
Brand archetypes.

Twelve universal characters that help bring a brand to life, so customers feel they already know it.

Bringing your brand to life.

Brands become easier to understand when you think of them as a person. Bringing your brand to life lets you give it human qualities, values and meanings, and build a strong connection and relationship with the consumer.

In psychology, Carl Gustav Jung is credited with doing the most work on archetypes, but they exist and are documented in many different cultures and eras.

Archetypes are a universal system of meaning. They help shape how we understand and interpret the world, and they create and manage our expectations of it.

Why use an archetype?

1

It creates differentiation beyond features and benefits.

2

Archetypes feel instinctively right, and we know what to expect from them.

3

Using even the smallest cues, we can trigger huge amounts of meaning.

4

They give a universal frame of reference.

5

A great brand tool: effortlessly single-minded.

6

They clearly highlight real possibilities for the brand.

7

The result is a brand we feel we know instinctively.

The twelve archetypes.

The Innocent

Retains and renews faith.

The Explorer

Lives a full life through freedom.

The Sage

Helps you understand your world.

The Regular Guy or Girl

Fits in and connects with others.

The Jester

Has and creates fun in the world.

The Lover

Gives intimacy and sensual pleasure.

The Hero

Improves the world through courage.

The Outlaw

Takes revenge on what isn't working.

The Magician

Transforms dreams into reality.

The Creator

Creates something of lasting value.

The Caregiver

Protects people from harm.

The Ruler

Controls and organises.

ARCHETYPE 1 OF 12

The Innocent.

"Free to bring happiness."

CORE DESIRE	To get to paradise.
GOAL	To be happy.
GREATEST FEAR	To be punished for doing something bad or wrong.
STRATEGY	To do things right, with simple charm.
WEAKNESS	Boring, naive or simplistic, weak, vulnerable.
TALENT	Faith and optimism.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Utopian, traditionalist, naive, mystic, saint, romantic, dreamer.

Good for brands that:

- Offer a simple solution to an identifiable problem.
- Are associated with goodness, morality, simplicity, nostalgia or childhood.
- Are produced by a company with straightforward values.
- Need to be differentiated from brands with poor reputations.

Brands that use it

Disney, Dove, Coca-Cola, Heinz

ARCHETYPE 2 OF 12

The Explorer.

"Don't fence me in."

CORE DESIRE	The freedom to find out who you are through exploring the world.
GOAL	To experience a better, more authentic, more fulfilling life.
GREATEST FEAR	Getting trapped, conformity and inner emptiness.
STRATEGY	Journey, seeking out and experiencing new things, trial and error, escape from boredom.
WEAKNESS	Aimless wandering, becoming a misfit, lacking a sense of security.
TALENT	Autonomy, ambition, being true to one's soul, knowing who you are, excited by learning from other cultures.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Seeker, wanderer, individualist, pilgrim, adventurer.

Good for brands that:

- Help people feel free and express their individuality.
- Are rugged and sturdy, or for use in the great outdoors or in dangerous settings.
- Can be bought for consumption on the go.
- Have a culture that creates new and exciting products or experiences.
- Don't spell things out, which forces consumer involvement.

Brands that use it

The North Face, Lonely Planet, Jeep

ARCHETYPE 3 OF 12

The Sage.

"The truth will set you free."

CORE DESIRE	To find the truth.
GOAL	To use intelligence and learning to understand the world.
GREATEST FEAR	Being duped or misled, or ignorance.
STRATEGY	Seeking out information and knowledge; self-reflection and understanding thought processes.
WEAKNESS	Can study details forever and never act; tall poppy; know-it-all.
TALENT	Wisdom, intelligence, authority.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Expert, scholar, detective, adviser, thinker, philosopher, academic, researcher, planner, professional, mentor, teacher, contemplative.

Good for brands that:

- Provide expertise or information to customers.
- Encourage customers to think.
- Are based on new scientific findings or specialist knowledge.
- Are supported by research-based facts.
- Want to differentiate themselves from others whose quality or performance is suspect.

Brands that use it

Wikipedia, Kindle, BBC News, Discovery Channel

ARCHETYPE 4 OF 12

The Regular Guy or Girl.

"All men and women are created equal."

CORE DESIRE	Connecting with others.
GOAL	To belong as part of a group.
GREATEST FEAR	Being left out, or standing out from the crowd.
STRATEGY	To develop ordinary, solid virtues: down to earth, the common touch.
WEAKNESS	Losing oneself in an effort to blend in, or for the sake of superficial relationships; loss of individuality.
TALENT	Realism, empathy, lack of pretence.
ALSO KNOWN AS	The good old boy, everyman, the person next door, the realist, the working stiff, the solid citizen, the good neighbour.

Good for brands that:

- Give people a sense of belonging.
- Have an everyday functionality.
- Have low to moderate prices.
- Are produced by a solid company with a down-to-earth culture.
- Need to be differentiated in a positive way from higher-priced or more elitist brands.

Brands that use it

Toyota, Levi's, VB, IKEA

ARCHETYPE 5 OF 12

The Jester.

"You only live once."

CORE DESIRE	To live in the moment with full enjoyment.
GOAL	To have a great time and lighten up the world.
GREATEST FEAR	Being bored, or boring others.
STRATEGY	Play, make jokes, be funny, play with ideas, be clever.
WEAKNESS	Frivolity, wasting time, foolishness, not being taken seriously.
TALENT	Joy, offering a twist, the unexpected.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Fool, trickster, joker, practical joker, clown, entertainer, comedian.

Good for brands that:

- Give people a sense of belonging.
- Help people have a good time.
- Are low or moderately priced.
- Are produced by a fun-loving company.
- Need to be differentiated from self-important, overconfident established brands.

Brands that use it

Ben & Jerry's, Fanta, Yahoo!

ARCHETYPE 6 OF 12

The Lover.

"You're the only one."

CORE DESIRE	Intimacy and experience.
GOAL	Being in a relationship with the people, work and surroundings they love.
GREATEST FEAR	Being alone, a wallflower, unwanted, unloved.
STRATEGY	To become more and more physically and emotionally attractive.
WEAKNESS	Vanity, obsession with looks over substance.
TALENT	Passion, gratitude, appreciation, commitment, beauty.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Partner, friend, intimate, enthusiast, sensualist, spouse, team-builder, connoisseur.

Good for brands that:

- Help people belong, or find friends or partners.
- Enable people to have a good time.
- Are low to moderately priced.
- Are produced by a company with an intimate, elegant culture, rather than a rigid hierarchy.
- Need to differentiate themselves from self-important, overconfident brands.

Brands that use it

Chanel, Häagen-Dazs, Moccona, Calvin Klein

ARCHETYPE 7 OF 12

The Hero.

"Where there's a will, there's a way."

CORE DESIRE	To prove one's worth through courageous acts.
GOAL	Expert mastery in a way that improves the world.
GREATEST FEAR	Weakness, vulnerability, being a "chicken".
STRATEGY	To be as strong and competent as possible.
WEAKNESS	Arrogance, always needing another battle to fight, ruthlessness.
TALENT	Competence and courage, the ability to save the day, inspiring others.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Warrior, crusader, rescuer, superhero, soldier, dragon slayer, winner, team player.

Good for brands that:

- Have innovations that make a major impact.
- Help people be all they can be.
- Solve a major social problem, or encourage others to do so.
- Have a clear opponent you want to beat.
- Are the underdogs or challengers.
- Are strong and help people do tough jobs exceptionally well.

Brands that use it

TAG Heuer, Nike, Mr Muscle, FedEx

ARCHETYPE 8 OF 12

The Outlaw.

"Rules are made to be broken."

CORE DESIRE	Revenge or revolution.
GOAL	To overturn what isn't working.
GREATEST FEAR	Being powerless or unnoticed.
STRATEGY	Disrupt, destroy or shock; let off negative steam.
WEAKNESS	Crossing over to the dark side, crime, destruction.
TALENT	Outrageousness, radical freedom.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Rebel, revolutionary, wild man, misfit, iconoclast.

Good for brands that:

- Have customers or employees who feel disenfranchised from society.
- Help retain values that are threatened by emerging ones, or pave the way for revolutionary new attitudes.
- Are low to moderately priced.
- Break with industry conventions.

Brands that use it

Rolling Stone, Harley-Davidson, Jack Daniel's, Diesel

ARCHETYPE 9 OF 12

The Magician.

"I make things happen."

CORE DESIRE	Understanding the fundamental laws of the universe.
GOAL	To make dreams come true.
GREATEST FEAR	Unintended negative consequences.
STRATEGY	Develop a vision and live by it.
WEAKNESS	Becoming manipulative; can seem to lack depth or emotion.
TALENT	Finding win-win solutions, positivity, knowing that non-traditional ways of thinking can work better.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Visionary, catalyst, inventor, charismatic leader, shaman, healer, medicine man or woman.

Good for brands that:

- Have products or services that offer a transformation.
- Implicitly promise to transform customers.
- Have a new-age quality.
- Are consciousness-expanding.
- Are user-friendly.
- Have spiritual connotations.
- Are very new, contemporary products.

Brands that use it

Polaroid, TED, Lynx, Weight Watchers

ARCHETYPE 10 OF 12

The Creator.

"If you can imagine it, it can be done."

CORE DESIRE	To create something of enduring value.
GOAL	To realise a vision.
GREATEST FEAR	Mediocre vision or execution, loss of imagination.
STRATEGY	Develop artistic control and skill; exploration through creativity.
WEAKNESS	Perfectionism, bad solutions, creation for creation's sake.
TALENT	Creativity, imagination, self-expression.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Artist, inventor, innovator, musician, writer, dreamer.

Good for brands that:

- Promote self-expression, give customers choices and options, help foster innovation, or are artistic in design.
- Are in a creative field like marketing, public relations, the arts or technology.
- You want to differentiate from a "do-it-all" brand that leaves little room for the imagination.
- Have customers who have the time to be creative.
- Have a creative culture within the organisation.

Brands that use it

YouTube, LEGO, Apple

ARCHETYPE 11 OF 12

The Caregiver.

"Love your neighbour as yourself."

CORE DESIRE	To protect and care for others.
GOAL	To help others.
GREATEST FEAR	Selfishness and ingratitude.
STRATEGY	Selflessly doing things for others.
WEAKNESS	Martyrdom, being exploited, weakness.
TALENT	Compassion, generosity and warmth.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Caretaker, saint, altruist, parent, helper, supporter.

Good for brands that:

- Give customers a competitive advantage.
- Support families, or are associated with nurturing.
- Serve the public sector: health care, education, aid programs and other caring fields.
- Help people stay connected with and care about others.
- Help people care for themselves.
- Are non-profits or charitable causes.

Brands that use it

Campbell's, Amnesty International, Dove, Kleenex

ARCHETYPE 12 OF 12

The Ruler.

"Power isn't everything. It's the only thing."

CORE DESIRE	To provide control and order.
GOAL	To create a prosperous, successful family or community.
GREATEST FEAR	Chaos, being overthrown.
STRATEGY	Exercise power with extreme confidence and a desire to help.
WEAKNESS	Being authoritarian, unable to delegate, arrogance, emotional distance.
TALENT	Responsibility, leadership, reliability.
ALSO KNOWN AS	Boss, leader, aristocrat, king, queen, politician, role model, manager, administrator.

Good for brands that:

- Are high-status and used by powerful, successful people to enhance their grip on power.
- Make people more organised.
- Offer a lifetime guarantee.
- Have a regulatory or protective function.
- Are moderate to high priced.
- Are market leaders that offer a sense of security and stability in a chaotic world.

Brands that use it

Mercedes-Benz, Montblanc, Hugo Boss, American Express

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