



Book The Hero and the Outlaw

Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes

Carol S. Pearson and Margaret Mark
McGraw-Hill, 2001

Recommendation

When you think of Apple Computer, does the image of "The Rebel" come to mind? Does Barnes & Noble conjure up "The Sage?" If authors Margaret Mark and Carol S. Pearson are right, these archetypes should spring to your mind as part of the identification of these brands. The authors assert that people think in a certain subliminal way about companies based on the characteristics of archetypal personalities. Your company, they say, should define the archetype that fits its culture (is your firm an "Explorer" or an "Innocent?") and consistently brand its products accordingly. While they quote people seldom seen in business books - Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell - they insist that their ideas are practical and profitable. If you are an executive who wonders what to do to make your brand stand out, *BooksInShort* recommends this book to you.

Take-Aways

- Companies must create meaning beyond their product lines.
- Companies need to project more than products and price points; they must create brands with implicit meaning.
- To stand out, companies should define themselves in the image of an archetypal myth, such as the outlaw, the sage or the hero.
- Companies profit from promoting themselves with the right archetype.
- Archetypal branding campaigns have benefited SAP America, Polo Ralph Lauren and the March of Dimes.
- The theory of archetypal branding is based heavily on the writings of Joseph Campbell.
- Twelve major archetypes define most brands.
- Companies, whether they know it or not, fall into one of the 12 archetypal categories.
- Marketers can harm children if they promote their brands a certain way.
- Whatever brand or archetype your company chooses, all its efforts have to support that brand's message consistently.

Summary

Archetypes Matter

Experts once considered archetypal meaning in marketing to be quaint and interesting. Today defining your brand's archetypal symbolism is a prerequisite. The idea of managing meaning is new. In the past, companies faced less competition because demand exceeded supply. If you were the only soda pop company, you didn't have to worry too much about designing deeper meaning into your product.

"Brands are trusted to the degree that everything they do is consistent."

Times now, however, are radically different. Companies must deal with increasing competition and, thanks to globalization, the competition is quickly turning worldwide. Even if you succeed in creating a comparative advantage for yourself, a competitor can quickly copy it. Recently, companies have bought out other companies not for what they sold, but for the brands they had established. The brands, with their deeper iconic meanings, were valuable because of the intangible meanings they offered. In this environment, companies that confuse their brand identity, such as Levi's or Nike, find that distorting their archetypal images resulted in decreasing sales and profits.

"Archetypal brands are classless, ageless and regionless, and their deep meaning must be inviolate."

If you market your brand today without paying attention to meaning and archetypes, then you are comparable to an ancient navigator trying to find his way on the seas during a starless night. Archetypes can give your company a compass, or a deeper meaning. Finding meaning implies more than just borrowing an image; it means actually becoming completely consistent with the archetypal image that you believe your company represents. Not only will a company create more effective advertising using archetype-based branding methods, but that company will have a better understanding of its products and target customers.

"Archetypes mediate between products and customer motivation by providing an intangible experience of meaning."

Linking your company's identity to an archetype is an intrinsically intangible proposal. However, companies have realized tangible benefits using this intangible concept. This idea has helped television producers, snack food companies and cause marketers, and has helped redefine the message of companies in the for-profit and non-profit sectors. These methods provide a systematic way to establish a brand identity for your product, your service, your company - or even yourself.

"Beneath any set of values lies an archetype. When that archetype and your stated values inform your real behavior, people recognize that you are the real McCoy. You do not just spout empty words, you walk your talk."

The following 12 archetypal brands represent every company - including many whose leadership doesn't realize they are following an archetype at all.

The Yearning for Paradise: Innocent, Explorer and Sage

These three archetypes emphasize self over others and autonomy over belonging. Each one has a distinct strategy for identifying with the customer.

- The Innocent: Life does not have to be hard, this myth promises. The image of innocence conveys the message that you are free to be yourself and to live out your dreams right now. Films like *Baby Boom* and *Local Hero* resonate with the archetype of the innocent. The PBS Network and movie stars like Doris Day, Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks are also brands of the innocent. Some innocent products include McDonald's, Keds, Baskin-Robbins, The Pillsbury Doughboy, Ivory and Disney. Many brands appeal to the innocent archetype by promising salvation from an imperfect world. This archetype is a good identity for brands that provide simple answers, have low to moderate prices and are produced by a company with arrow-straight values.
- The Explorer: Don't fence me in. The explorer seeks a better world. The story of the explorer is characterized by fairy tales such as *Hansel and Gretel*, exploratory science fiction such as *Star Trek* and narratives about a transition from homeland, job or marriage. Great books that exemplify the explorer myth include Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Homer's *The Odyssey*. Your company might be able to identify its brand with the explorer archetype if your product makes people feel free, can be consumed on the go and is nonconformist.
- The Sage: Sharing wisdom with you. The sage's central wisdom is an individual way of finding paradise. The sage wants to be

free to think and believes in mankind's capacity to grow. Well-known sages include George Carlin, Oprah Winfrey, Socrates and Confucius. The sage also plays a part in all mystery stories. The sage may lack charisma and social graces but is associated with clear thinking. Sage brands include Vice President Al Gore, the Educational Testing Service, the Mayo Clinic and Harvard and Stanford Universities. The sage archetype might provide an appropriate identity for your brand if you offer clients expertise or information, encourage them to think and support the quality of your product with hard data.

Leaving a Thumbprint on the World: Hero, Outlaw and Magician

These three archetypes are transformative and represent great change. These archetypes use their energies to transform or destroy rigid and archaic structures.

- The Hero: Triumphant over adversity and evil. John Kennedy, John Wayne, John Glenn and, of course, all superheroes are heroes. Distinctive hero brands include the military, the Olympics, the National Organization for Women and the Red Cross. The hero identity might be right for your brand if you offer an invention or innovation that will have a major impact on the world. Your company might fit the hero archetype if your product helps people reach their upper limit, if you are addressing a major social problem and if your customer base identifies itself as moral and good.
- The Outlaw: Rules were meant to be broken. This archetype has the attraction of forbidden fruit. Outlaw figures include Zorro, Robin Hood, Jack Nicholson and Madonna. The Internet has an outlaw image. The outlaw image fits your brand if your customers and employees feel very disaffected from society, the function of your product is to destroy something, it isn't very good for people and its price is low to moderate.
- Magician: How to get things done. The magician believes in understanding the rules and using them to accomplish specific goals. The magician has traditionally been the shaman and is at the forefront of great scientific changes. Mary Poppins, the TV show *Touched By An Angel*, Lucent and Star Wars' Yoda represent the magician archetype. The magician identity might be good for your brand if your product or service is transformative (i.e. its implicit promise is to transform the consumer), user-friendly and priced in the medium to expensive range.

No Man Is An Island: Regular Guy or Gal, Lover and Jester

These three archetypes embody very different sorts of vulnerabilities. In other words, these archetypes have power precisely because they tap into repressed needs.

- Regular Guy/Gal: The virtues of being ordinary. The regular guy symbolizes situation comedies, labor unions, country music, American democracy, *Seinfeld* and carnivals. Companies include Saturn and VISA. This archetype might be a good fit for your brand if your company has a homey appeal and your product helps people feel that they belong, is in daily use and is priced moderately to inexpensively.
- The Lover: Intimacy and elegance. The Lover archetype governs all forms of human love. Symbols of this archetype include Clark Gable, Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren, chocolates, Haagen Dazs and romance novels. Companies include Jordache, Hallmark and Chanel. Lovers may also be known as partners, friends and matchmakers. The lover is right for your brand if your company represents either intimacy or elegance, helps people find love or friendship, fosters beauty and is moderately priced or expensive.
- The Jester: The joyous cutup. The "Got Milk" television ads, Ben and Jerry's ice cream, Pringles, anarchist politics, candy and booze represent this symbol. The jester often helps foster innovation in an organization. However, the shadow of the jester includes mean-spirited pranks and irresponsibility. The jester could be a promising match for a brand that helps people feel that they belong and helps them have a good time, and for a company with a freewheeling culture.

Providing Structure to the World: Caregiver, Creator and Ruler

These three archetypes are tied together by their adoration of stable environments. They represent ways that we can preserve order and stability and reconcile our desires for consistency and change.

- The Caregiver: Doing well by doing good. The caregiver is an altruist, moved by compassion, generosity and a desire to help others. Marcus Welby, Bob Hope, Florence Nightingale, Princess Diana and Mother Teresa symbolize this archetype. Companies that fit this archetype include Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Campbell's Soup. The caregiver might be a good match

for your brand if customer service can give you a competitive advantage, you work in education or healthcare, or if your product is somehow connected to non-profits or charities.

- **The Creator:** Helping you be you (only better). The creator represents the artist, the writer, the entrepreneur and the innovator. Mozart and Picasso are symbols of the creator myth. Martha Stewart, Crayola, Singer and Kinko's represent creator brands. The creator brand is essentially nonconformist. The creator might be a good match for your company if your product encourages self-expression, provides the customer with choices and options, helps foster innovation or is artistic in design.
- **The Ruler:** Who's in charge here? The ruler represents queens, kings, CEO's, presidents or even capable career mothers. Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill, any Supreme Court Justice or anyone with power can be considered the ruler. The IRS, the White House, E.F. Hutton, Brooks Brothers, Microsoft, American Express, The Sharper Image, Citibank, HMOs, Cadillac and IBM are considered ruler brands. Ruler brands and ads appeal to the consumer's wish to be powerful and important. The ruler identity might be right for your brand if you make a high-status product used by the powerful to enhance their stature, help people become organized or provide stability in an unstable world.

Ethical Issues

A marketer whose company wants to work with an archetypal image has ethical concerns to ponder. The marketing professional must try to prevent harm and avoid public relation nightmares while working to create positive psychological and social results. For example, using a cartoon camel to sell cigarettes might incur a reasonable backlash. It might also be questionable to use the Dalai Lama to sell Apple computers. The power of symbols can be used for good or evil, so heed the warning that archetypes, by their very nature, are amoral. Marketers should always judge the wisdom and impact of using an archetype.

Questions You Should Ask About Your Brand

When you brand your product with an archetype, you give yourself a wonderful opportunity to define your company's mission. Once you know your corporate archetype, this tool will help your company understand its cultural roots, teach employees how to succeed within its culture and organize better collaborations among teams. Ask some instructive questions about your company: What is your company's name and what does it mean? What do your logos and mottoes symbolize? How do your workers dress and interact? What does your office architecture represent - for example, a high-tech startup, a school library or hospital waiting room - and what does that say about your unconscious corporate culture? What is your company's deep structural goal? Answering those questions moves you toward creating a winning brand identity and a winning future for your company.

About the Authors

Margaret Mark is the president of Margaret Mark Strategic Insight, a marketing consulting firm specializing in brand management. She is former Executive Vice President of Young and Rubicam and her recent clients include Cablevision/Madison Square Garden, Sesame Workshop, SAP American, Polo Ralph Lauren and the March of Dimes. **Carol S. Pearson**, Ph.D., is the president of CASA (Center for Archetypal Studies and Applications), a management consultant and the best-selling author of *The Hero Within*, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, *Magic At Work* and the "Pearsons-Mark Archetype Indicator" (PMAI).
