

# Does your personal brand make a difference?



By [Donna Rachelson](#)

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According to people around the world surveyed in the Havas Media second annual Meaningful Brands Index, what makes people care about brands, increasingly, is whether those brands improve lives.

Umair Haque, the director of the Havas Media Labs and a blogger for Harvard Business Review says that the next global economy isn't just about stuff, it's about human lives. He believes that a failure for an organisation to matter in human terms is what leads people to mistrust companies instead of giving them their loyalty.

Personal brands are the same. Even if you build a personal brand that stands out from the crowd, if people feel like you don't stand for something important that makes a difference in this world, they won't trust you with their loyalty and love.

## Shifting focus from outputs to outcomes

In this age of capitalism and consumerism, there are hundreds and thousands of brands that represent good products and companies, but there are far fewer brands that make as much impact as they do profit. Brands that stand out today are those that improve lives and achieve meaningfulness, whether it's by reducing their environmental impact or by encouraging small business development through their procurement practices.

The same can be said for personal brands. It could be argued that Paris Hilton has a strong personal brand. And yet when you compare how she is perceived to how someone like Angelina Jolie is perceived, the gap is obvious. Angelina Jolie's personal brand has been strengthened by her humanitarian work with refugees, her decision to adopt children who needed families and her openness about her preventative mastectomy and quest to education women about breast cancer. She is seen as someone who stands for something important by many people, which is why her personal brand is so successful.

Haque's advice to companies who want to become more meaningful is to move away from focusing solely on outputs to focusing on outcomes. My advice to clients looking to develop their personal brands sustainably is the same: don't be so focused on pursuing your career goals that you forget about the people your life touches along your journey. Think about the legacy you will leave behind you. And if you don't really care, don't bother pretending you do. People can spot a fake, but they are attracted to personal brands that are genuine.

The personal brands that outlast others are those that leave a legacy. Take your passion and translate it into what you say and do, and how you treat others, as well as into the projects you choose to tackle.

## ABOUT DONNA RACHELSON

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