

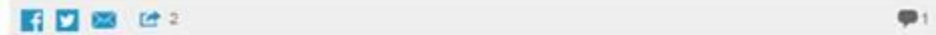
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Will latest inflammatory comments tarnish Trump's brand?

By MAE ANDERSON Jun. 30, 2015 3:07 AM EDT



FILE - In this Jan. 16, 2015 file photo, Donald Trump, host of the television series "The Celebrity... Read more

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The flap has some wondering if the backlash may spill over to his globe-spanning empire of real estate properties. But other experts say NBC's dramatic action simply gives "The Donald" more of the attention and publicity he craves.

"I think that people have come to expect this kind of behavior from Trump," said Robert Passikoff, president of Brand Keys Inc., which monitors brand equity. "You don't have to agree with him, but he is one of the few human brands wandering around anymore."

Other personality-based brands have been felled by inflammatory remarks, such as Paula Deen, the celebrity chef who lost her show and endorsement deals in 2013 for making racist remarks. But Trump's empire — and brand personality — is far bigger than Deen's, spread across vast hotel and other real estate holdings.

Trump has said his net worth totals \$8.7 billion, though Forbes magazine's analysis of billionaires pegs it at about \$4.1 billion. Here's a look at his various holdings and how the recent controversy may affect them.

TELEVISION

While TV revenues are just a small part of Trump's billions, NBC's decision Monday that it would no longer air the annual Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants, was the

sudden end of a long-running relationship. "The Apprentice" debuted in 2004 and was a smash, making Trump a familiar figure in many American living rooms.

In recent years its spinoff, "Celebrity Apprentice," was a modest performer but a reliable part of NBC's schedule as the network fought to get out of the ratings cellar. The network plans to try to continue "Celebrity Apprentice" without Trump as its colorful center, but a previous effort, 2005's short-lived "The Apprentice: Martha Stewart," failed to find an audience.

Despite the loss of his NBC deal, Larry Chiagouris, marketing professor at Pace University in New York, said it's likely that after his presidential bid winds down that Trump will wind up with a show on another network.

"I bet you'll see a Trump brand show of some kind on CBS or ABC or FOX," he said. "The Trump name still brings attention and eyeballs."

REAL ESTATE

Trump says that his ownership stakes in real estate are worth \$5.3 billion, ranging from the Trump Tower in New York to the Mar-a-Lago golf club in Palm Beach, Florida. Some in the real estate industry see the impact of his recent comments as minimal.

"This is a blip on the radar," said Stefani Markowitz, president of the New York-based brokerage Rutenberg. "And there is little question that his real estate holdings not only won't be affected, but will continue to rise."

Others say Trump's comments about Mexicans and other ethnic groups could hurt him in closing real estate deals in the future. Don Peebles, a real estate developer with a \$5 billion portfolio of properties, said he vehemently disagrees with Trump's comments and said government officials involved in public-private partnerships might be wary of conducting business with Trump.

Real estate moguls such as the Sultan of Brunei have lost business due to their political views. Last year, many celebrities and entertainment industry leaders boycotted the Beverly Hills Hotel and other properties controlled by the sultan due to the tiny Southeast Asia nation's adoption of Islamic Shariah law that called for punishing adultery, abortions and same-sex relationships with flogging and stoning.

As for Trump, Peebles said, "It's hard to tell how long the anger lasts and whether there is a residual impact."

HOTEL BRANDS

Trump manages or lends his name to nine hotels marketed as the Trump Hotel Collection. They include properties in New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Toronto and golf resorts in Florida and Ireland. Another four properties are under development including one in Rio de Janeiro and one in Washington, D.C. His daughter Ivanka has been very active in the hotels, personally overseeing recent renovations at one of the New York City locations.

Chris McGinnis, founder of travel news and advice site TravelSkills.com, said it's not likely the comments will affect the hotel business.

"Business travelers may find what he said distasteful, but if their meeting is across the street from a Trump hotel, that's likely where they will stay," he said. "There are plenty of people who do not like the politics of the Marriott family, but that clearly has had little impact on that chain."