will be sharper, more relevant, and closer to ready than anything a vague request produces.



[S] The Pre-Flight Checklist

Before you hit send, verify your signal.

Have you defined the business outcome, not just the task?	
Have you given the AI a clear role to play?	
Have you described your situation, audience, and tone?	
Have you specified the format, length, and what to avoid?	
Have you asked it to flag assumptions and uncertainty?	
Are you treating the response as a first draft to refine?	



Tune The Framework to Your Business

Knowing the framework is one thing. Applying it to your clients, your specific language, and your firm's pressure points is another. A generic prompt gets you generic output. A SIGNAL prompt built around your specific business gets you something you can actually send.

**Need help with your Digital Marketing?
Contact me at www.philliptwyford.com**