BRAND ARCHETYPES

Psychologist Carl Jung theorized that humans use symbolism to more easily understand complex concepts. In the course of his studies, he found that these paths to greater understanding would be categorized to make them easier to understand. Marketers have taken Carl Jung’s categories and turned them into a useful tool for developing and staying consistent to a personal or corporate brand. These are not shortcuts to the branding process, but ways of categorizing brand personas to make them easier to understand. Below you will find the 12 brand archetypes.

THE INNOCENT
Goal: To be happy.
Traits: Strives to be good, is pure, young, optimistic, simple, moral, romantic, loyal.
Drawback: Could be naïve or boring.
Marketing niche: Companies with strong values, seen as trustworthy, reliable and honest, associated with morality, good virtues, simplicity, can be nostalgic.
Example: Dove soap, Coca-Cola, Cottonelle bathroom tissue

THE REGULAR GUY OR GAL
Goal: To belong, or connect with others.
Traits: Down to earth, supportive, faithful, folksy, person next door, connects with others.
Drawback: Could lack a distinctive identity and blend in.
Marketing niche: Common touch, solid virtues, gives a sense of belonging.
Example: Home Depot, eBay

THE HERO
Goal: Help to improve the world.
Traits: Courageous, bold, honorable, strong, confident, inspirational.
Drawback: Could be arrogant or aloof.
Marketing niche: Make a positive mark on the world, solve major problems or enable/inspire others to do so.
Example: Nike, BMW, Duracell

THE REBEL
Goal: Break the rules and fight authority.
Traits: Rebellious, iconoclastic, wild, paving the way for change.
Drawback: Could take it too far and be seen in a negative way.
Marketing niche: Agent of change, advocate for the disenfranchised, allow people to vent or break with conventions.
Example: Harley-Davidson, Virgin (Richard Branson)

THE EXPLORER
Goal: Finds fulfillment through discovery and new experiences.
Traits: Restless, adventurous, ambitious, individualistic, independent, pioneering.
Drawback: Might not fit into the mainstream.
Marketing niche: Exciting, risk-taking, authentic.
Example: Indiana Jones, Jeep, Red Bull

THE CREATOR
Goal: Create something with meaning and enduring value.
Traits: Creative, imaginative, artistic, inventive, entrepreneur, non-conformist.
Drawback: Could be perfectionistic or impractical.
Marketing niche: Visionary, help customers express or create, and foster their imagination.
Example: Lego, Crayola

THE RULER
Goal: Control, create order from chaos.
Traits: Leader, responsible, organized, role model, administrator.
Drawback: Could lack a common connection, or be too authoritative or controlling.
Marketing niche: Help people become more organized, restore order, create more stability and security in a chaotic world.
Example: Microsoft, Barclays, Mercedes-Benz

THE MAGICIAN
Goal: Make dreams come true, create something special.
Traits: Visionary, charismatic, imaginative, idealistic, spiritual.
Drawback: Could take risks that lead to bad outcomes.
Marketing niche: Help people transform their world, inspire change, expand consciousness.
Example: Disney, Wizard of Oz, Apple
THE LOVER
Goal: Create intimacy, inspire love.
Traits: Passionate, sensual, intimate, romantic, warm, committed, idealistic.
Drawback: Could be too selfless or not grounded enough.
Marketing niche: Help people feel appreciated, belong, connect, enjoy intimacy, build relationships.
Example: Victoria’s Secret, Godiva Chocolate, Marie Claire

THE CAREGIVER
Goal: To care for and protect others.
Traits: Caring, maternal, nurturing, selfless, generous, compassionate.
Drawback: Being taken advantage of, taken for granted, or exploited.
Marketing niche: Help people care for themselves, serve the public through health care, education or aid programs.
Example: Mother Theresa, Campbell’s Soup, Johnson & Johnson, Heinz

THE JESTER
Goal: To bring joy to the world.
Traits: Fun, sense of humor, light-hearted, mischievous, irreverent.
Drawback: Could be seen as frivolous or disrespectful.
Marketing niche: Help people have a good time or enjoy what they are doing, allow people to be more impulsive and spontaneous.
Example: Motley Fool, Ben & Jerry’s, IKEA

THE SAGE
Goal: To help the world gain wisdom and insight.
Traits: Knowledgeable, trusted source of information, wisdom and intelligence, thoughtful, analytical, mentor, guru, advisor.
Drawback: Could be overly contemplative or too opinionated.
Marketing niche: Help people to better understand the world, provide practical information and analysis.
Example: BBC, PBS, Google, Philips

HOW TO CHOOSE A BRAND ARCHETYPE:
Note: Brand archetypes are best used in a full branding process. They are NOT a shortcut to bypass the hard work of getting to the core of who you are. You choose a brand archetype after you’ve done that process.

Personal Discovery: Do a deep dive into who you are and the benefits you provide. Ask yourself:
- What am I passionate about?
- What expertise or experiences do I have?
- How would I define my personality?
- What 5 adjectives would I use to describe me or my company?
- Why should customers buy from me (or consume my content)?

Brand Story: Determine the story arch your customer goes through when engaged with your brand. Consider: what issues they have before working with you and what their lives are like after working with you.

Messaging: Determine your tagline and one-liner summary.

Brand Archetype: Based on the three steps above, use this guide find the ONE archetype that best fits your brand.

Ask a Friend/Client: Seriously. They likely see your brand more clearly than you do, because if you’re anything like me, you’re grossly overthinking it!