

Jung's 6 rules for e-commerce design

(2026)

Kate Kolody

The Jung Method for E-commerce: The Path to Purchase

Jung didn't write about interfaces, but he offered several constructs for how the psyche builds meaning, reacts to uncertainty, defends itself, and makes choices. These constructs can be honestly translated into UX as principles of decision-making, trust, and reducing cognitive load.

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01

The psyche works
through patterns, not
“pure logic.”

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For Jung, the key point is that consciousness relies on ready-made schemas (complexes/ archetypal patterns) and quickly assigns what's happening a "type." In UX this means: the user doesn't analyze a store "from scratch." In 1–3 seconds they determine: is this legitimate or not, premium or mass, simple or complex, safe or risky.

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01

Practice

the first screen and the visual language must instantly communicate the “type of world” and the rules of the game. If the language is contradictory (premium visuals + cheap pressure patterns), the psyche reads the mismatch and triggers mistrust.

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01

02

Symbolic function:
meaning is born not from
facts, but from what
facts "mean."

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Jung believed that symbols and associations connect the conscious and the unconscious, helping the psyche orient itself. In an interface, symbols are not “icons,” but the entire layer of nonverbal signals: typography, density, rhythm, photo language, materiality, tone of copy, micro-interactions.

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02

Practice

design must be semantically coherent. If you promise "control and clarity," the interface cannot be noisy and overloaded. If you promise "curation," the catalog must guide, not drop the user into endless choice.

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02

03

Anxiety and defense:
under uncertainty the
psyche defends itself,
not "thinks."

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In Jung, defenses and complexes activate when a person enters an emotionally charged zone (shame, fear of making a mistake, fear of loss, suspicion of manipulation). In e-commerce this directly shows up as friction and drop-off.

Practice

- Remove “price uncertainty”: shipping/taxes/returns must not be a surprise.
- Remove “outcome uncertainty”: sizing, compatibility, effect, what exactly is inside the box.
- Remove “trust uncertainty”: who you are, how to contact you, real reviews, proper policies.

These are not “best practices.” This is an antidote to triggering defensive mode.

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04

Archetypes as cognitive
models of role, not as a
“brand game.”

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For Jung, an archetype is a recurring form of experience. In modern translation: it's a way to quickly understand "how things are done here" and "what role is being offered to me."

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04

Practice

An archetype is useful not as “we’re the Lover,” but as a tool for aligning decisions across the entire journey:

- If the user’s role = “rational expert” (Sage), you provide comparisons, sources, cause-and-effect logic, specifications.
- If the role = “a person who needs care and safety” (Caregiver), you provide simple steps, guarantees, support, minimal choice.
- If the role = “aesthetic/curatorial taste” (Ruler/Creator), you provide selection, restraint, quiet, no discount hysteria.

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04

Practice*

*Key point: the role must be the same on the homepage, PDP, cart, checkout. Otherwise the psyche catches you "switching shoes" and stops trusting you.

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04

05

Persona (mask) and the
Self (identity): people
buy as confirmation of
"who I am."

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Jung distinguished a social mask from a deeper identity. In e-commerce this explains why some stores sell through functionality, while others sell through the user's self-description ("this is me").

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05

Practice

on the PDP and in discovery you need a layer of "identity markers," but without pomp: who it's for, in what life scenario, what style of choosing you support, what trade-offs you remove. This should not be slogans, but structure: "if X matters to you — choose Y, because Z."

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06

Individuation as
designing a “path” that
reduces the internal
conflict of choice.

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Jung believed the psyche strives for wholeness and meaning. In purchases the conflict is often: "I want it" vs "I can't / I'm scared / I'm not sure." Good UX makes the choice less conflictual because it provides a clear frame and an explainable path.

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06

Practice

guided selling (recommendations, a quiz, “find your option”) works not by magic, but because it reduces responsibility for a wrong choice and returns a sense of correctness (“I understand why this is right”).

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07

A very practical Jungian
checklist for CJM

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At each step (landing → browse →
PDP → cart → checkout → post-
purchase) capture 4 things:

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07

A very practical Jungian checklist for CJM

- What the user must UNDERSTAND (meaning).
- What they must FEEL (state: control/confidence/calm).
- What can TRIGGER DEFENSE (shame, suspicion, overload, risk).
- Which element removes it (transparency, choice structure, proof, predictability, support).

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Kate Kolody

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Thank you for reading

If this UX and e-commerce approach resonates with you, follow me for more. I regularly share breakdowns, frameworks, and practical templates on how design shapes decisions, trust, and conversion.

(Website) katekolody.com

(LinkedIn) [Kate Kolody](#)

