

Some more human and more connected at work in safe environments, a business discovers the most effective, the most effective marketing strategies, and the highest return on investment.



REACHING AND RESONATING WITH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Understanding the Twelve Primary Brand Archetypes



In our last whitepaper, we introduced the idea of archetypes and defined them as recurring patterns of behavior, personality traits, and symbols that have been identified in myth, storytelling, and literature across cultures and throughout history. Archetypes, which are universal, show up everywhere.

Because archetypes are essentially the building blocks of the human experience, they are a powerful tool for understanding human behavior and motivation.

In branding, your brand archetype can be thought of as the personification of your company's mission.



Your brand archetype is the primary way your brand shows up in the world. We know that when we align our brand with some of the core needs and desires of our customers, we draw ideal clients whose values align with those of our brand. Through archetype identification, we are able to serve those clients optimally according to shared values and on a deeper level.

While there is a spectrum of sixty archetypes, twelve core archetypes stand out as “brand archetypes.” We encourage you to read each one to see which one resonates most with how you want your brand to present itself to your target audience.

If one of these archetypes seems close but maybe not quite “on brand,” for your brand, we recommend the book *The Hero and the Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes* by Hartwell and Chen, which offers subtypes for each of these twelve fundamental archetypes and is the source for each of the traits, examples, and quotes that follow.



TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES



THE CAREGIVER

GOAL: to help others

TRAITS: compassion, generosity, efficiency, patience, competence

EXAMPLES: George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Dove, Allstate Insurance

The Caregiver is “motivated to serve and to provide reassurance, advice, a listening ear, and an open heart to support the welfare of others” (36).

The Caregiver archetype offers a helping hand and a sense of comfort to its target audience through products, services, or emotional support.

If the primary objective of your brand is to care for others and offer help, and if you want to appeal to individuals who value empathy, kindness, and the well-being of others, then Caregiver is likely your primary brand archetype. And, who doesn't need some TLC from time to time?



THE CITIZEN

GOAL: to belong

TRAITS: service, stewardship, contribution, moral leadership

EXAMPLES: John F. Kennedy, Habitat for Humanity, Chipotle

“Having the courage to stand on principle, the Citizen possesses great energy and optimism balanced with pacing and pragmatism.” (38)

If your brand strives to make a valuable contribution to society and strives to appeal to individuals who are socially conscious, value activism, and also want to make a positive difference in the world, Citizen is likely your primary brand archetype. We love a company that validates our concerns and our desire to make a difference!

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES



THE CREATOR

GOAL: to turn ideas into reality

TRAITS: imagination, developed sense of aesthetic, creativity, innovation

EXAMPLES: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Walt Disney, Etsy

“On a quest to create things and expressions of lasting value, the Creator constantly seeks to acquire new skills” (41).

Does your brand exist to innovate in a space and provide ways for your employees and your clients to create? If your company provides tools, platforms, or resources that inspire innovation, encourage artistic endeavors, and foster a sense of personal accomplishment and fulfillment through the act of creation, then your primary brand archetype could be The Creator. Creatives need affirmation, so thank you for providing it, Creators!



THE EXPLORER

GOAL: to live an exciting and fulfilling life

TRAITS: innovation, ambition, independence, nonconformity

EXAMPLES: Huckleberry Finn, Star Trek, Starbucks

“The Explorer is known to push boundaries and delight in unexpected discoveries, embracing a ‘no limit’ philosophy” (48).

Does your brand offer a sense of adventure, discovery, and freedom to its clients, appealing to individuals who have a deep desire for exploration, new experiences, and the thrill of the unknown? If so, your primary archetype is likely The Explorer. Thank you, Explorers, for making life exciting!

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES

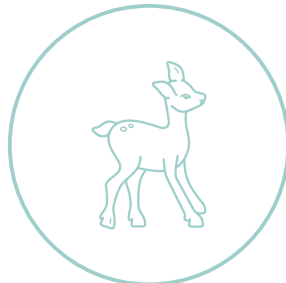


THE HERO

GOAL: to exert mastery in a way that improves the world
TRAITS: self-sacrifice, stamina, courage, continuous learner
EXAMPLES: Odysseus, Luke Skywalker, Harry Potter, Nike

“The Hero has relatively few distinguishing personality traits and can present in many different forms with many different faces, . . . possessing traits that resonate within almost every human being” (54).

If through your products, services, or messaging, your brand inspires and motivates individuals to rise above adversity, face their fears, and take bold action to achieve their goals, your primary archetype may be the Hero. This archetype appeals to individuals who desire to make a significant impact, demonstrate strength and bravery, and be seen as heroic figures. We all need a hero!



THE INNOCENT

GOAL: to be happy
TRAITS: sense of wonder, purity, trust, spontaneity
EXAMPLES: Forrest Gump, Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, Annie’s Homegrown Inc.

“The Innocent finds joy and meaning in simple pleasures, bringing to life the adage, ‘Don’t worry; be happy’” (56).

Offering its target audience a sense of purity, simplicity, and the promise of a blissful, idealized world, the innocent archetype appeals to individuals who long for safety, optimism, and a return to a state of innocence and simplicity. If your products, services, or messaging creates a nostalgic and comforting experience, evoking feelings of trust, joy, and hope, then the Innocent is your brand archetype. We look to you, Innocents, to bring simplicity to our complicated times! It’s a gift to be simple.

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES



THE JESTER

GOAL: to bring laughter, fun, and joy to the world

TRAITS: humor, originality, irreverence, social facileness

EXAMPLES: Tina Fey, The Cat in the Hat, Geico

“The Jester reminds us that we are free to choose—whether it’s point of view, a life path, or our individual expression” (58).

If the primary objective of your business is to offer your target audience a sense of humor, lightheartedness, and the opportunity to escape from seriousness and embrace joy, and if your brand strives to appeal to individuals who crave entertainment, laughter, and a break from the mundane, then the Jester is your core brand archetype. We thank you for encouraging us to not take life too seriously and to enjoy the lighter side of existence! Make ‘em laugh, Jesters!



THE COMPANION

GOAL: to build loving and committed relationships with others

TRAITS: loyalty, attention to detail, helpfulness, support

EXAMPLES: Lassie, Annie Sullivan, Zagat

“The Companion. . .holds a deep respect for each person’s value and inherent worth and shows it by offering assistance, order, and a sense of belonging” (40).

Do you exist to offer your target audience a sense of companionship, loyalty, and emotional support? Do you find your brand appeals to individuals who value connection, empathy, and the comfort of having a trusted ally by their side? If the products, services, or messaging you offer provides a safe space where individuals feel understood, heard, and cared for, then your brand archetype is the Companion. Thanks for being there for us, Companions!

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES



THE MAGICIAN

GOAL: to turn dreams into reality

TRAITS: influence, cleverness, charisma, intuition

EXAMPLES: Benjamin Franklin, Willy Wonka, Apple

“Able to accomplish magic from the inside out, the Magician gets results outside of the ordinary rules of life” (62).

Offering its target audience a sense of transformation, possibility, and the power to manifest their desires, this archetype appeals to individuals who seek personal growth, enlightenment, and the ability to unlock their full potential. We all need someone who inspires awe, wonder, and a belief in the extraordinary. If your brand aspires to do that, your brand archetype is the Magician, and we thank you for the magic you bring to the world.



THE REBEL

GOAL: to overthrow what isn't working

TRAITS: rule breaker, risk taker, progressive thinker, confidence

EXAMPLES: Malcolm X, James Dean, MTV

“The Rebel is a force to be reckoned with, representing the voice that's had enough. . .This archetype is a key to social change, acting as a harbinger of fresh perspectives, new outlooks, aspirational change, and awakening” (71).

If your goal is to offer your target audience a sense of liberation, individuality, and the opportunity to challenge the status quo, and your brand tends to appeal to individuals who crave freedom, authenticity, and the courage to defy norms, then you're the Rebel. We're indebted to all of you who rebel against conventional thinking, encouraging us to embrace our uniqueness and express ourselves boldly. Where would we be without you, Rebel?

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL ARCHETYPES



THE SAGE

GOAL: to use intelligence to understand the world

TRAITS: wisdom, clarity, rationality, independence, gentleness

EXAMPLES: Homer, Yoda, The Smithsonian

“Generous of spirit yet discriminating, the Sage gently shares great wisdom with compassion and mercy so that teaching may facilitate a path where mistakes are not repeated. This archetype combines objective analysis with the capacity to weigh many factors and the inclusion of expert opinion while inherently remaining a pragmatic skeptic” (76).

This is the archetype that offers its target audience a sense of wisdom, knowledge, and the opportunity for intellectual growth. It appeals to individuals who value learning, understanding, and seeking truth. If your brand strives to provide valuable insights, thought-provoking content, and a space for intellectual exploration, then you’re the Sage and we’re indebted to you for expanding our minds and helping us navigate the complexities of life. We value your wisdom, Sages.



THE RULER

GOAL: to have control

TRAITS: power, confidence, leadership, command

EXAMPLES: Atlas, Rolls-Royce

“The Ruler calls on individuals and society at large to step up and take responsibility for the world we create” (75).

Appealing to individuals who desire power, stability, and the ability to shape their environment and offering its target audience a sense of authority, control, and the opportunity to lead with confidence is the Ruler brand archetype. Through its products, services, or messaging, the Ruler archetype provides a sense of order, organization, and command. In a world that feels like chaos reigns, having someone tell us we can control our destiny is empowering. We’ve got this! Thank you, Ruler!

NOW WHAT?

Just as people have personalities, so do brands. Discovering your brand's personality—your brand archetype—and then matching it with your desired market is key to not only reaching but resonating with your target audience.

If archetypes have piqued your interest in developing your brand to have greater impact, we have even more tools up our sleeves that we'd love to share with you. Contact us to see how we can partner with you to determine your brand archetype and bring your brand vision to life.

