

# HAVAS

# Meaningful

# Brands™

**(Updated) Global report**

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

Jan. 2024



# Introduction

**This year**  
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 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, which set in motion the idea that businesses could, and should, work for good. The latter is now a globally recognized pillar of being a twenty-first-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 everyday 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, rather than acting as heroes themselves. And they let their audiences decide how to invest funds in important work. In other words, purpose just got personal.

74%

of consumers believe brands should be improving their personal health and well-being

**AND....**

73%

of consumers believe brands must act now for the good of society and the planet – communication is not enough



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."

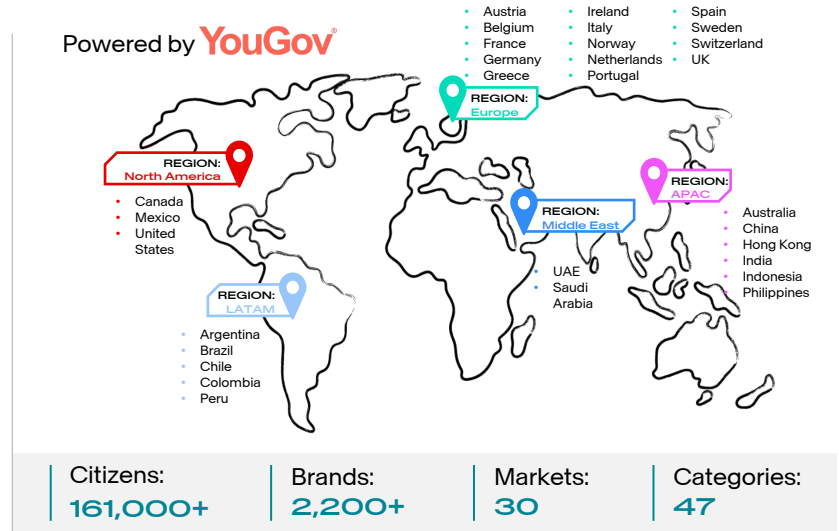
— Seema Patel

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.



**1 FUNCTIONAL**  
Rational benefits focused on product functionality, customer service, interactivity, and technology

**2 PERSONAL**  
Messaging and behaviors that connect on an individual basis and serve a specific personal need, want or feel

**3 COLLECTIVE**  
Company initiatives, actions, and impact that respond and connect at social and cultural levels

In recent years, we've seen people increasingly focused on brands' expanding societal and environmental roles and a desire to build community. 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 the planet that were previously radical are now expected.

The role of Meaningful Brands™ is to explore these shifts. It's to examine which brands are having outside resonance in people's lives, but also crucially, to 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 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, which impact their day-to-day lives.

**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

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. All are carrying a huge threat to our ability to survive and thrive. People have 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



# 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-level ways. But at a personal level, it has also become harder for people in their everyday lives. The 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 a higher 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.

#### — GLOBALLY —

**70%**  
of people think the world is going in the wrong direction



**78%**  
of people think we are living in an **environmental crisis**

### PERSONAL

People are feeling the effects of crises in their daily lives

#### — PERSONALLY —

**#1** We are living in an **economic crisis**, at a personal level

**#2** Health crisis

**#3** Societal crisis

**#4** Environmental crisis

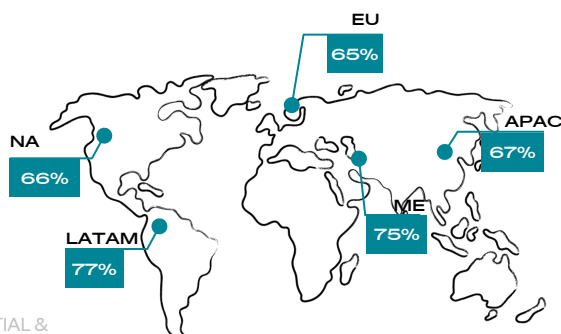
**#5** Political crisis

## Personal action to drive positive change

As we enter a new age of purpose-driven brands, the study shows that people are generally satisfied and optimistic about the future.

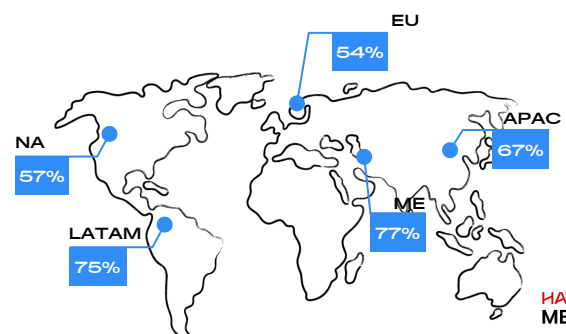
**69%** feel satisfied with life

72% Boomers    68% Gen X  
70% Millennial    66% Gen Z



**63%** feel optimistic about the future

59% Boomers    61% Gen X  
66% Millennial    63% Gen Z



# Welcome to the "Me-economy"

- where purpose gets more 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.

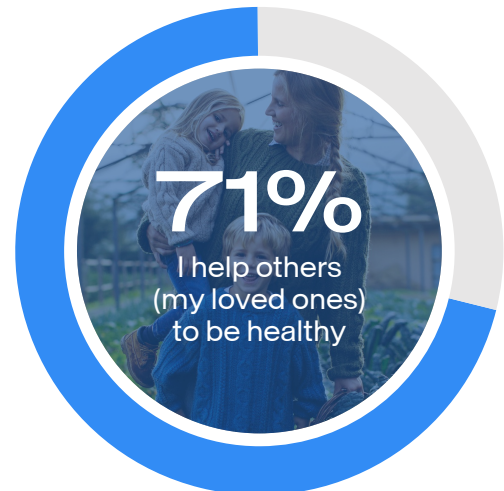
Today's people firmly believe that MB™ should help the planet and people; they have the power to make a positive and meaningful difference to their lives.

People are taking things into their own hands and aren't waiting for others to change the world. **Instead, they are taking personal action to affect change...**

## — FOR THEMSELVES —



## — FOR OTHERS —



...and consider that brands and companies should use their power to influence or affect more positive change.

Companies / Brands

Ranked  
**#2**

most important stakeholder in solving **economic challenges** (after governments/politicians)



And people are willing and ready to 'cancel' brands that aren't demonstrating positive action

**59%**

“ I will **stop buying** from companies that **don't respect the planet or society**”

**53%**

“ I will **stop buying** from brands if they **don't respect me for who I am**”

**45%**

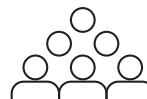
“ I will **stop buying** products from brands that do not have the same **views and values** as me”

Now more than ever, companies and brands are expected to show stronger commitments to their customers.

This attitude is more prevalent in older generations, who may be requiring more support from brands in these trying times.

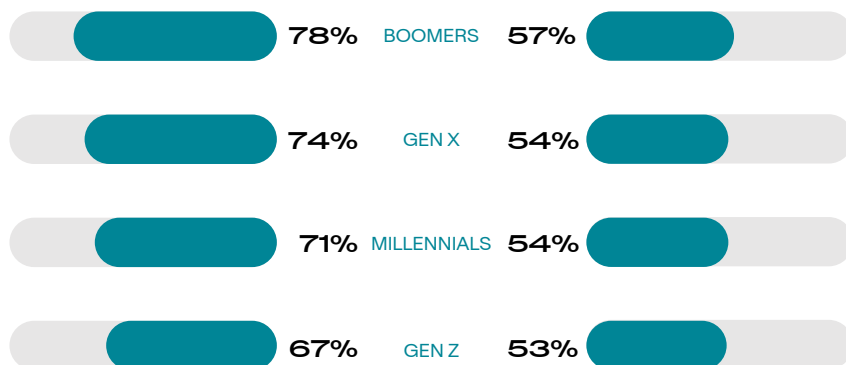
**73%**

“ Companies should show more humanity and generosity when times are tough



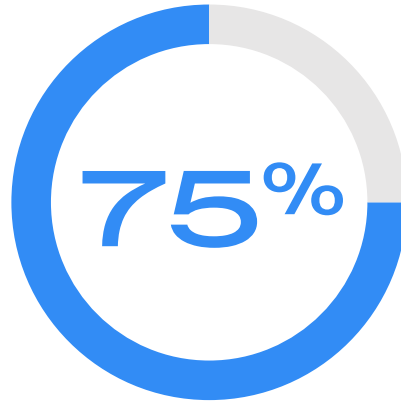
**54%**

“ Companies should focus less on selling products/services and more on supporting their customers



# Unfortunately, most brands are just not measuring up

People would *not* care if



of brands *disappeared*

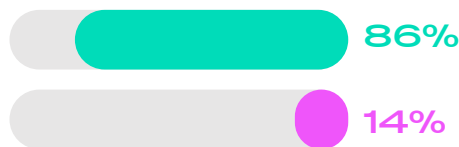
Yet, some brands have unlocked how to be meaningful – and are significantly *outperforming the market on all measures*

## The most Meaningful Brands™ generate significantly higher KPIs:

Overall impressions



Advocacy



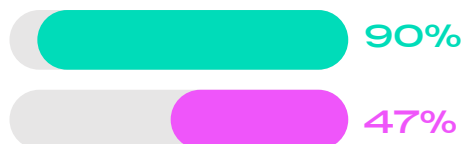
Purchase intent (non-clients)



Premium price



Repurchase intent (clients)



### Brand KPIs

- High MB™ Performance
- Low MB™ Performance

# Welcome to the "Me-conomy," where a whole new set of benefits make brands **more meaningful**

Today's most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+57% better** on delivering **personal** benefits, compared to the average brand.

## Be My Best Self

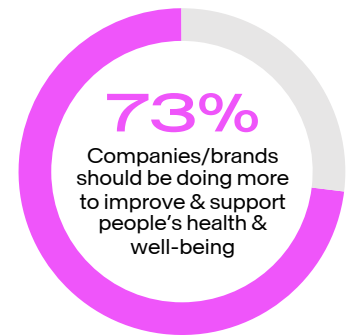
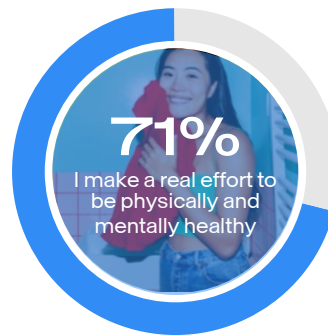
### 01. Support my health & wellness

Health and wellness have become central concerns for all, particularly for Boomers and Gen Xers who want to maintain their health in their later years.

Brands should be looking for ways to better democratize health and wellness benefits and make healthy living more attainable for all those who seek it.

*"Inspires me to take a healthier approach to life"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+58%** better than average brands



	GEN Z	MILLENNIAL	GEN X	BOOMERS
Gives me a sense of happiness	111	108	109	107
Gives me a sense of peace of mind	110	108	108	107
Helps me feel energized & alive	112	111	113	116
Helps me feel good about myself	111	109	111	112

*"I put time aside just for me, to relax and recharge"*

**67%** ALL vs. **74%** BOOMERS

Note: Dimensions/attributes sorted by Quality of Life index across all pillars.

### 02.

#### Help me feel resilient & happy

People are seeking an uplift in these uncertain times, and so more brands should try to help deliver these vital emotional benefits.

While Gen Zs seek greater happiness and peace, Boomers want to feel energized and alive.

### 03.

#### Add color to my life

People want more from brands than just selling products.

They want to be inspired by brands and are seeking more meaningful experiences in their daily lives.

*"Offers exclusive experiences"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+41%** better than average brands

*"Inspires me with new ideas and possibilities"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+57%** better than average brands





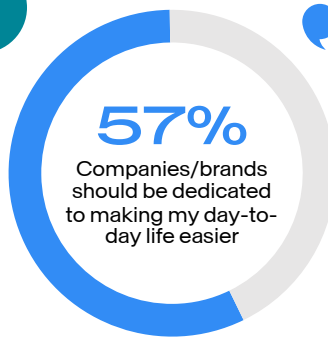
# Facilitate My Life

## 04.

### Make it all super-seamless

Brands must focus on addressing the more practical needs of their customers lives, and topping the list is making consumers' lives simpler, easier and more manageable.

Note: Average score of Most Meaningful Brands™ (top 10% performing brands on MB™ Index) performance compared against overall average performance on Data Privacy, Exclusive Exp., Purchase Experience, Respect, Digital Experience, In-store Experience attributes.



“Helps me simplify my life”

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform

**+42%**

better than average brands

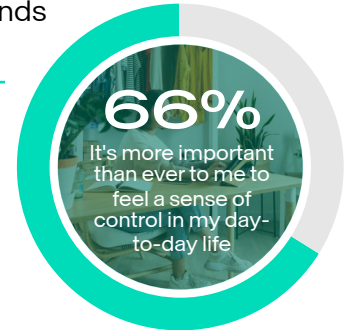
**#1**  
attribute contributing to people's quality of life

### GIVE ME A SENSE OF CONTROL

“Helps me feel more in control of my day-to-day life”

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform

**+58%** better than average brands



“Offers good value for money”

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform

**+42%**

better than average brands

## 05.

### Fit my needs and my budget

People need product/brand choices that are going to be right for them, particularly in this cost-of-living crisis.

“Offers a range of products that fit my needs”

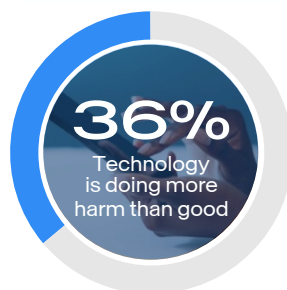
Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+43%** better than average brands

## 06.

### Create a safety net

People want and need to feel safe and secure online, but the reality is that many don't.

### YOUNGER NEEDS

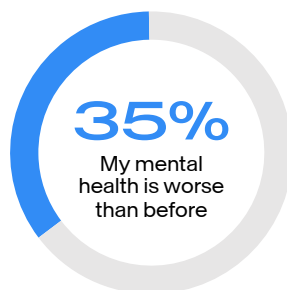


### OLDER NEEDS



“Respects my personal data”

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+35%** better than average brands



# Create a Platform for Good

*"I don't feel I can openly express my true self"*

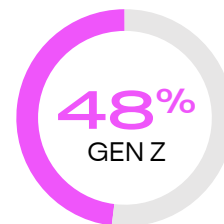
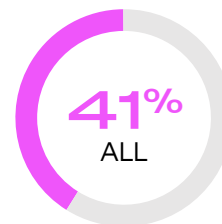
## 07.

### Acknowledge, respect & celebrate our differences

People seek brands and experiences that demonstrate an appreciation of their unique values and perspectives, and that allow them to express the greatest degree of individuality.

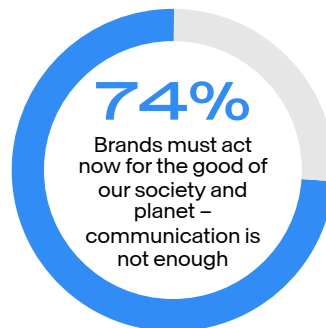
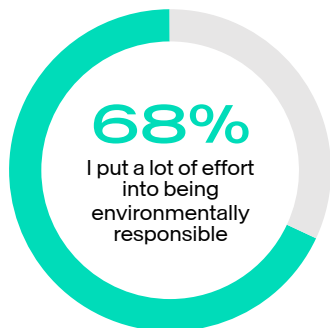
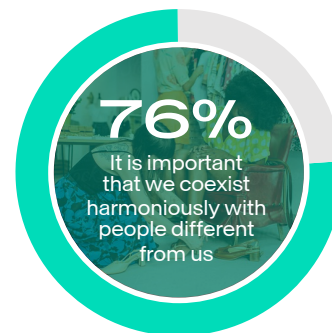
*"Helps me express myself as an individual"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+57%** better than average brands



*"Actively promotes and supports ED&I in society"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+41%** better than average brands



*"Invest in innovative, sustainable & ethical solutions"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+41%** better than average brands

## 08.

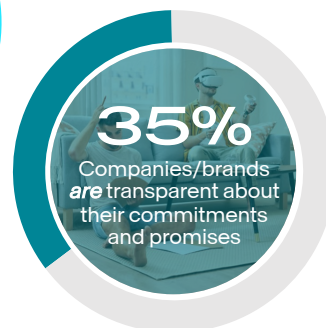
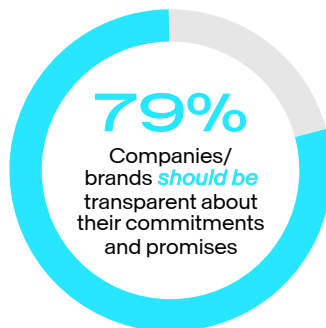
### Invest in our future

Consumers are conscientious of global issues and are not only taking proactive action, but also expect brands to take concrete action toward the betterment of the planet and people.

## 09.

### Walk the talk

Transparency and honesty continue to be high expectations. Brands that remain candid and straightforward will build trust and over time lead to a more meaningful long-term relationship.



*"Delivers what it promises/says"*

Most Meaningful Brands™ perform **+38%** better than average brands



# 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 innovative solutions to clients who support them in their positive transformation.

Havas is committed to building a diverse culture where everybody feels they belong and 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.havas.com](http://www.havas.com).

Further information about our Meaningful Brands™ study is available at [www.meaningful-brands.com](http://www.meaningful-brands.com).

## **NOTICE:**

### **Proprietary and Confidential**

All the content of this document (text, figures, lists, financial information, graphics, design, diagrams, as well as other graphic elements and/or audio and videos), whichever the format used (paper or electronic), is confidential and proprietary to Havas. This document includes ideas and information based on the experience, know-how and intellectual/creative effort of Havas. For these reasons, this material shall not be used, reproduced, copied, disclosed, transmitted, transformed, commercialized or communicated, in whole or in part, neither to third parties nor to the public, without the express and written consent of Havas.

© 2023 Havas. All rights reserved.

This presentation is not a contractual proposal and has no binding effects for any Havas company until a final and written contract is entered into between the parties.

## Contacts

**Charlotte Rambaud**

*Global Chief  
Communications Officer*

[charlotte.rambaud@havas.com](mailto:charlotte.rambaud@havas.com)

+33 6 64 67 66 27

**Kristin Calmes**

*Global Senior  
Communications Officer*

[kristin.calmes@havas.com](mailto:kristin.calmes@havas.com)

+33 1 57 77 77 13