

APPLYING ARCHETYPES - STRENGTHENING THE BRAND

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Abstract: *In today's context, the growing business interest in investing in the effective creation of characters to tell brand stories to consumers may justify the benefits of applying archetypes. If consumers can recognize themselves in brand characters they can become loyal customers. For a business to be able to tell brand stories well, it first needs to discover the main character and understand his or her further role. In academic literature, brand archetypes have been analyzed through the benefits they provide in terms of connecting with the customer and in terms of reinforcing and building the brand image. However, there is no clear definition of the application of archetypes in academic literature, which would provide a clear sequence of steps to discover and apply the most appropriate archetype. Therefore, to fill this gap in the research on the topic, we will develop at a theoretical level a guideline for archetype adaptation - a workflow. In this context, in this paper, at a theoretical level, we have explored brand archetypes and sought to substantiate the applicability of archetypes to brand enhancement by modelling an archetype-adaptation-flow framework. The problematic question we analyzed was, how can the adaptation of archetypes contribute to brand strengthening, at the theoretical level? To substantiate this problematic question, in the first part of the paper we defined the meaning of brand archetypes and argued for the benefits of archetype adaptation. In the second part, based on the result of the document analysis, we modelled a roadmap for the application of archetypes. The archetype adaptation - workflow guidelines modelled in theoretical study can be useful for businesses and the brands they manage that want to discover the most appropriate archetype, but do not have clear guidelines on how to do so. The archetype-fitting workflow guidelines can also be useful for: building or reinforcing a relevant image; differentiating oneself against the risk of similarity; overcoming the challenge of consumer interest; and facilitating the visibility of advertising campaigns.*

Keywords: *brand, archetypes, strong brand, applying archetype.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Relevance. The main function of a brand is to reveal the hidden qualities of a product without direct contact, but at a distance through sight, touch, smell, hearing or experience. As an all-encompassing concept, the brand describes retail businesses, physical products and services, and distinctiveness becomes a brand strength (Xiaochen and Youqi, 2011). The need to keep a brand strong in today's context persists, as only a strong brand can help a business to create a positive image and provide high added value to the products or services offered (Zulfikar, 2023). Given that it is increasingly difficult for businesses these days to meet customer expectations (Krishna et al., 2022) and to grow sales, the need to maintain a strong brand should continue to be of interest to business owners and marketing experts (Zulfikar, 2023). Brand strength can be maintained or built from the start by understanding brand archetypes.

Researchability. Analyzing the academic literature, we can observe that a few studies on the topic of archetypes - conducted on their usefulness in creating a close relationship with customers: (Haddad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil, 2015); (Bishop and Pantaleon, 2017); (Bechter, Farinelli, Dieter and Frey, 2016); (Bishop and Pantaleon, 2017). We can also find research on archetypes in the analyses of the following authors: (Grubliauskaitė, 2017); (Xara-Brasil, Hamza and Marquina, 2018); (Laub et al., 2018), who have explored the application of archetypes to enhance brand image.

Thus, brand archetypes, in academic literature, have been examined through the benefits they provide in connecting with the customer and through the enhancement and creation of brand image. However, there is no clear definition of the application of archetypes in academic literature, which would provide a clear sequence of steps to discover and apply the most appropriate archetype. Therefore, in order to fill this gap in the research on the topic, we will develop at the theoretical level an archetype-application-flow guideline, which will not only systematize the results of the available research but will also offer them to businesses to test them in practice. These modelled archetype adaptation - workflow guidelines will be useful for businesses and the brands they manage that want to discover the most appropriate archetype but do not have a clear way to do so. The archetype adaptation workflow guidelines that have been developed can also be useful for: building or reinforcing a relevant image; differentiating oneself against the risk of similarity; overcoming the challenge of consumer interest; and facilitating the visibility of advertising campaigns.

In this context, the aim of this study is to substantiate the applicability of archetypes to brand enhancement at theoretical level by modelling an archetype-adaptation - workflow roadmap. **The object of** the study is brand archetypes.

Study objectives:

1. Based on document analysis, define the meaning of brand archetypes and justify the benefits of applying archetypes.
2. Based on the document analysis, to model the application of archetypes - workflow guidelines for, for brands curated by businesses.

Research problem: How can the application of archetypes help to strengthen a brand, at a theoretical level?

Research methods. Theoretical methods of data collection: document analysis. Methods for theoretical data processing: comparison and generalization. The study opted for a document analysis, which involved working with the text to analyze the most significant features of the problem. This theoretical method of data collection allowed for an objective view of the problem and a comparison of ideas when working with large volumes of text (Prakapas and Butvilas, 2011). The data obtained from the document analysis were processed using the methods of comparison and summarization. The comparison method helped to compare the similarities and differences between the ideas, while the generalization method helped to combine the ideas and come to appropriate conclusions.

Research methodology. Given that businesses are starting to invest more and more in creating a brand persona to tell stories to consumers and to help them stay strong in a competitive environment, we chose to carry out a theoretical study on archetypes and their application to brand building. This theoretical study will also seek to fill a gap in the research on the topic, as the academic literature has analyzed brand archetypes through the benefits, they provide in terms of connecting with the customer and in terms of strengthening and building the brand image. However, we did not observe in the academic literature a specific sequence of steps that would help a business to discover and adapt the most appropriate archetype for itself. We have chosen to use a theoretical method of data collection - document analysis - to carry out our theoretical research. In the first part of the study, we defined the meaning of brand archetypes and argued for the benefits of applying archetypes. In the second part of the study, we modelled a roadmap for the application of archetypes to brands managed by businesses. In each part of the study, we compared and summarized the results. In the conclusions of the study, we have answered the problem of how archetype adaptation

can help to strengthen a brand at a theoretical level. The findings of the study can be useful for businesses that have doubts about the suitability of archetypes for image, reputation and consumer relationship development, and for those who want to find the most suitable archetype but do not have a clear way to do so.

2. THE MEANING OF A BRAND ARCHETYPE AND THE BENEFITS OF APPLYING ARCHETYPES

Broadly speaking, archetypes are personified symbols that allow the mind to identify with unconscious desires, meanings and truths. However, when we talk about a brand archetype, we refer to the personality attached to the brand identity, thus distinguishing it from other similar brands (Bishop and Pantaleon, 2017). After all, as competition increases, businesses need to be able to choose whether to engage in a price war or try to differentiate themselves. Standing out is difficult, but it is possible with a strategy to build and maintain a relationship with the customer, which can be aided by knowledge of the verbal and visual language of archetypes (Haddad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil, 2015). In addition, knowledge of archetypes can also be useful when aiming at one of the key aspects of successful brand management, namely the creation and development of a relationship between the consumer and the brand. Consumers tend to identify with a brand and become loyal when the brand matches their perception of it (Roberts, 2010). Before identifying with a brand, consumers first assess their similarities by identifying the brand's compatibility with their personality or how close the brand is to it. Thus, successful brands are closely related to consumers' self-perception and their associations (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Given that brand identity is the core identity of a brand expression, businesses invest a lot of money in creating effective brand personas that can successfully convey the brand's core values and characteristics (Spangenberg, 2021). Storytelling has become a key method to appeal to the consumer, which has reached its peak of popularity (Seguí, 2014). To understand how to properly tell brand stories, we must first examine the role of characters - especially the protagonist (Pereira, 2019). Hence, this can only further substantiate the value of applying archetypes.

For consumers to have a good understanding of a brand's story, it is important for consumers to be able to recognize themselves in the brand's characters. By combining the characters of the story with the personality of the brand, an effective story can be created. Such a story can help create a strong emotional connection between the brand and its

consumers (Paquette, Yang & Long, 2017). Brand storytelling can be related to the concept of brand image, as brand image can influence consumer behavior, attitudes, intentions and purchase behavior. The strength of brand image can be observed in the way consumers identify with brands and use them as a means of self-expression or social identification (Baakli, 2023).

Stories can benefit a brand by helping to build a positive reputation. This suggests that the ability to tell stories well is a vital tool for business survival (Brighton, Kadembo & Makasi, 2020).

Discovering the brand archetype is also important when we want to create a brand with a strong, distinctive image that is clear to all or to clearly communicate a promotional message, to provide a strong foundation for content strategy, and to create a brand story (Grubliauskaitė, 2017). The adaptability of the archetype can help tell more subtle stories to customers, helping them to identify with the brand and make it more recognizable. Also, by properly understanding and embodying the archetype that represents the brand, the business will be able to make appropriate decisions and lead change that is in line with the essence of the business (Bishop and Pantaleon, 2017).

From a marketing perspective, archetypes are used to interact with consumers' motives and to give meaning to brands in relation to consumers' conscious and unconscious desires. Similarly, marketing managers can use an archetypal view of brand personality to define what a brand is and what it stands for, giving it true meaning in relation to customers' desires and motives (Xara-Brasil, Hamza and Marquina, 2018).

Established brands seeking to overcome the challenge of retaining consumer interest can use the archetype to link it to the personality that best embodies it, given that consumers tend to identify with an actual or conceptual personality when purchasing products. It is therefore important to understand what personality traits are associated with a brand and what kind of self-projection takes place when consumers make purchases. Thus, through archetypes, the brand can play an important role in consumers' choices related to the self-expression 'this is me' (Bechter, Farinelli, Dieter and Frey, 2016).

Brands that have a developed archetype can foster emotional connections with consumers, create a strong brand meaning and thus facilitate the visibility of advertising campaigns. If the archetype is used in storytelling, it will be particularly useful because stories have always been accepted and understood (Spangenberg, 2021). Archetypes have an emotional impact on consumers as they recognize these traits in themselves (Bishop and

Pantaleon, 2017). Using the archetype as the backbone of the organization allows the brand to remain timeless but can be updated over time (Bolhuis and Karreman, 2014). Consistency is important to become a distinctive brand, using the same brand archetype for a long time, which could shape consumers' imagination with different stories. The brand needs to tell different stories in a cyclical way. One of the most iconic examples of such a business is Nike, which is consistent with the hero archetype and tells different stories at different times through successful athletes. Memorable advertisements, slogans and a well-known logo contribute to Nike's success. However, the key success factor is the constant connection of the products with a successful hero atmosphere (Laub et al., 2018).

Thus, the meaning of the brand archetype can be defined by the personality attributed to the brand identity, which distinguishes it from similar brands. The value of adapting archetypes can be justified in today's context by the growing business interest in investing in the effective creation of personas to tell brand stories to consumers. After all, storytelling has become a key method of reaching consumers. Stories can allow the consumer to identify with a brand through the search for certain similarities and compatibility. If the consumer can identify with the brand's characters, he or she may become a loyal customer. In order for a business to be able to tell a brand's stories well, it must first discover the main character and understand his or her further role. So, this is just another example of why archetypes are important for businesses and their brands. A general understanding of the meanings of verbal and visual archetypes can help a business: to build and maintain a relationship with the customer; to create a strong, distinctive brand image; to communicate a clear advertising message; to create a brand story; to develop a content strategy; to achieve brand recognition. For an established business, linking the archetype to the personality that best embodies the brand, revealing its traits, can help overcome the challenge of consumer engagement. Brands with an established archetype can facilitate the visibility of advertising campaigns and foster emotional connections with customers by emphasizing the brand's meaning through storytelling. And for businesses that want to become distinctive, it is important to use the same archetype consistently and try not to change it unless it needs to be updated.

3. GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE BRAND ARCHETYPES

Step 1. Finding the brand archetype

The search for a brand archetype usually starts by defining the **foundation, core** and **influencer** of the brand. The core is usually a *type of business category*. This feature is what got your business to where it is now, or it is the standard that customers demand or have traditionally demanded from your industry. The core *personality that represents* the business is the core of the brand, and *what differentiates a brand* is the commitment and strength of its core archetype (Bishop and Pantaleon, 2017).

According to Haddad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil (2015), the brand archetype can be discovered through a much more detailed sequence of steps. The **first** step is the search for the 'soul' of the brand, which is carried out by means of a survey, answering questions such as: *why the brand was created; who created the brand; in what context was it created; what the relationship of consumers to the brand is; what the company's culture and values is*. The **second** step is to search for the essence of the brand by answering the question: *what does the brand really offer?* Where the brand does not clearly state an archetypal essence, a consumer survey should be carried out to obtain consumer insights. The **third** step is to analyze competitors to identify their differentiation and competitive advantage. In this step it is important to analyze the competitive environment in terms of the archetypal meaning of the competitors. This may also include questions such as: *what the archetypes of the competitors are; how they position themselves; are they clearly linked to their brand archetype; how they can differentiate themselves from them and move into a deeper customer relationship*. The **fourth** step is the analysis of the target audience, which can help to understand whether the archetype is relevant and meaningful to the consumer (Haddad, Hamza and Xara-Brasil, 2015).

Step 2. Defining a specific brand archetype

One of the most used ways to identify the brand archetype is to use C. Pearson's model of archetypes, which, according to Grubliauskaitė (2017), has been used by a few authors and researchers to date in their research. Pearson's archetype model consists of twelve archetypes: *the magician; the rebel; the hero; the lover; the common man; the jester; the ruler; the creator; the protector; the dreamer; the explorer; the sage*. According to Dessart (2015) the archetypes are further classified into four groups: *the first group* is mastery and

danger, and includes the following archetypes: the magician, the troublemaker and the hero; *the second group* is belonging and pleasure: the lover, the common man and the jester; the *third group* is control and stability: the ruler, the creator and the protector; and the fourth group is independence and fullness: the dreamer, the explorer and the wise man. According to Xara-Brasil, Hamza and Marquina (2018), the twelve archetypes can be further divided according to common traits:

- **The archetypes of creator, protector and ruler:** intent on ordering the world, helping individuals to feel secure. Main concerns are financial, health, loss of control.
- **The archetypes of the lover, the joker and the common man:** showing the need to join others and be accepted, but not to change the world. These archetypes are people, love or community oriented.
- **The archetypes of the hero, the troublemaker and the magician:** wanting to change and improve the world, to fulfil dreams. They are courageous characters, capable of facing challenges. They are afraid of powerlessness and ineffectiveness.
- **The archetypes of the dreamer, the explorer and the sage:** related to the pursuit of happiness, focusing on independence and self-reliance. These archetypes can help people to achieve happiness, mainly by combating the fear of inner emptiness.

1.1) Archetype search: *general method*

- Brand foundation: type of business category;
- Brand core: the main personality representing the business;
- Influencing factor: what differentiates the brand.

1.2) Archetype search: *a more detailed approach*

- Searching for the "soul" of a brand by asking questions through a survey;
- Searching for the essence of the brand: what the brand really offers;
- Competitor analysis: differentiation trends and competitive advantage;
- Analysis of the target audience, answering the question whether the archetype is relevant and meaningful to the consumer.

2) Identification of a specific archetype

- Application of Pearson's archetype model;
- Choosing a specific archetype, according to 12 possible options: magician; rebel; hero; lover; commoner; jester; ruler; creator; protector; dreamer; explorer; sage.

3) Adaptation in practice

- Putting the discovered and identified archetype into practice.

Fig. 1. Guidelines for the application of brand archetypes - a workflow. Source: compiled by the author

Thus, the brand archetype adaptation - workflow guidelines for would consist of several steps, see **Fig. 1** below. Step 1 - Search for a brand archetype. This step identifies that the archetype can be discovered in two ways: generic or more detailed. The most chosen approach is the generic one, defining the foundation, core and influencer of the brand. The more detailed approach consists of four steps: the search for the 'soul' of the brand; the search for the essence of the brand; the analysis of competitors; and the analysis of the target audience. Once the brand archetype has been discovered, step 2 is the identification of a specific brand archetype, based on Pearson's archetype model, which consists of twelve archetypes: magician; troublemaker; hero; lover; commoner; joker; ruler; creator; protector; dreamer; explorer; sage. Once these few steps have been completed, the next step for the business would be to put the identified archetype into practice.

4. CONCLUSION

1. Understanding brand archetypes in today's context remains a hot topic, given that businesses are challenged by an increasingly fierce competitive environment that requires them to remain strong both in sales and in communication with customers. Businesses are starting to invest more and more in the development of brand persona that helps to effectively convey brand values and attributes to consumers. Through character, stories can be told which have become the main method of reaching the consumer. To be able to understand how to tell brand stories properly, a business should first discover the character and its central role. The search for a character can be aided by an understanding of brand archetypes. Based on the results of the document analysis, we found that knowledge of brand archetypes and the ability to put them into practice can help businesses: Creating effective stories that create a strong emotional connection between the brand and its consumers; Developing the right brand reputation; Cultivating and strengthening the relationship with the customer; Creating or maintaining a strong, distinctive and recognizable brand image; Developing a consistent content strategy; Delivering high quality communication through a clear promotional message or brand story. For established businesses, the application of archetypes can help overcome the challenge of consumer engagement, while for brands that already have an archetype in place, it can facilitate the visibility of promotional campaigns and foster an emotional connection with their customers.

2. Archetype matching, based on the archetype matching - workflow guidelines modelled at the theoretical level, can help a brand to understand the steps to start the search

for an archetype and how to choose the most appropriate one once it is found. The guidelines consist of a two-step sequence: the search for a brand archetype and the identification of a specific brand archetype. In the first step, the business should discover its brand identity based on internal, competitor and target audience analysis. In this step, the business should discover the place that best describes the essence of their brand. Based on the results obtained in the first step, the business should identify a specific archetype based on the twelve possible choices. Thus, this modelling of the sequence of steps, based on the results of the document analysis, can be useful for businesses and the brands they manage that do not know how to reinforce their brand, but are looking for a way to do so.

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