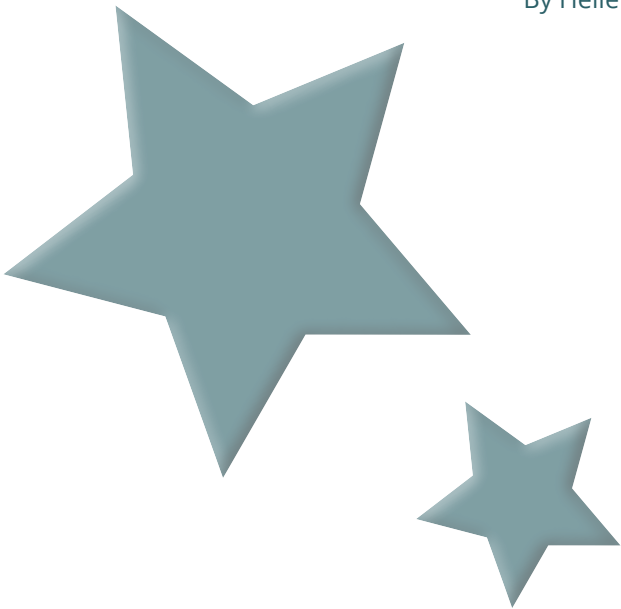

ARCHETYPES AT WORK

- A Short Introduction to Hein's Archetype
Model and Prima Donna Management

By Helle Hedegaard Hein, MSc, PhD



First edition, spring 2019

BACKGROUND

The cornerstone of my research is Prima Donna Management. During my entire research career, I have worked with professions and highly specialized employees in a vast number of fields.

About 15 years ago management literature began touching on the concept of the “Prima Donna” as a predominant member of the future workforce. Highly specialized employees, knowledge workers, creatives etc. were equated with theatrical Prima Donnas in order to characterize employees who are not only whimsical, childish, hot-tempered and self-centered, but also resistant to leadership.

This did not sit well with my own results from earlier research projects, so I set out to develop new motivation and management theory with special focus on highly specialized employees.

One of the most important results in my research is that the people who are labeled as trouble-makers and Prima Donnas in the negative sense of the word often turn out to be far from childish, self-centered and resistant to leadership. Quite the opposite: My data shows a clear pattern of so-called Prima Donnas being driven by a higher purpose, and that the behavioral patterns that arise from being driven by a higher purpose are misinterpreted by colleagues and managers.

It goes without saying that not all highly specialized employees are driven by a higher purpose. My research shows that highly specialized employees can be divided into four archetypes with different primary drivers and motivational profiles – and consequently very different managerial needs.

RESEARCH METHOD

The archetype model and the theory underlying it was developed through four years of intensive field studies (2005-2009) at The Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen, where I sat in on rehearsals for more than 30 different productions of opera, ballet and plays.

During the same period, I observed approximately 200 meetings ranging from planning and production meetings over staff seminars to executive meetings.

Besides numerous informal conversations with employees and executives at The Royal Danish Theatre, I also conducted more than 150 formal interviews with actors, opera singers, ballet dancers, directors, assistants, producers, stage managers, technicians and the executive management group.

By way of a subsequent consultancy assignment at The Royal Danish Ballet, I later observed an additional three rehearsal processes and conducted more than 50 interviews with employees at the ballet.

I have compared the data collected at The Royal Danish Theatre with data from previous research projects. The models and underlying theory have been adjusted and further developed in later research projects involving other professions such as teachers, nurses, psychologists, judges and professional athletes. When it comes to their primary drivers and motivational profiles, these professions have turned out to be surprisingly similar to artists and administrators at The Royal Danish Theatre.

Therefore, I firmly believe that the archetype model applies to all kinds of employees and professions in every kind of organizational setting.

GROUNDED THEORY

The archetype model and the underlying Prima Donna theory has been constructed by means of the so-called 'grounded theory'-methodology. It is a highly inductive approach where models and theories are constructed through methodical and intensive data gathering and analysis.

In short, the method is based on the researcher gathering qualitative data through observations and interviews until there is a sufficient amount of repeated observations describing the same phenomenon (or multiple phenomena). This allows you to extract codes, concepts and in the end, categories. When categories haven't been added to the list of categories for a while, a model is developed that describes the connections between the different categories.

When this is done, the model is tested, modified and validated through additional field study. In order for the model to become a theory, you also need to formulate an ensemble of connected, underlying thoughts, thus developing a theoretical scientific perspective surrounding the model. Such a perspective has consequences for the basic assumptions and conceptions underlying the theory (e.g. basic assumptions about the human psyche and the role of management and leadership etc.).

This method differs from traditional research methods in that you do not choose an existing theoretical framework for collecting data, but rather use the data gathered to construct a new theoretical framework.

Although the archetype model is developed without the support of existing and mainstream motivation theory, the attentive reader will spot occasional similarities to classical motivation theory. However, the archetype model adds new knowledge and new elements to existing theory and thus expands the existing theoretical apparatus.

WHAT IS AN ARCHETYPE?

Archetype means original pattern or basic form. In this case an original pattern or a basic form of motivation.

We all feel different degrees of motivation in what we do varying from the strongest sense of motivation over moderate motivation to feeling demotivated. Your archetype describes *your primary motivational driver* which generates the strongest possible sense of motivation you can experience. Your primary driver is what gives you your biggest kick – the thing that sparks the flame better and stronger than anything else you know.

It is important to stress that your archetype and your primary driver doesn't define everything that is you. You are also defined by other motivational drivers, by your personality, by your values and world views etc. The archetype model is not meant to be depreciating, but rather a model that opens up to complexity and a greater appreciation for the complexity of motivation. The human psyche is a complex entity, and motivation is a complicated concept. With the archetype model at hand, the complexity of motivation is arranged into manageable units. At least, that is the aim.

People are not motivated by one single thing, but rather by an array of factors. At work, some tasks always tend to feel more motivating and meaningful than others. They generate the strongest and most motivating kick. Other tasks are perceived of as moderately motivating. They generate a moderate kick. Some tasks are so boring that they drain our motivation. Workplaces may facilitate motivation by ensuring that you get enough kicks or by reducing motivation inhibitors.

Consequently, we all experience motivation to different degrees and from different sources. Each archetype has a primary driver that is unique to that archetype. Each archetype also has a secondary driver that generates a strong (but not the strongest) kick. The secondary driver may support your primary driver and it may be shared with other archetypes. But the thing that defines your archetype is your strongest source of motivation, i.e. your primary driver.

Your primary driver not only describes what generates the strongest possible kick, but also what you define as good work and what you consider to be optimal working conditions and good leadership. Your archetype will manifest itself in your behavioral patterns, although you may from time to time – or maybe even often – behave like other archetypes because your job requires you to do so. This will, however, lead to a lesser degree of motivation.

FOUR ARCHETYPES

The four archetypes are described in the model below.
 The model also illustrates whether a person is primarily tension-seeking or equilibrium-seeking.
 Tension-seeking people get their kicks by venturing outside their comfort zones,
 whereas equilibrium-seeking people get their kicks by staying inside their comfort zones.

PRIMA DONNAS	INTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS	EXTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS	PRAGMATISTS
Work is considered:	Work is considered:	Work is considered:	Work is considered:
A higher purpose	A challenge	A competition	Work
Primary driver:	Primary driver:	Primary driver:	Primary driver:
Serving a higher purpose	Outdoing oneself	Outperforming others	Doing good work
Secondary driver:	Secondary driver:	Secondary driver:	Secondary driver:
Cracking a tough nut	Cracking a tough nut	Outdoing oneself	Contributing to the work community

Tension-seeking
Equilibrium-seeking

PRIMA DONNAS

Prima Donnas' primary driver is to serve a higher purpose. Prima Donnas feel an obligation to make a difference in the outer world. They have an altruistic world view where focus is directed away from the self and towards a higher purpose.

In order to serve the higher purpose, Prima Donnas feel obligated to always strive for the highest standards. They feel a strong sense of duty which at times can come at a high price.

Prima Donnas get their primary kick when they succeed in serving the higher purpose. When that happens, they don't feel "motivated". They experience existential meaning. Although the higher purpose is the undercurrent that drives Prima Donnas every day, the existential kick is a surprisingly rare event. Usually, Prima Donnas experience existential kicks no more than twice a year. The main reason why Prima Donnas don't experience primary kicks more often is that two aspects are required: Firstly, Prima Donnas must reach an extremely high standard, and secondly, they need some kind of feedback (not to be confused with praise or recognition) that their efforts made a difference for the higher purpose. Rare as the Prima Donna kick may be, Prima Donnas never forget a primary kick. The existential kick is so strong that the glow shines on and the memory of an original kick can even ignite an existential mini-kick 25 years down the road.

If for any reason Prima Donnas feel obstructed in serving their higher purpose, they will have a sense of "selling out". This will prompt strong reactions, and outwardly reacting Prima Donnas may feel obligated to put up a fight in defense of the higher purpose. This can in turn lead to misunderstandings and the Prima Donnas being labeled as childish, hysterical, vain, self-centered and resistant to leadership. This is the reason why Prima Donnas are called Prima Donnas. People may make the mistake of confusing Prima Donna whims with a genuine feeling of duty and an obligation to step up and defend a threatened higher purpose. Prima Donnas would rather be in conflict with managers and colleagues than be in conflict with their calling and their values.

Whereas the primary driver of serving a higher purpose is unique to Prima Donnas, their secondary driver is shared with The Introverted Performance Addict.

INTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS

Introverted Performance Addicts are competitive people whose motivation direction is introverted. Thus, they focus mainly on the inner world. They direct their energy towards and get energy from ideas, inspiration, experiences etc. Their introverted motivation direction is also relevant in regard to the success criteria that they operate by. Introverted Performance Addicts often define their own success criteria and show less (if any) interest in the success criteria imposed by the outer world.

While Introverted Performance Addicts may be competitive, they do not define competition as striving to outperform others. Introverted Performance Addicts are competing with themselves and driven mainly by outdoing themselves. They continually push themselves to set new standards and never shy away from a challenging task.

Their secondary driver is to crack tough nuts. They are driven by an insatiable curiosity and a challenge-filled quest for finding the solution to an impossibly difficult task. When they succeed in cracking a tough nut, they get a strong kick from their newly won sense of mastery and victory from having outsmarted the challenge. However, the sweetness of the kick lingers only shortly before the barre is raised and the hunt for an even bigger challenge begins.

Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts share the secondary driver of 'cracking the tough nut', but their aims differ. Prima Donnas crack tough nuts in order to make a difference for the higher purpose, whereas Introverted Performance Addicts crack tough nuts as part of their constant quest to outdo themselves.

Due to the introverted part of their personality, Introverted Performance Addicts often need to apply their analytical skills in undisturbed contemplation and prefer spaces where they can work alone. They are sometimes accused of being antisocial loners, but in fact they like to take part in social activities, provided the event is voluntary and does not interfere with their thought processes. When in the process of cracking a tough nut, the last thing they need is noise, interruptions and meetings.

Like Prima Donnas, Introverted Performance Addicts are attracted to tasks that require them to venture outside their comfort zones. Both are tension-seeking archetypes. On the one hand, getting their kicks requires them to step outside their comfort zones. On the other hand, stepping outside your comfort zone often leads to a feeling of inner tension that makes you want to escape the discomfort. This is the reason why Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts are often expert procrastinators.

EXTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS

Extroverted Performance Addicts' primary driver is to outperform others. Competitive and extroverted by nature, they direct their attention outwardly and adopt the success criteria of the outside world as their own benchmarks. Whereas Introverted Performance Addicts strive to be in sync with themselves, Extroverted Performance Addicts prefer to be in sync with their surroundings. In terms of competition, this means they measure their performance against formal goals for example by using the organization's key performance indicators or performance goals as quantifiable metrics that measure their achievements. Consequently, the success criteria of the outside world are integrated with their own success criteria and performance objectives making them dedicated and stellar high performers.

Their extroverted nature also fosters a strong impulse to constantly compare themselves with others. Extroverted Performance Addicts feed off competitions to a degree that they often invent imaginary contests and end up comparing themselves to people who show no interest in participating in the competition. They thrive when competitors pressure them, breathe down their neck or threaten to overtake them. The boost of energy that this provides prompts them to further enhance their performance.

In a performance-based environment, Extroverted Performance Addicts are often perceived as easier to deal with, since they are more likely to accept the predefined success criteria as opposed to Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts who tend to define their own success criteria.

Extroverted Performance Addicts get their primary kick from outperforming others, from winning and from creating extraordinary, measurable results. Extroverted as they are, however, they can't escape a feeling of being robbed of their kick if managers and colleagues fail to explicitly acknowledge and reward their performance. In such cases they may resort to being overtly self-promoting in order to ensure that no one misses their next performance.

Being the most ambitious and goal-oriented archetype, Extroverted Performance Addicts often turn out to be the rainmakers of the organization without whom sales and productivity would suffer.

THE PRAGMATIST

Pragmatists' primary driver is to do good work. Like Extroverted Performance Addicts, they align their own success criteria with the outside world, but they are nowhere near as competitive and ambitious as the Extroverted Performance Addicts. Pragmatists score high on conscientiousness. They are dutiful and show attention to detail and make use of guidelines, standard operating procedures etc. in defining good work.

Pragmatists have no problem with working autonomously within well-defined and implemented guidelines of a certain strategy, but they will often need frequent feedback and reassurance that they are meeting management's expectations or customer requirements.

Pragmatists are equilibrium-seeking people who focus on balance in life. Whereas some of the other archetypes live to work, Pragmatists clearly work to live. They need clear borders between work and private life. When they are off duty, they need to be entirely off duty. Otherwise they will feel stressed. As their need for balance is so distinct, their primary feeling of motivation takes on a different character. Rather than being a kick as such, Pragmatists often describe their primary feeling of motivation as more of a fundamental satisfaction that derives from a feeling of continuously doing good work and striking an effective work-life balance. Their kick is nowhere near as powerful as the other archetypes' kicks but due to its extended nature it lasts longer.

Pragmatists' secondary driver is to contribute to the work community. You will often find Pragmatists on party committees or deeply engaged in planning social events, doing random acts of kindness or bringing cake to work to add to the overall happiness at work. Pragmatists also insist on compliance with rules and standards and they often hang up notes in an effort to enforce rules and regulations at work. Because Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts have a somewhat greater need for autonomy at work, they often perceive of Pragmatists as sticklers for detail and procedural policemen. However, Pragmatists ensure efficiency, productivity and stability and without them, chaos of cosmic proportions would ensue.

PAY CHECK WORKERS - A DEMOTIVATIONAL ARCHETYPE

The four archetypes all represent different primary drivers and motivational profiles. Primary kicks generate the strongest feelings of motivation and meaning. As such, primary drivers drive fun, interesting and meaningful tasks, but they are also the source of perseverance when work is boring, uninspiring and cumbersome.

If a person does not get enough primary kicks, the consequence will be serious demotivation and a devastating loss of meaning along with so-called frustration regression, which ultimately can lead to Pay Check Worker-behavior. The Pay Check Worker is not an archetype as such, but a behavioral category that describes the behavior exhibited by demotivated employees. Any of the four archetypes can regress to behaving like Pay Check Workers as a result of demotivation.

PRIMA DONNAS	INTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS	EXTROVERTED PERFORMANCE ADDICTS	PRAGMATISTS
Work is considered:	Work is considered:	Work is considered:	Work is considered:
A higher purpose	A challenge	A competition	Work
Primary driver:	Primary driver:	Primary driver:	Primary driver:
Serving a higher purpose	Outdoing oneself	Outperforming others	Doing good work



PAY CHECK WORKERS
Work is considered:
A punishment
Primary driver:
Maximizing contribution-reward balance

Frustration regression is an - often unconscious - compensation strategy. When the primary kick is absent for a longer period of time, people end up feeling a loss of motivation and meaning as their inner flame is extinguished. This leads to a feeling of being treated unfairly. The first phase of frustration regression usually involves visible dissatisfaction, loud complaints, rolling eyes, sulking, confrontational behavior etc. This is followed by a negotiation phase when employees try to compensate for the perceived loss of motivation by requesting a bonus or fringe benefits of little or no importance. Third phase involves a period of resignation, characterized by withdrawal, possibly increased absenteeism, significantly less contribution and apathy and maybe even depression.

Eventually, demotivated employees end up focusing excessively on maximizing their personal contribution-reward balance by contributing less while trying to increase their rewards, thus resembling the behavior of a “pay check worker”. One should bear in mind, though, that the Pay Check Worker is not an archetype as such. Pay Check Worker behavior is a symptom of serious demotivation and frustration regression and is often a symptom of an employee not being motivated according to his or her true archetype.

It is important to point out that people suffering from frustration regression can return to their true archetype and rekindle their motivation provided they get enough archetype kicks to “kick start” them, which is why demotivated people should be treated as the archetype from which they have regressed rather than being treated as the Pay Check Worker that they have regressed to.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?



Go to **www.hellehein.com** (international website)
or **www.hellehein.dk** (Danish website).

Or contact me at **+45 24 25 51 36** or
helle.hein@mail.dk

