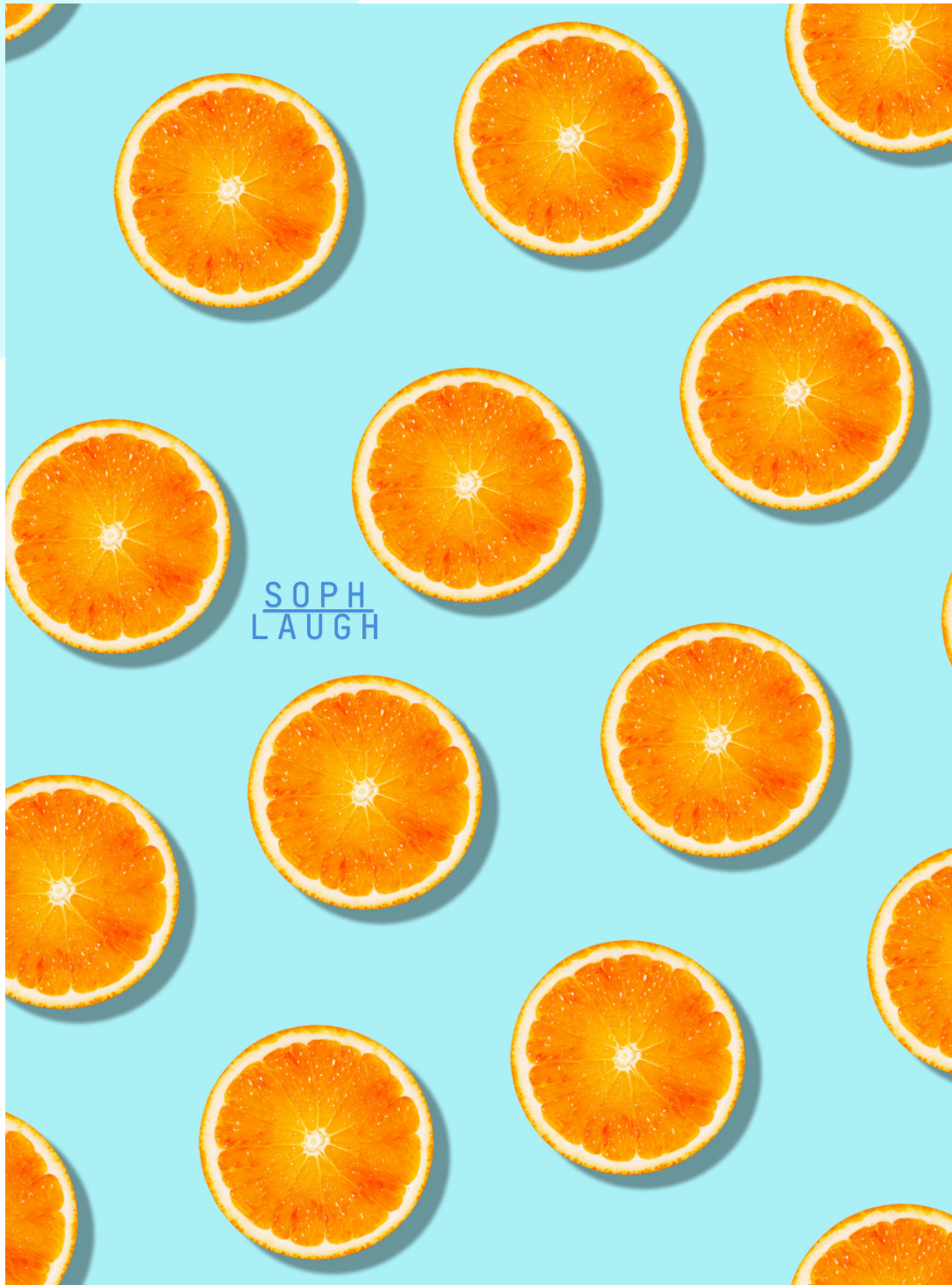


STUFF I'D ACTUALLY OPEN



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ANATOMY OF A NEWSLETTER

BY SOPHY LAUGHING (SOPH LAUGH)

Since my first LinkedIn Newsletter, *Cross-Cultural Conversations*, ended up being more random than originally intended, with topics ranging from The Tao of Conflict: Better Not to Strategy is How You Structure Risk - arguably, there might be some irreverent branding messages from a marketing perspective, but when it comes right down to it, each business professional faces a litany of messages across their ecosystems and social media platforms, including LinkedIn. I just so happen to prefer the irreverent ones.

Spoiler alert: I'm not going to change how I write or what I write about. In high school, my go-to

conflict-resolution phrase was: *Whatever!*

My family did not appreciate my linguistic flex. Fortunately for them (and others), I outgrew that. But I didn't outgrow my sense of humor. It's who I am (literally and figuratively).

Humor is not just a turn of phrase, but a *biological fact*:

✔ **Literally:** *my name is Laughing. It's on the byline, the email header, the LinkedIn profile. It's woven into my professional identity.*

✔ **Figuratively:** *my whole approach — how I lead, write, question, critique, and build — is rooted in humor. I use it to disarm, to reveal truth, to connect, and to keep power honest.*

My newsletter is like me: playful, but deliberate. Critical, but not cynical. Strategic, but not stiff. Fearless, but still human.



ROADMAP TO SIAO

SOPH LAUGH

The tactical pieces I'm going to spell out over the course of *Stuff I'd Actually Open (SIAO)* are designed to enliven the strategic business architect in you (without boring you in the process).

I'm not suggesting I have answers to today's business needs, or that I'll even write about business - sometimes I prefer to write about Manifest AI or call out Congress for not taking math in school (No, Ai Doesn't Drink a Bottle of Water per Prompt) but this doesn't mean I don't have ideas that aren't share-worthy. 🤔

For the purpose of this newsletter: SIAO will explore **diverse topics**. It might pack it up, slack it up, & serve it up, like John McEnroe. Cause in the world of business, decisions are fast paced. They're also measured, and deeply considered by those making tough decisions on a daily basis.

Business leaders can't rely on surface-level, AI-generated articles. You have to read books to go deeper. Studies. Peer-reviewed journals - or, talk to interesting people doing interesting things. That's the best part of newsletters, when interesting people reach out, just to shoot the breeze.

TWO SIMPLE RULES

SOPH LAUGH

Nobody wants to be sold to. So, my first rule (or confession) is that I'm not selling anything. So, what's the point, you ask? This is a think piece. Marketing is about the customer. Sales is about the seller. Thinking is what happens behind the scenes, behind GTM strategies, AI-rollouts, and corporate expansion or succession.

This doesn't mean I won't find myself excited by a new business model (more about that in *Corporate Crushes*) or *oohing* over a commodity that's taking off, or a scrappy start-up I can't stop thinking about.

But SIAO won't be trying to sell you stuff.

The second rule is I won't be using AI to write my newsletter. While I am an advocate of machine learning and artificial intelligence, on a multitude of levels (business, philosophy, physics), this newsletter speaks from the heart of the boardroom that lives on, that sees trouble long before it registers on the bottom line, and that knows when to step back - or (alternatively) move faster.

Sometimes the best way forward is through, as fast as your team can drive. Sometimes it's best to sell your trade secret to a larger player, who might otherwise beat you to market because they've already got in infrastructure in place. And sometimes, it's best to step back from all of it, and take stock of how the world is changing, and what you can do to move onward, in ways that tap into your expertise and talent.



I'm a Gen-X exec who graduated university without ChatGPT. Don't get me wrong, I adore LLMs + APIs. I respect the heck out of the people who build complex systems. But not every article in SIAO is gonna be about AI (nor written by one without disclosure). While AI is a force to be reckoned with; it's still a fancy word calculator for most.

- Those who are curious, test it.
- Those who know how it works, take action (while they learn more).
- Those who use it in lieu of their own voice, become hopelessly enchanted.

And then, there are those who are along for the ride: they think or write about it, scan the business landscape, and allow themselves a moment to marvel over the ingenuity of it all. They also read SIAO.

The moral behind "Two Simple Rules" is:

- Don't sell stuff and disguise it as a newsletter.
- Don't stop being curious, even about random topics. There's always something to be learned, explored, or built (and then sold for a profit).

CORPORATE CRUSHES

THIS IS WHERE SIAO GETS GOOD

It's happens to the best of us. You know what I mean, so I won't go *there*.

Instead, I'm talking about corporate legends and legacy companies. I've read about many and I follow even more.

For example, in 2017 I read about a company founded to revive a mountain pass. I hoped they'd get some grants to keep going until a bigger player noticed. Clearly, I'm not the only one who can connect the dots. U.S.-based companies working to restore this nation's supply chain are worthy of monitoring ([MP](#)).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS YOU HAVEN'T ASKED

BY DR. SOPHY LAUGHING

I'm big on leveling with people, so I want to make absolutely crystal clear who should subscribe to this Newsletter. The title says it all, "Stuff I'd Actually Open (SIAO)" - but what does that mean?

It means SIAO is filled with *anti-generic* content. We're not selling to each other, we're thinking aloud together. If something comes of the enterprise, that's because we resonate.

My career and the clients I serve sell their expertise. Offers differ across sectors, but one of the things **knowledge brands** have in common, is that they can spot quality a mile away. They may also know how to engineer for failure - because the larger brand that contracted them to manufacture products under their brand wants *their* customers to buy new product releases every 3-4 years (not mentioning names here, but later, I'll tell you who I'm talking about.) You might own their products.

I mention this random business case because business is about swapping stories not *peddling snake oil engineered for obsolescence* (think Little Toaster). It's about delving into history, or taking a deep dive into the philosophy of our shared values.

In other words, you could be a coach, consultant, strategist, service provider, professional, researcher, or any other kind of brand that thrives on knowledge and personal connections and find yourself right at home at SIAO. High-interest topics are my kryptonite. If you subscribe, we'll explore topics that cause us to lose track of time.

With Knowledge Comes Great Power

Now, if you wanna dig deeper, that's where consulting kicks in. Just kidding! I wanted to see if anyone was still reading.

TTYL,
Soph

