



# A Pocket Guide to Using the Archetypes

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Archetype/Application	Seven Steps	Illustration
<p><b>DRIFTING GOALS</b> Application: Stay Focused on Vision</p> <p>Various pressures can often take our attention away from what we are trying to achieve. The "Drifting Goals" archetype helps explain why an organization is not able to achieve its desired goals. Used as a diagnostic tool, it can target drifting performance areas and help organizations attain their visions (see May 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify drifting performance measure.</li> <li>2. Look for goals that conflict with the stated goal.</li> <li>3. Identify standard procedures for closing the gap. Are they inadvertently contributing to the goal slippage?</li> <li>4. Examine the past history of the goal. Have the goals themselves been lowered over time?</li> <li>5. Anchor the goal to an external reference.</li> <li>6. Clarify a compelling vision that will involve everyone.</li> <li>7. Create a clear transition plan. Explore what it will take to achieve the vision, and establish a realistic timeline.</li> </ol>	<p><b>DRIFTING QUALITY STANDARDS</b></p> <p>The diagram shows a circular flow. At the top, 'Tater Tot Quality Standard' (B2) leads to 'Pressure to Lower Goal', which leads to 'Investments in Production Process and Ingredients' (B1). B1 leads to 'Actual Tater Tot Quality' (B1), which leads to 'Quality Gap'. The Quality Gap leads back to 'Tater Tot Quality Standard' (B2). There is also a 'Delay' loop from 'Actual Tater Tot Quality' back to 'Tater Tot Quality Standard'.</p>
<p><b>ESCALATION</b> Application: Competition</p> <p>One of the reasons we get caught in escalation dynamics may stem from our view of competition. The "Escalation" archetype suggests that cutthroat competition serves no one well in the long run. The archetype provides a way to identify escalation structures at work and shows how to break out of them or avoid them altogether (see October 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the competitive variable. Is a single variable the basis of differentiation between competitors?</li> <li>2. Name the key players caught in the dynamic.</li> <li>3. Map what is being threatened. Are your company's actions addressing the real threat, or simply preserving core values that may no longer be relevant?</li> <li>4. Reevaluate competitive measure. Can the variable that is the foundation of the game (price, quality, etc.) be shifted?</li> <li>5. Quantify significant delays that may be distorting the nature of the threat.</li> <li>6. Identify a larger goal encompassing both parties' goals.</li> <li>7. Avoid future "Escalation" traps by creating a system of collaborative competition.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ESCALATING FREQUENT FLYER PROMOTIONS</b></p> <p>The diagram shows two interconnected loops. On the left, 'A's Frequent Flyer Promotions' (B1) leads to 'A's Ticket Sales' (S), which leads to 'Market Share of Airline A Relative to B' (O). On the right, 'B's Frequent Flyer Promotions' (B2) leads to 'B's Ticket Sales' (S), which leads to 'Market Share of Airline A Relative to B' (O). Both 'Market Share' nodes lead to 'Competitive Threat to Airline A' (O) and 'Competitive Threat to Airline B' (O). There are also 'Delay' loops from 'Market Share' back to 'Competitive Threat'.</p>
<p><b>FIXES THAT FAIL</b> Application: Problem-solving</p> <p>Almost any decision carries long-term and short-term consequences, and the two are often diametrically opposed. The "Fixes that Fail" archetype can help you get off the problem-solving treadmill by identifying fixes that may be doing more harm than good (see September 1992).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify problem symptom.</li> <li>2. Map current interventions and how they were expected to rectify the problem.</li> <li>3. Map unintended consequences of the interventions.</li> <li>4. Identify fundamental causes of the problem symptoms.</li> <li>5. Find connections between both sets of loops. Are the fixes and the fundamental causes linked?</li> <li>6. Identify high-leverage interventions. Add or break links in the diagram to create structural interventions.</li> <li>7. Map potential side-effects for each intervention in order to be prepared for them (or to avoid them altogether).</li> </ol>	<p><b>FIXES FOR FALLING SALES</b></p> <p>The diagram shows a cycle. 'Marketing Promotions' (B1) leads to 'Revenue Pressure' (S), which leads to 'Falling Sales Volume Problem' (O). 'Falling Sales Volume Problem' leads to 'Erosion of Product Image' (O), which leads to 'Attractiveness of Product w/o Promotions' (O). 'Attractiveness of Product w/o Promotions' leads to 'Attractiveness of Buying Now vs. Later' (O), which leads to 'Sales' (S), which leads back to 'Marketing Promotions' (B1). There is also a 'Delay' loop from 'Attractiveness of Product w/o Promotions' to 'Erosion of Product Image'.</p>
<p><b>GROWTH AND UNDERINVESTMENT</b> Application: Capital Planning</p> <p>If demand outstrips capacity, performance can suffer and hurt demand. If this dynamic is not recognized, the decrease in demand can then be used as a reason <i>not</i> to invest in the needed capacity. "Growth and Underinvestment" can be used to ensure that investment decisions are viewed from a fresh perspective, rather than relying on past decisions (see August 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify interlocked patterns of behavior between capacity investments and performance measures.</li> <li>2. Identify delays between when performance falls and when additional capacity comes on-line—particularly perceptual delays regarding the need to invest.</li> <li>3. Quantify and minimize acquisition delays.</li> <li>4. Identify related capacity shortfalls. Are other parts of the system too sluggish to benefit from added capacity?</li> <li>5. Fix investment decisions on external signals, not on standards derived from past performance.</li> <li>6. Avoid self-fulfilling prophecies. Challenge the assumptions that drive capacity investment decisions.</li> <li>7. Search for diverse investment inputs. Seek new perspectives on products, services, and customer requirements.</li> </ol>	<p><b>UNDERINVESTING IN SERVICE CAPACITY</b></p> <p>The diagram shows a cycle. 'Marketing' (R1) leads to 'Product Sales' (S), which leads to 'Service Quality' (O). 'Service Quality' leads to 'Perceived Need to Invest in Capacity' (O), which leads to 'Investments in Service Capacity' (S), which leads back to 'Marketing' (R1). There is also a 'Delay' loop from 'Service Quality' to 'Perceived Need to Invest in Capacity'. Another loop shows 'Investments in Service Capacity' leading to 'Service Quality' (S) and 'Perceived Need to Invest in Capacity' (O), which leads to 'Service Quality' (S).</p>

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<p><b>LIMITS TO SUCCESS</b> Application: Planning</p> <p>If we don't plan for limits, we are planning for failure. The "Limits to Success" archetype shows that being successful can be just as dangerous to long-term health as being unsuccessful. By mapping out the growth engines and potential danger points in advance, we can anticipate future problems and eliminate them <i>before</i> they become a threat (see March 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the growth engines.</li> <li>2. Determine doubling time of those processes.</li> <li>3. Identify potential limits and balancing loop(s)—physical capacity, information systems, personnel, management expertise, attitudes/mental models.</li> <li>4. Determine change required to deal effectively with the limit(s) identified.</li> <li>5. Assess time needed to change. Is there a discrepancy between the doubling time and the changes that need to be made to support that growth?</li> <li>6. Balance the growth. What strategies can be used to balance the growth engine with the time frame of the investments that must be made to sustain it?</li> <li>7. Reevaluate the growth strategy. Continually challenge assumptions in context of the broader company.</li> </ol>	<p><b>TECHNICAL SUPPORT CAPACITY LIMITS</b></p>
<p><b>SHIFTING THE BURDEN</b> Application: Break Organizational Gridlock</p> <p>Organizational gridlock can be caused by interlocking "Shifting the Burden" structures, as one function's "solution" creates problems in another area. The archetype provides a starting point for breaking gridlock by identifying chains of problem symptoms and solutions that form walls between functions, departments, or divisions (see February 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the original problem symptom(s).</li> <li>2. Map all "quick fixes" that appear to be keeping the problems under control.</li> <li>3. Identify impact on others. What are the impacts of those "solutions" on other players in the company?</li> <li>4. Identify fundamental solutions. Look at the situation from both perspectives to find a systemic solution.</li> <li>5. Map side-effects of quick fixes that may be undermining the usability of the fundamental solution.</li> <li>6. Find interconnections to fundamental loops. Find the links between the interaction effects and the fundamental solution that may be creating gridlock.</li> <li>7. Identify high-leverage actions from both perspectives.</li> </ol>	<p><b>INTERLOCKING PROBLEMS IN CAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM</b></p> <p>* NVH = noise, vibration, harshness</p>
<p><b>SUCCESS TO THE SUCCESSFUL</b> Application: Avoid Competency Traps</p> <p>The "Success to the Successful" archetype suggests that success or failure may be due more to initial conditions than intrinsic merits. It can help organizations challenge their success loops by "unlearning" what they are already good at in order to explore new approaches and alternatives (see November 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate historical origins of competencies.</li> <li>2. Identify potential competency traps.</li> <li>3. Evaluate current measurement systems—are they set up to favor current systems over other alternatives?</li> <li>4. Map internal view of market success. What are the operating assumptions around success in the market?</li> <li>5. Obtain external views of market success. Ask "outsiders" for alternative strategies.</li> <li>6. Assess effects on the innovative spirit. Is the current system excluding or limiting the spirit of experimentation that will lead to new alternatives?</li> <li>7. Continually scan for gaps and areas for improvement.</li> </ol>	<p><b>SUCCESS OF THE "QWERTY" KEYBOARD</b></p>
<p><b>TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS</b> Application: Resource allocation</p> <p>In a "Tragedy of the Commons" situation, the complex interaction of individual actions produces an undesirable collective result, such as the depletion of a common resource. The archetype can be used to help connect the long-term effects of individual actions to the collective outcome, and develop measures for managing the common resource more effectively (see April 1993).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the "commons." What is the common resource that is being shared?</li> <li>2. Determine incentives. What are the reinforcing processes that are driving individual use of the resource?</li> <li>3. Determine time frame for reaping benefits.</li> <li>4. Determine time frame for experiencing cumulative effects of the collective action.</li> <li>5. Make the long-term effects more present. How can the long-term loss or degradation of the commons be more real and present to the individual users?</li> <li>6. Reevaluate the nature of the commons. Are there other resources or alternatives that can be used to remove the constraint upon the commons?</li> <li>7. Limit access to resources. Determine a central focal point—a shared vision, measurement system, or final arbiter—that allocates the resource based on the needs of the whole system.</li> </ol>	<p><b>OVERGRAZING THE ALTERNATOR</b></p>