

New Havas 2023 Global Meaningful Brands™ report

Welcome to the “Me-economy”

Where new cultural and societal forces are changing what it means to be meaningful.



Introduction



2023

marks an important turning point for **two** fundamentals of brand culture.

The world is at once 15 years on from the Global Economic Crisis - an event that shook a generation and one that led to a revolution of Big Tech, disruptive brands, radical consumer centricity, on-demand commerce, and more.

We're also 15 years on from the launch of B-Corp - then a revelatory concept, that set in motion the idea that businesses could, and should, work for good. The latter is now a globally recognized pillar of being a 21st-century brand. And has created a set of robust principles that are relevant today.

Where do we go from here?

The fundamentals established in the last 15 years are still vital for brands. Being good for the planet and for society is perhaps more important than ever. And more expected than ever, as we saw from this study.

But, as people's lives become more challenging and uncertain, we're also seeing a re-personalization of brand purpose. One in which people's day-to-day lives are back in focus. And one in which brands are expected to help make daily life just better... from making every day luxuries affordable; to making tasks simpler, and easier; to making well-being universally accessible.

Even when it comes to helping the environment and society, the focus has turned personal. 2023 Meaningful Brands™ elevate and empower their audiences to be activists, versus acting as the hero themselves. And they let their audiences decide how to invest funds in important work. In other words, purpose just got personal.

72%

of people in our 2023 Meaningful Brands™ global study said that collective equity - being good for the planet and society was important.

BUT...

71%

now also believe brands should be improving their personal health and well-being.



We are now entering a phase where purpose must evolve to also recognize that people should be at the heart of what brands care about most. Brands now must focus much more on addressing their customers' personal needs.

This study shows that there is a new set of demands that people are now placing on brands - and they are rewarding those who deliver."

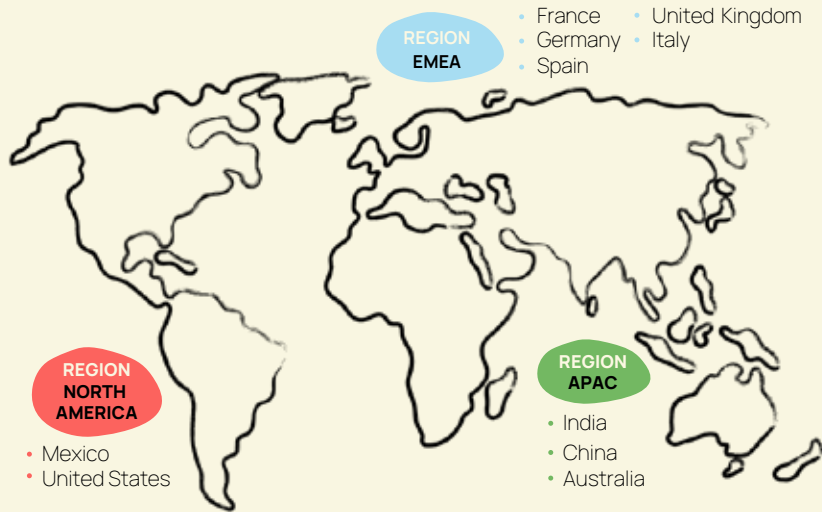
- **Seema Patel**

Managing Director Global Intelligence, Havas Media Group

About Meaningful Brands™

Havas has measured Meaningful Brands™ annually since 2009. Now, nearly 15 years into this landmark proprietary study, our Meaningful Brands™ study continues to be a vital sense check about people's aspirations, guardrails and expectations of brands.

The methodology examines a brand's impact and equity based on consumers' perceptions and expectations across three key pillars – its personal, functional, and collective benefits (listed across 40+ dimensions and attributes). The most Meaningful Brands™ are the ones performing well on all three metrics. In recent years, we've seen people increasingly focused on brands' expanding societal and environmental roles, and a desire to build community.



91.000+ People surveyed

1300+ Brands

10 Markets

42 Categories

In time, as we saw with 2021's "Age of Cynicism" report, we've seen the backlash to them doing so with too much aggrandizement and self-interest. We're now emerging into a more mature purpose economy where acts of good for society and planet, that were previously radical, are now expected.

The role of Meaningful Brands™ is to explore these shifts. It's to examine what brands are having outside resonance in people's lives, but crucially identify what sets these winning brands apart from the rest. By doing so, Havas continues to evolve the playbook of how brands can be meaningful in people's lives.

Meaningful Brands™ at their best win people's loyalty; they occupy a bigger space in culture; and they also set themselves up for long-term growth.

They combine purpose with customer centricity to not just grow, but "grow well," giving back to the people and the planet. In many ways, the expectations of brands have never been higher. But we at Havas think that is a good thing.

It's also an era where people are also separating what they expect from businesses, and how they want brands to behave. They still expect businesses to play a larger societal role in supporting people and the planet. But, especially as life gets more challenging and uncertain, they are now looking to brands to play a more personal role, supporting their functional and emotional needs that impact their own lives.



People are acutely aware that they are living in the midst of global crises affecting nearly every aspect of their lives – environmental, economic, political, societal, and health crises. All are carrying a huge threat to our ability to survive and thrive. As a consequence, people are having to adapt and change, and with that, what they require from brands is changing too... **Welcome to the Me-economy.**"

– Mark Sinnock,

Global Chief Strategy, Data & Innovation Officer,
Havas Group

Top rated Meaningful Brands™
are not just good for the world, but also have stronger bottom lines. They outperform the stock market by

222% with an annual average rate of **+7.52pts** since 2013

New Meaningful Brands™ Global report

How the “Age of Cynicism” gave rise to the “Me-economy”

No matter where you look, it's clear that people feel that life is becoming far more challenging. The world is an uncertain place in lots of major macro ways. But at personal level, it has also become harder for people in their everyday lives. Purpose for brands in this atmosphere is expanding from wider help-the-world challenges to more personal endeavors: helping with the environment, yes, but also making quality of life more affordable.

Purpose expectations shift to two priorities

Planet

#1

The **climate crisis** is now acknowledged globally as the most important issue we face

68%

of people think the **world is going in the wrong direction**, at a global level

3/4

people think we are living in an **environmental crisis**, at a global level



Personal

BUT people are also reporting feeling the effects of crisis within their day-to-day lives.

1 in 3

report being **personally affected by at least one crisis**, on an everyday level

1 in 2

of those personally affected by crisis feel it **impacts them in a multitude of ways**

Interestingly, or more crucially,

Economic Crisis on a personal level is being ranked as the #1 concern

for people we spoke to, above health crisis; societal crisis; environmental crisis; and political crisis. Above everything.

1 in 3

agree that brands should **satisfy their individual needs first** before taking a wider role in society

Peak Purpose

As we enter an era - 15 years in - to the notion of purpose driven brands, Havas is also seeing a fatigue about claims. This isn't affecting consumers' expectations, which are higher than ever. But it is making them more critical.



72%

are tired of brands pretending they want to help society when they just want to make money

77%

think companies / brands should be transparent about their commitments and promises...

but... 33%

think they actually are.

What does it mean to be meaningful in 2023?

Welcome to the “Me-economy,” where purpose gets personal

We’re moving into an era where the world’s biggest problems are being felt on a much more individual level. Meanwhile, as life gets more challenging, people are looking to brands to enhance their lives in both practical and emotional ways.

Today’s Meaningful Brands™ help planet and people - while also enhancing the everyday.

Overall, the
**Top 2023
Meaningful
Brands™ deliver
on the “me”**
as well as the wider
world issues

71%

of people believe that companies and brands should be doing more to improve and support my health and well-being



Today’s most Meaningful Brands™ perform

+49%

better on delivering personal benefits compared to the average brand



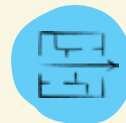
“Help me express myself as an individual”



“Help me feel energized and alive”



“Give me a sense of happiness”



“Help me simplify my life”



“Help me save time and money”

8 ways for Meaningful Brands™ to grow in 2023

1. Make mental and physical wellness universal

With personal becoming more personal, and health - physical and emotional - becoming a key priority overall. 2023 Meaningful Brands™ focus not only on enhancing wellness, but making it available to all.

The Most Meaningful Brands™ perform better in inspiring me to **take a healthier approach to life**

+66%

71% of people feel that companies/ brands should be doing more to **improve and support people’s health and well-being**

7 out of 10 people declare making a real effort to be **physically and mentally healthy**

2. Enable people to do and to feel more


People’s expectations of brands are expanding. More and more, they’re looking to brands to enhance everyday life with joy and personal service.

As this progresses, brands are being looked to - especially in their content and brand activations - be service providers, advisors, gurus, and more.



In our Personal attributes index:

 **111** Good Feeling

 **108** Connecting with others

are some of the key top performing attributes.

The Most Meaningful Brands™ perform better in providing that **creative spark**:

+62% Inspires me with **new ideas and possibilities**

+65% Makes me feel more **confident**

3. Respect and celebrate difference

The expectations and parameters of inclusion generally are becoming more hyperindividual by the second. What started with race and gender has expanded to include neurodiversity, class diversity, and more. And they extend from visibility in marketing to widening opportunity for under-represented groups. Brands in the “Me-economy” are expected to celebrate and empower diversity in product, service, imaging, content, experiences, and beyond.

3 out of 4 of respondents agree it is important that we **coexist harmoniously with people different from us**

74% feel it is important for them to **express their true thoughts and opinions**



4. Let the joy shine through

More brands, through product, messaging or activation are trying to inspire optimism, joy and escapism to people as they grapple with uncertain times.

“Helps me feel energized and alive” is the

#2

attribute across all pillars that contributes to our Quality of Life.

54%

of people say they are optimistic about the future.

“

People desperately want some mechanism for escape, and to treat themselves in some way, shape or form. Contrary to popular belief that people turn away from indulgence in an economic downturn, it is in fact proving to be important in helping people take care of and maintain a sense of self.”

– Seema Patel
Managing Director
Global Intelligence,
Havas Media Group



5. Make it all super seamless for ME

As purpose turns more personal, sometimes a worthy cause is simply being great – removing barriers from people’s lives.

In this hypertactical era, sometimes just being functional trumps all brand aspects. Working, understanding my needs and being reliable, is not just a goal, but the win.

“Helps me simplify my life” is the **#1** attribute across all pillars to contribute to people’s Quality of Life.

Meaningful Brands™ perform

+42%

better on **Customer Experience** attributes like:



Good purchase experience



Exclusive experience and individualization



Respect of data privacy

“

If you look to this year’s Index of the most Meaningful Brands™, a common theme is one of hyper functionality, utility and consumer centricity.”

– Mark Sinnock,
Global Chief Strategy, Data & Innovation Officer,
Havas Group



6. Unlock accessibility - affordability is the new inclusion

In the Havas Meaningful Brand™ study, good value and price consistency were ranked as key attributes among 2023 audiences. Offering products and services at accessible levels is becoming a purpose of its own.

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **better than average** brands on Value attributes:

+45%

on offering good value for my money

+45%

on offering range of products that fits my needs

“

Brands and retailers are working harder than ever to create products that are high quality, and bring joy, but are also accessible to everyone.”

– Mark Sinnock,
Global Chief Strategy, Data & Innovation Officer,
Havas Group



7. Become a platform - enable people to make purpose personal

The role of a brand when it comes to purpose is increasingly not to be the celebrity or the savior, but the facilitator. More people want to lead the change when it comes to activism and have brands help them shine. And they are changing their behaviors already to affect social change.



6 out of 10 respondents are **being the change they want to see in the world**

3 out of 5 are prepared to **make personal sacrifices to save the planet and take a stand on political issues** that are important to them

62% are starting to **change their behavior** to adapt to the environmental pressures we are facing

8. Do good without the drama

Transparency continues to be a priority – especially about claims. Amid this, brands are taking a new approach where purpose driven activities are positioned with honesty, humility, and sometimes even humor.

Meaningful Brands™ perform

+49%

better on **being transparent and honest in their activities and communications** than the average brand.

“

New purpose messaging from brands has an increasing sense of levity inline with what we see with the Meaningful Brands™ data.

People expect purpose driven behaviors from brands but are increasingly cynical and also see this - sustainable goals, ethical behavior - as just how 21st-century brands should operate. Innovative brands are speaking about purpose with a humble or humorous tone of voice.”

– **Mark Sinnock,**

Global Chief Strategy, Data & Innovation Officer, Havas Group





About Havas

Founded in 1835 in Paris, Havas is one of the world's largest global communications networks with more than 22,000 people in more than 100 countries sharing one single mission: to make a meaningful difference to brands, businesses, and people.

Havas has developed a fully integrated model through its 70+ Havas Villages around the world covering all communication activities. The teams of the three business units Creative, Media, and Health & You work together with agility and in perfect synergy to offer tailor-made and innovative solutions to clients and support them in their transformation.

Havas is committed to building a diverse culture where everybody feels they belong, can be themselves and thrive. Havas integrated into Vivendi a global leader in media, entertainment, and communications in December 2017. Further information about Havas is available at www.havasgroup.com.

Further information about our Meaningful Brands™ study is available at www.meaningful-brands.com.

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