

# 12 Brand Archetypes

*(Source: Archetypes via BrandHouse Denmark)*

# ARCHETYPES

The term "archetypes", as it is used in marketing today, has its origins in Carl Gustav Jung's theories.

He believed that universal, mythic characters — archetypes — reside within the collective unconscious of people the world over.

Archetypal images represent fundamental human desires and evoke deep emotions.

There are 12 archetypes which symbolize a basic human need, aspiration or motivation.

In other words, an archetype is a human type in its purest form: the classic hero, outlaw, ruler, etc.

Each type has its own set of values, meanings and personality traits.

To alleviate confusion with other branding material, the BrandHouse Denmark name is listed first followed by the term used by Kendall Summerhawk in her book, *Branding with Archetypes*, where different.

# The Innocent

**Motto:** *Free to be you and me*

**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

**Weakness:** boring for all their naive innocence

**Talent:** faith and optimism

**The Innocent is also known as:** Utopian, traditionalist, naive, mystic, saint, dreamer.

**The Innocent provides an identity for brands that:**

- offer a simple solution to an identifiable problem are associated with goodness, morality, simplicity, nostalgia or childhood
- are low or moderately priced are produced by a company with straightforward values need to be differentiated from brands with poor reputations.

# The Regular Guy/Girl / Humanitarian

**Motto:** *All men and women are created equal*

**Core Desire:** connecting with others

**Goal:** to belong

**Greatest fear:** to be left out or to stand out from the crowd

**Strategy:** develop ordinary solid virtues, be down to earth, the common touch

**Weakness:** losing one's own self in an effort to blend in or for the sake of superficial relationships

**Talent:** realism, empathy, lack of pretense

**The Regular Person is also known as:** The good old boy, everyman, the person next door, the realist, the working stiff, the solid citizen, the good neighbor, the silent majority

**The Regular Person provides a good identity for brands:**

- that give people a sense of belonging
- with an everyday functionality
- with low to moderate prices
- produced by a solid company with a down-home organizational culture
- that need to be differentiated in a positive way from more elitist or higher-priced brands

**Examples of Regular Person brands:** IKEA

# The Explorer

**Motto:** *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

**Biggest fear:** getting trapped, conformity, and inner emptiness

**Strategy:** journey, seeking out and experiencing new things, escape from boredom

**Weakness:** aimless wandering, becoming a misfit

**Talent:** autonomy, ambition, being true to one's soul

**The explorer is also known as:** The seeker, iconoclast, wanderer, individualist, pilgrim.

**The explorer is a good identity for brands that:**

- helps people feel free, nonconformist or pioneering
- is rugged and sturdy or for use in the great outdoors or in dangerous settings
- can be purchased from a catalog or on the Internet
- helps people express their individuality
- can be purchased for consumption on the go
- want to differentiate themselves from a successful regular guy/gal brand or conformist brand
- have an explorer culture that creates new and exciting products or experiences

**Explorer brands would be:** Virgin, Jeep, Trope-Snacks, Marlboro, Bounty.

# The Sage / Teacher

**Motto:** *The truth will set you free*

**Core desire:** to find the truth.

**Goal:** to use intelligence and analysis to understand the world.

**Biggest fear:** being duped, misled—or ignorance.

**Strategy:** seeking out information and knowledge; self-reflection and understanding thought processes.

**Weakness:** can study details forever and never act.

**Talent:** wisdom, intelligence.

**The Sage is also known as:** The expert, scholar, detective, advisor, thinker, philosopher, academic, researcher, thinker, planner, professional, mentor, contemplative.

**The Sage would be a good identity for brands:**

- that provide expertise or information to customers
- that encourage customers to think
- that are based on new scientific findings or esoteric knowledge
- that are supported by research-based facts
- want to differentiate themselves from others whose quality or performance is suspect

**Examples of Sage Identities:** CNN, Gallup, McKinsey & Co.

# The Hero

**Motto:** *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

**Talent:** competence and courage

**The Hero is also known as:** The warrior, crusader, rescuer, superhero, the soldier, dragon slayer, the winner and the team player

**The Hero could be good for brands:**

- that are inventions or innovations that will have a major impact on the world
- that help people be all they can be
- that solve a major social problem or encourage others to do so
- that have a clear opponent you want to beat
- that are underdogs or challenger brands
- that are strong and help people do tough jobs exceptionally well
- that need to be differentiated from competitors that have problems following through or keeping their promises
- whose customers see themselves as good, upstanding citizens

**Examples of companies that express themselves like this archetype:** Nike, Tag Heuer.

# The Outlaw / Maverick

**Motto:** *Rules are made to be broken*

**Core desire:** revenge or revolution

**Goal:** to overturn what isn't working

**Greatest fear:** to be powerless or ineffectual

**Strategy:** disrupt, destroy, or shock

**Weakness:** crossing over to the dark side, crime

**Talent:** outrageousness, radical freedom

**The Outlaw is also known as:** The rebel, revolutionary, wild man, the misfit, or iconoclast

**The Outlaw may strengthen your brand's identity if it:**

- has customers or employees who feel disenfranchised from society
- helps retain values that are threatened by emerging ones, or paves the way for revolutionary new attitudes
- is low to moderately priced
- breaks with industry conventions

**Outlaw brands include:** Diesel, Harley-Davidson.

# The Magician / Alchemist

**Motto:** *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

**Talent:** finding win-win solutions

**The Magician is also known as:** The visionary, catalyst, inventor, charismatic leader, shaman, healer, medicine man

**The Magician could be the right identity for your brand if:**

- the product or service is transformative
- its implicit promise is to transform customers
- it has a new-age quality
- it is consciousness-expanding
- it is user-friendly
- has spiritual connotations
- it is a very new, contemporary product
- it is medium- to high-priced

**Example of magical brands:** Axe, Smirnoff, Polaroid, iPod.

# The Lover / Romantic

**Motto:** *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:** outward-directed desire to please others at risk of losing own identity

**Talent:** passion, gratitude, appreciation, and commitment

**The Lover is also known as:** The partner, friend, intimate, enthusiast, sensualist, spouse, team-builder

**The Lover may be a good identity for your brand if:**

- it helps people belong, find friends or partners
- it's function is to help people have a good time
- it is low to moderately priced
- it is produced by a freewheeling, fun-loving organizational structure
- it needs to differentiate itself from self-important, overconfident brands

**Some of the great Lover brands:** Alfa Romeo, Häagen-Dazs

# The Jester

**Motto:** *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

**Weakness:** frivolity, wasting time

**Talent:** joy

**The Jester is also known as:** The fool, trickster, joker, practical joker or comedian

**The Jester may be a good identity for brands:**

- that give people a sense of belonging
- that help people have a good time
- that are low or moderately priced
- that are produced by a fun-loving company
- that need to be differentiated from self-important, overconfident established brands

**Examples of Jester brands:** 7UP, Fanta

# The Caregiver \ Nurturer

**Motto:** *Love your neighbor as yourself*

**Core desire:** to protect and care for others

**Goal:** to help others

**Greatest fear:** selfishness and ingratitude

**Strategy:** doing things for others

**Weakness:** martyrdom and being exploited

**Talent:** compassion, generosity

**The Caregiver is also known as:** The saint, altruist, parent, helper, supporter

**The Caregiver may be right for your brand identity if:**

- it gives customers a competitive advantage
- it supports families (products from fast-food to minivans) or is associated with nurturing (e.g. cookies, teaching materials)
- it serves the public sector, e.g. health care, education, aid programs and other care
- giving fields
- helps people stay connected with and care about others
- helps people care for themselves
- is a non-profit or charitable cause

**Examples of caregiver organizations:** Volvo, Amnesty International

# The Creator / Artist

**Motto:** *If you can imagine it, it can be done*

**Core desire:** to create things of enduring value

**Goal:** to realize a vision

**Greatest fear:** mediocre vision or execution

**Strategy:** develop artistic control and skill

**Task:** to create culture, express own vision

**Weakness:** perfectionism, bad solutions

**Talent:** creativity and imagination

**The Creator is also known as:** The artist, inventor, innovator, musician, writer or dreamer

**The Creator may be right for your brand identity if:**

- it promotes self-expression, gives customers choices and options, helps foster innovation or is artistic in design
- it is in a creative field like marketing, public relations, the arts, or technological innovation
- you want to differentiate it from a "do-it-all" brand that leaves little room for the imagination
- your product has a do-it-yourself aspect that saves money
- your customer has the time to be creative
- your organization has a creative culture

**Examples of Creator brands:** Lego, Sony, Swatch

# The Ruler

**Motto:** *Power isn't everything, it's the only thing.*

**Core desire:** control

**Goal:** create a prosperous, successful family or community

**Strategy:** exercise power

**Greatest fear:** chaos, being overthrown

**Weakness:** being authoritarian, unable to delegate

**Talent:** responsibility, leadership

**The Ruler is also known as:** The boss, leader, aristocrat, king, queen, politician, role model, manager or administrator

**The Ruler may be right for your brand identity if:**

- it is a high-status product used by powerful people to enhance their power
- it makes people more organized
- it offers a lifetime guarantee
- it empowers people to maintain or enhances their grip on power
- it has a regulatory or protective function
- is moderately to high priced
- you want to differentiate it from more populist brands or one that is a clear leader in the field
- it is a market leader that offers a sense of security and stability in a chaotic world

**Examples of "Ruling" companies:** IBM, Mercedes.

*If you were a brand which archetype  
would tell your story?*