

Brand Archetypes

A set of 12 universal personalities — rooted in Carl Jung's psychology — that brands use to express a clear, consistent identity. Picking an archetype gives your brand a recognisable character, evokes specific emotions, and helps you connect with customers on a deeper, more human level.

Best for: Brand identity · Tone of voice · Positioning · Marketing & storytelling

01 — AT A GLANCE

The framework is a palette of 12 personalities, grouped into four motivational families — one family per row.

12 archetypes in 4 families (each row is one family).

The Innocent Coca-Cola	The Sage Google	The Explorer The North Face
The Everyman IKEA	The Jester M&M's	The Lover Victoria's Secret
The Hero Nike	The Rebel Apple	The Magician Disney
The Creator LEGO	The Ruler Rolex	The Caregiver Johnson & Johnson

02 — THE CORE COMPONENTS

The 12 archetypes cluster into four families, each driven by a core human desire.

Independence & Fulfilment	The Innocent (purity, optimism — Coca-Cola), the Sage (wisdom — Google), the Explorer (freedom, adventure — The North Face). Brands chasing understanding and freedom.
Belonging & Connection	The Everyman (relatable — IKEA), the Jester (fun — M&M's), the Lover (intimacy — Victoria's Secret). Brands built on people and emotion.
Mastery & Courage	The Hero (bravery — Nike), the Rebel (challenge the status quo — Apple), the Magician (transformation — Disney). Brands that make a bold mark.
Structure & Control	The Creator (imagination — LEGO), the Ruler (authority — Rolex), the Caregiver (compassion — Johnson & Johnson). Brands offering order and care.

Pick one, and commit

Choose the archetype that fits your values, appeals to your audience, and stands apart from competitors — then express it everywhere: logo, colours, tone of voice, campaigns, even how your team behaves. Consistency is what turns a personality into a brand.

03 — WHEN TO USE IT & WHEN NOT TO

This framework isn't right for every situation. Used at the wrong moment, it can point you in the wrong direction.

✓ USE IT WHEN...	✗ DON'T USE WHEN...
• Defining or refreshing a brand identity • Setting a consistent tone of voice • Standing out from same-sounding competitors • Briefing designers, writers and agencies	• As a rigid box that blocks a nuanced, real identity • Switching archetypes often (it confuses your audience) • Picking one that clashes with what you actually do • Treating it as decoration instead of guiding behaviour

04 — IN ACTION

Trailhead — Choosing an Archetype for an Outdoor Brand

Trailhead, a new Indian outdoor-gear brand, sounds like every rival — 'durable, affordable, reliable.' Nothing sticks. Brand archetypes give it a personality customers can feel and remember.

How the framework was applied:

Step 1	Reflect on values — Trailhead is about curiosity, freedom and getting people off the beaten path — not luxury or safety.
Step 2	Read the audience — Its customers crave adventure and discovery, and admire brands that inspire them to explore.
Step 3	Scan competitors — Most rivals lean 'Hero' (conquer the mountain) or 'Ruler' (premium, elite). A gap is open.
Step 4	Pick the archetype — Trailhead chooses the Explorer: adventure, curiosity, forging your own path.
Step 5	Express it everywhere — Earthy tones, landscape and compass imagery, a curious adventurous voice, discovery-led campaigns — and staff who live it.

The numbers at a glance

Before Generic 'durable & cheap'	Family Freedom & fulfilment	Archetype Explorer adventure & curiosity	After Distinct recognisable identity
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Why a personality beat a feature list

'Durable and affordable' sounds like everyone. Choosing the Explorer archetype gave Trailhead a consistent character — in look, language and behaviour — that customers instantly recognised and felt part of. People connect with personalities, not spec sheets.

05 — KEEP IN MIND

Even experienced teams slip up here. Keep these in mind to keep your analysis honest and useful.

1. Don't pick an archetype that clashes with what your brand truly is.
2. Avoid copying a competitor's archetype — find the open space.
3. Don't switch personalities often; consistency builds recognition.
4. Express it across everything, not just the logo.
5. Use it as a guide, not a cage that flattens a real identity.