

# Human Purpose

An Interview with Donna Murphy, Global Chief Executive Officer, Havas Health & You

**EDITORS' NOTE** Donna Murphy joined the Havas network in 1987 and has devoted her career to its innovative health and wellness offering. Murphy and her team built Havas Health & You into the largest health and wellness communications network in the world. She now leads 4,500 employees around the world at more than 80 multidiscipline health and wellness focused marketing agencies in 70 countries.



Donna Murphy

Devoted to charitable endeavors, she is a member of the leadership council of Home Base, a Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital program. She is also a member of the Coalition for Healthcare Communication's executive committee and a board member of Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere). In recent years, Murphy has been recognized for her many achievements, both professionally and philanthropically. She was named a 2019 Visionary in the Top Women in Healthcare Awards, Advertising Person of the Year by Med Ad News, one of the 100 People Who Make Advertising Great by the 4A's, one of the Most Influential Women of the Year by The Irish Voice, and also earned the 2017 Irish America Business 100 Award. She was also ranked third on the Medical Marketing & Media (MM&M) and PRWeek Health Influencer 50 list, named to MM&M's Hall of Femme, and celebrated as Executive of the Year by the Arthritis Foundation. Additionally, under her leadership, Havas Health & You was named Agency/Network of the Year by MM&M and one of Ad Age's Best Places to Work in 2020, a recognition based on employee satisfaction and wellbeing. An alumna of Pace University, Murphy sits on its board of trustees.

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** Havas Health & You (HavasHealthandYou.com) unites Havas Life, Health4Brands (H4B), Havas Lynx, Havas Life PR and Havas Health Plus, all wholly-owned health and communications networks, with the consumer health businesses and practices of Havas Creative Group. Its customer-centric approach has the talent, tenacity and technology that health and wellness companies, brands and people need to thrive in today's world.

**Will you highlight the history and heritage of Havas Health & You?**

Havas Health & You started as a humble 40-person team in 1987 and has since grown into a massive force of talent and capabilities with a global network of 4,500 people. Numbers of new agencies launch each year under our umbrella, and our people are encouraged to think innovatively and creatively and to use their talents to meet unmet needs in the rapidly changing category that is health.

Much of our growth over the years can be accredited to the entrepreneurial culture we foster at HH&Y, and the consistent focus to remain on the cutting edge of the latest science and strategy to improve health outcomes. Our north star as we make decisions is what we call "human purpose" – how can we as a company improve quality of life for people around the world?

A few recent examples include the launches of Havas Health CX, our data-led customer experience network, Havas Health and Interscience (HH&I), a collaboration with Japan's largest medical agency, Havas ECS, the first of its kind endocannabinoid consultancy,

and Havas Mango, our digital experience creation studio. In all these instances we saw great opportunity to push the boundary and bolster our offering. As we move forward in 2021 within a new health landscape, we will continue to meet the needs of our evolving industry and act as leaders in the sector.

**How do you describe the Havas Health & You culture and how critical is culture to the strength and success of the organization?**

As I mentioned, our guiding principle at HH&Y is acting with human purpose, and this includes how we foster our culture. Our network's biggest strengths are those that come from fostering an environment that focuses on helping others live healthier and better lives and allowing our people to use innovation and creativity to do so. Our people come from all over the world with unique experiences, stories, personalities and skills, and they are each appreciated enormously. By instilling this unnegotiable value of respect and collaboration and fostering of the human spirit throughout our employees, we attract genuine people and create leaders who want to make a difference and act with a strong purpose to help people live healthier lives.

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**How has Havas Health & You adapted the way it works to address the challenges brought on by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the strength and resilience of your workforce during this unprecedented time?**

Firstly, my utmost sympathy goes out to all of those personally impacted by Covid-19. Throughout the pandemic, countless families dealt with illness, lost loved ones, and experienced profound financial loss. Supporting one another and our communities is my number one priority as we navigate and learn in these challenging times.

We, like most companies, learned without option what it meant to pivot. We shifted a global workforce of 4,500 people to work remotely, seemingly overnight, and we adapted our offerings to reflect a net new environment. Our partners were looking for solutions to problems they never anticipated, and we worked incredibly hard to meet and exceed their expectations and provide guidance and support. We discovered more abruptly than ever what it meant to change the tires while on a car that was moving at 100 MPH, and we did so rather successfully. I am constantly impressed by the people within the HH&Y network who stepped up and worked so hard to overcome these challenges and came out better on the other side. I believe that we'll remember this time as one that was tremendously difficult, but one which ultimately led to some undeniable value, an immense learning opportunity, and a testament to the power of the human spirit. I am deeply grateful to all of our people.

**What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?**

The key to effective leadership is hiring the right people with high-caliber morals and values, and a diverse set of talents and backgrounds. When you build a network of smart people that you trust, you are setting yourself up to manage in an environment where you can foster their ideas, support their endeavors, and overall encourage their growth as they work hard for a network they can rely on and be proud to be part of.

I aim to give my people all the guidance and resources they need for success while giving them the space and opportunity to take risks, act entrepreneurially, and grow professionally. Most importantly though, I believe immensely

in connected leadership. It is imperative to me to lead in a way that is grounded, human, and respectful, and in a way that prioritizes the well-being of my people. I work hard to make personal connections with every member of the HH&Y network because I sincerely appreciate them as hard-working members of our community and as individuals.

**Havas Health & You is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. How critical is it to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?**

The sole reason our network thrives is because it is built upon diverse global voices where individuals of differing backgrounds can collaborate. When opening increased levels of racial dialogue with our people, we learned a tremendous amount. Firstly, we are a work in progress and still have a lot to gain from listening to the voices in and outside our business. I deeply appreciate the bravery of the individuals who came forward to offer their perspectives and opinions. This is an ongoing process, but we've used these viewpoints to further encourage inclusivity and highlight the importance of diversity within Havas Health & You.

We've launched the HH&Y Diversity and Inclusion Council, which is made up of 25 senior employees, representing roughly 95 percent of agencies around the global organization. Havas Group's Commit to Change has been implemented as well, where we vow to improve on data transparency, increased industry access, breaking systems and evolving, education and ownership, accelerating careers, amplifying diverse voices, and compensation accountability. We've also committed to 3 percent Conference attendance at the WAATBP (where are all the black people) Conference and Career Fair sponsorship. We recognize the importance of mentorship and are forming staff resource groups for employees of color and those within the LGBTQ+ community to talk openly about their experiences. It is clear that diverse voices are not only important, but completely necessary for the success of any institution, and this will be an ongoing priority for us moving forward.

**Will you discuss Havas Health & You's focus on corporate responsibility and community engagement?**

Acting with humanity is a core value at HH&Y, and giving back to the community is a

pillar which we prioritize. As a member of the board of Project Hope, I have utilized our network to support in their endeavors as they work to provide health solutions to those in need all over the globe. Also, being on the Leadership Counsel for the Home Base Veteran and Family Care Foundation, I offer our talents to activate on their goals to provide health for U.S. veterans, service members, and their families.

Our community outreach is often propelled by our people who are given the resources needed to support their passion points in helping others. Havas Health & You has recently worked to support the following groups: Alzheimer's Society, Breast Cancer Care, American Red Cross, Voluntary Service – Department of Veterans Affairs, Hoodies, Center for Great Expectations, Centre Point, British Heart Foundation, United for Global Mental Health, Movember Foundation, Breast Cancer Now, The Christie, and Save the Children, to name a few.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?**

Health as a category is very dynamic and constantly changing. Over my years in the industry, I have seen shifts in leadership styles, the way we work, consumer beliefs, and beyond. I am confident that women, like the industry itself, will remain flexible and nimble in their approaches to leading in this nuanced category, and find great success as it continues to grow and develop. Within my own network, I am conscious of prioritizing female advancement and leadership, acting as a mentor where I can, and working to act as a role model to women in all phases of their careers. I have personally seen great gains in this area over the years and appreciate the progress that has been achieved so far. I look forward to the advances yet to come as this important dialogue continues.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in a career in health?**

Health is relevant to everyone in the world. Every single person has a unique and deeply personal health story, and everyone can relate to wanting to live a healthier life. If a young person is interested in pursuing health as a career, I can strongly encourage them to do so if they are looking for work that is meaningful. I feel grateful every day that I am able to work in a category that makes an impact and makes a valuable difference in the way people feel and live. ●