What are Brand Archetypes and How to Use them Effectively

Understanding how and why archetypes are used

o Archetypes emerge from a sound understanding of the brand...not the other way around.
- We will probably sounds like a broken record with this point, but it is imperative that you do your due diligence before you land on an archetype. This means that you make the effort to become immersed in your client's business and brand through some level of discovery. Too often, we have seen archetypes used as the "magic bullet" or "bandaid approach" to solving a brand challenge. Archetypes are a tool in the toolkit. They are NOT the savior of brand.
- You need to gain insight and inputs into 5 main areas before you jump in here. They are: business, brand, category, competition and consumer/client. You are looking for:
  o What makes the business 'tick'
  o What exists today as far as insights go against these areas
  o Pain points or problems that the business needs to solve
- Once you have identified and synthesized key themes associated with the business and brand then you can dive into archetypes and specifically which ones may apply to this business or brand.

o Most brands have more than one archetype.
- There are MANY examples out there of explanations of archetypes that pair brands with a specific one of the 12. Our belief is that no person, brand or company is just one archetype but rather a combination. There WILL likely be a dominant archetype, but then there are usually an additional 1-2 that have significant influence.
- This should make sense if you think about people and their personalities. We are not one-dimensional, right? There are different aspects of our personalities that come out depending on the situation, how we want to show up, etc. If you can check out our episode on brand character if you are looking to identify or develop a brand, or any of our personal brand episodes if you want to identify this for yourself.
- When you start to dive into the archetypes you should be looking for which ones make sense for the brand to "own" and bring to life. We are big fans of the archetypal wheel, which lays out all of the archetypes in one place. (You can google this and it will come up with a variety of options.)
- At the beginning we listed a few of the archetypes - hero, caregiver, everyman. A brand may very well own the space of being a hero, but if you layer on the other two you allow for some "softening" of this archetype. A hero can have some caregiving tendencies, meaning that while they may be saving the day, they are doing it with consideration of others. They may leverage the everyman in the way that even though they are saving the day, they are approachable. (Think about Superman's personas - badass superhero to Clark Kent as an everyman.) Again, there may be a leading archetype, but rarely is it a single one.

o Align on how archetypes will be used in your organization.
- They may or may not want to go down the rabbit hole of "how the sausage is made" with you for a variety of reasons. They don't have the time, they don't have the patience, or they don't have the wherewithal to do it. You will have to determine this for your company or clients so that they can be used effectively.
- We have had clients that cover the gamut as far as wanting to be involved in this part of the process. We have run full workshops where we dive into the entire process to build the options and the final archetype together. We have had some presentations where we give either an indepth or a brief overview of archetypes so that the clients understand the foundation of the strategies we are presenting. And there are other times when we do not mention the word archetype at all and just given them their unique personality with the choices made to built it being grounded in the philosophy. All of these are completely fine and viable options. Just like with any work we do on the agency side, clients' preference for involvement differs.

o Invest in creating tools that will bring them to life.
- Just like any strategic tool, it is not enough to create it. You have to bring it to life. Especially with something like this topic, which can be tricky to educate your team, your business, or your clients on. The usage becomes the most important thing, because it determines whether people actually put it into practice or not.
- We are big fans of before and after executions of marketing materials that show how to put the archetype into action. This should also be part of the toolkit so that anyone that is producing materials against or speaking against the brand knows how to use it and what to do with it.
- This also typically requires some education or at the very least some back and forth reviews as the teams put the work into place. It can be hard to shift from the type of writing and communicating that is more tactically based to something more emotional, so be patient with the teams as they work through this and be there for them to assist.

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