



2022
WORD
OF THE
YEAR

Since 2020, Red Havas has named a global word of the year (WOTY). We let the selection of this word be informed by quantitative input (via a Havas Group employee survey) and qualitative input (from a mix of global communications pros and thought leaders across the industry). Ultimately, it's identified by an internal team at the agency that considers all words received, not only numerically but thematically.

Our WOTY captures the zeitgeist in the briefest of terms. We advertise it as being a "quick and easy" survey, but we concede it's no small ask.

What we ask: "How would you summarize the year that just passed in a single word?"

What we understand: This is more than a meandering through the modern lexicon. Coming up with an answer to this question requires introspection, retrospection and the ability to examine the collective experience.

To everyone who put forth a WOTY, we send you our gratitude.

-Red Havas

It was another year of interesting and wide-ranging WOTY submissions. We found change- and growth-related terms to be especially popular, along the lines of growth, flexibility, agility/ agile, re-adapt, reconfigure, fluid, flow and transition. This was the category with the most submissions.

Many submissions were words that describe how we feel, think and act; within this category, the most dominant words were resilience/resilient, persevere/ perseverance, followed up by enduring, grit, tenacious, kind/ kindness, grace and empathy.

Within the change and growth category, positive change dominated. Forward, progress, momentum, relaunch, reacclimate, restart, re-emerge, reclaim, reconfigure and return all made appearances. In fact so many submissions began with re that we briefly thought of making the prefix itself our WOTY. Of course, we also received a

lion's share of words connoting the negative side of change — chaos, unrest, uncivilized, fragile and disruptive.

Within the change and growth category we also found words relating to the scale of change — transformative, quantum leap, epoch, metamorphic.

Hybrid was the single most popular word, but that's not the word we chose.

When reviewing the submissions that poured in from every corner of the world, two categories of words stood out to us. One stream was around words related to flexibility, fluidity, adaptability, agility, comeback and change. The second was around our feelings, behaviors and attributes as people. The category with the most "votes" were resilient/ resiliency, grit, enduring, tenacious and persevere/ perseverance — all of which are aspects of resiliency.



Our word of the year:

RESILIENCE

Merriam-Webster says it's "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change." **Cambridge Dictionary** explains that it's "the ability to be happy, successful, etc. again after something difficult or bad has happened." The **American Psychological Association** says it's "the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands."

We say it's a beautiful word with a backbone. To us, resilience is not a matter of getting walloped by a difficult circumstance, seeing stars for a moment and then standing back up, ready to stagger blindly into the next

challenge. Rather, it's getting walloped by a difficult situation and gleaning wisdom from it before getting back up with conviction and confidence.

Laura Bernabeu Cánovas, global brand manager for Laboratorios Ordesa, chose resilience as her WOTY because "the pandemic has changed the way we work, study and live." As she says, "2022 has been a road to resilience and recovery."

And João Brito, group brand manager for Mantequerías Arias, selected it because 2022 was "a year that has tested us again, this time not in terms of health but economically and in terms of the instability caused by everything that continues to happen."

In the words of some of our other survey respondents who submitted “resilience” as their word of the year:

“We’ve been in a pandemic for two-and-a-half years. Our first year was surreally shocking, the second languishing, as dubbed by the New York Times. This year we recognized our resilience — as human beings, as a community, a country and a global society. We’re bruised and scarred, but resilient.”

“I’ve never fallen and had to get back up more times than I did in 2022. In 2023, we keep going!”

“The world has often seemed to crumble around us this year (and the last several years), but we continue to push and grow nonetheless.”

“No matter how tough and challenging some times can be, one should always believe in the human capability to adapt and open new paths in life.”

“Although the last two-and-a-half years have obviously been incredibly challenging in so many ways, there were countless examples of people helping people, enacting change and thriving, despite all odds.”

“It is my word of the year because during 2022 there have been many changes. We started the year recovering the first face-to-face events after COVID, with the uncertainty of how they would turn out. We continued to deal with internal client changes that affected budgets and different situations that have taught us to adapt and keep working on our resilience.”

“There is a lot of doom and gloom in the world and in people’s individual lives, but our resilience to get up and try again will serve us well. It’s not how we fall; it’s how we bounce.”

Words of the year from around the world

- ▶ Merriam-Webster's 2022 word of the year is **gaslighting**. "It's a word that has risen so quickly in the English language, and especially in the last four years, that it actually came as a surprise to me and to many of us," said Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large.
- ▶ Oxford English Dictionary's shortlist includes **metaverse**, **#IStandWith**, and **goblin mode**. #IStandWith recognizes the activism and division that's characterized this year while goblin mode is "another relatively new concept: the idea of rejecting societal expectations put upon us, in favor of doing whatever one wants to," according to the dictionary.
- ▶ Australia National University's word of the year is **teal**, an adjective that means "of or relating to an independent political candidate or politician who advocates for greater integrity in parliament and more action on addressing harmful climate change."
- ▶ The Cambridge Dictionary revealed its word of the year for 2022 as **homer**. Editors credited disgruntled Wordle players whose winning streak was ended by the unfamiliar American English term.
- ▶ As nations across the globe face a plethora of ongoing crises, the Collins English Dictionary revealed its 2022 word of the year to be **permacrisis**, a term to describe such events.
- ▶ Deutsche Welle (DW)'s German Youth Word of the Year 2022 is **smash**. While in English the verb refers to the act of violently breaking something to pieces, amongst German youth the verb smashen roughly means "starting something with someone," "picking someone up" or "having sex with someone."

What is your word of the year?

A selection of replies from thought leaders around the world ...

ACCELERATION

Increase in the rate or speed; capacity to gain speed within a short time.

"We live in very hard times, complicated by wars, global pandemics, economic uncertainty, but in reality, for something new to emerge, a crisis is always needed. And all that is happening has forced us to step on an accelerator pedal that is going to bring evolution within a storm that we do not know how long it will last. All these changes had to take place over time and this whole crisis has done nothing but accelerate the use of renewable energies, teleworking, better working conditions, women's rights, etc. Everything that had to happen has happened with much more speed. 2022 has accelerated the changes."

Cristina Isidoro | PR Manager | Huawei CBG Spain

ADAPTABILITY

The quality of being able to adjust to new conditions.

"Adaptability – we now live in a constant state of adaptability. The need to adapt and adjust the way we work, the way we live, the way we think and educate ourselves, and frankly our expectations. From equality and climate change, to dealing with war and conflict, from navigating misinformation and disinformation, to adapting our approach to business and politics. The art of adaptation is a craft we are all learning to master. The world needs a rethink and we need to be open to modifying every part of our lives, communities and society to improve and make it a better place."

James Wright | Global CEO, Red Havas Group | Global Chair, Havas PR Global Collective

BALANCE

A condition in which different elements are equal or in the correct proportions; harmony of design and proportion; stability of one's mind or feelings.

"Balance because we have returned to normality and although we had high expectations – spend more, grow more, live more... – BUT this optimism has been curbed by a surprising 2022 with the Ukraine crisis, slowdown... much to our regret."

Kristinn Björnsson | EMEA Marketing Manager | Bacalao De Islandiav

COMMITMENT

The state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc.; a pledge or undertaking.

"We started the year with our annual convention, where we set this word as the guiding thread for the whole year, and so it has been! Thanks to the commitment of all our employees, we closed the year with results that have made history. Thanks to our commitment, we are continuing to focus on a more sustainable mobility that is committed to the environment. Thanks to our commitment, we focus on customer service to guarantee a memorable experience. And thanks to commitment, we are committed to people, and we support all our employees in their professional and human development."

Laura Oro | Marketing Manager | Norauto Spain

CONNECT

To bring together or into contact so that a real or notional link is established; to join together so as to provide access and communication.

"In a world that is becoming increasingly divided we need to come together to connect with our customers and colleagues and build the best relationships."

Angela Oakes | Co-Founder and Joint President | Global Women in PR

ENDURANCE

The fact or power of enduring an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way; the capacity to last or to withstand wear and tear.

“After two years of COVID many of us imagined that 2022 would usher in a rebound or rebirth – somehow re-balancing the resilience and all the sacrifices. Instead, the climate remains under threat, there’s a devastating war in Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis is ratcheting the pressure on millions of people and we Brits lost a beacon of stability in the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. But endurance has endured. Sometimes with humour (when a lettuce wins a contest to outlast a Prime Minister), sometimes with protest but more often with practical action and compassion for the displaced, the disadvantaged and in need. And that should give us hope.”

Anne Tyrer | VP, UK Corporate Affairs and Communications | American Express

GRATITUDE

The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

“Gratitude is a common word, yet not practiced or welcomed by all. If I worked hard then why should I be grateful? But I see gratitude as having the inner appreciation that I possess the audacity to dream big and the tenacity to achieve my goal. Gratitude isn’t a pity party.”

Menaka S. Thillaiampalam | Group Chief Marketing Officer | Banking Circle Group

HUG

To hold (something) closely or tightly around or against part of one’s body; keep close to; cherish or cling to (something such as a belief).

“We are here, we embrace each other again, we greet each other with respect and passion. A way of offering our arms to embrace the feelings after being held back for so long by social distancing.”

Jorge Alcalde | Editor-in-Chief | Esquire Magazine Spain

HYBRID

A thing made by combining two different elements; a mixture; composed of mixed parts.

"It is the new way of working following the changes brought about by COVID and affects all of us."

Susan Hardwick | Co-Founder and Joint President | Global Women in PR

INTERGENERATIONAL

Relating to, involving, or affecting several generations.

"My word is intergenerational – both to pay tribute to the recent intergenerational solidarity shown within many communities in response to COVID, and to highlight the intergenerational social contract we need to build over the next few years to make a sustainable future possible [for our children]."

Cat Tully | Director | School of International Futures

JOY

A feeling of great pleasure and happiness.

"Joy is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. Why is it so difficult to find? Try letting go of the past; practice gratitude; be positive; be fully present. Find joy in everything you do – work, family, friends, all aspects of your life."

Donna-Jean Plante, CAE | Executive Director | New York Women in Communications (NYWICI)

"We are well aware of the long list of the ways the world is falling apart around us. Despair is everywhere. More than ever before, we need to find, create and spread moments of joy in 2023. I'm not encouraging a head-in-the-sand approach but a little joy goes a long way. For those of us with the privilege of wonderful careers, let's find the joy in mentoring and sponsoring others. Imagine the power of us all amplifying our joy of working hard at something we love. Let's lean into the joy of giving others grace and meeting them where they are."

Kim Sample | President | PR Council

PURPOSEFUL

Having or showing determination or resolve; having a useful purpose; intentional.

“Capital ‘P’ Purpose is not a new word nor a new conversation in our industry but I believe 2023 will require a focus on being purposeful in everything we do and say. In a tightening economy, we must be more purposeful about where and how we invest in talent and tools, the brands we agree to pitch, and the solutions we sell to clients. With the continuing onslaught of social issues, we must be purposeful about how, when and where we engage. With a continuing mental health crisis due to COVID, we must be purposeful of the requests we make of friends, families and colleagues and be purposeful in demonstrating our empathy.”

Kim Sample | President | PR Council

SANITY/INSANITY

The ability to think and behave in a normal and rational manner; sound mental health vs. the state of being seriously mentally ill; madness; extreme foolishness or irrationality.

“Sanity. Or, more specifically, the lack thereof. Leaders dance around the edges of climate action as our planet floods and burns. Political extremism and sectarianism surge. Putin dangles the prospect of nuclear Armageddon. Virtual influencers and deepfakes mess with our minds. Every day, it seems, we inch closer to the brink.”

Marian Salzman | Author of *The New Megatrends: Seeing Clearly in the Age of Disruption*
| Authority on Corporate Communications

UNDERSTANDING

The ability to understand something; comprehension; the power of abstract thought; intellect; sympathetic awareness or tolerance.

“2022 has been a year of understanding. Understanding we can get back together, understanding that everything has changed but certain things unfortunately remain the same. Most of all understanding we do more when we are together than apart.”

Aaron Padin | Founder of Design Firm VSLMTH | Former Head of Art and Design at J. Walter Thompson



JAMES WRIGHT
Global CEO, Red Havas & Global Chairman,
Havas PR Global Collective
Red Havas
m: 917-520-7666
a: 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Red Havas is part of the Havas PR Global Collective, the PR and communications arm of the Havas Group that comprises approximately 40 agencies around the world and more than 1,300 employees. The Red Havas strategic merged media model brings together traditional and digital publishing, content, social media and data within a single infrastructure.

For further information, please visit
www.redhavas.com.



JAMES WRIGHT
Global CEO, Red Havas & Global Chairman,
Havas PR Global Collective
Red Havas
m: 917-520-7666
a: 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Red Havas is part of the Havas PR Global Collective, the PR and communications arm of the Havas Group that comprises approximately 40 agencies around the world and more than 1,300 employees. The Red Havas strategic merged media model brings together traditional and digital publishing, content, social media and data within a single infrastructure.

For further information, please visit
www.redhavas.com.

Our word of the year:

RESILIENCE