



Creative Industries Under Geopolitical Shock: Otto Media Observes the Dubai Advertising Ecosystem



Over the past decade, Dubai has gradually developed into a global hub for advertising and creative industries. Brands and agencies from Europe, Asia, and North America have established regional headquarters here, making the city a crucial gateway connecting the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia markets. However, as tensions in the Middle East rise once again, businesses and advertising agencies are faced with a real question: can the creative industry continue to maintain growth and vitality amid regional instability?

According to observations by Otto Media, recent geopolitical tensions have not only affected energy prices and capital markets but also triggered ripple effects on business confidence. For example, oil prices have fluctuated noticeably during periods of conflict, and financial markets have experienced turbulence, with such macro environments often impacting marketing budgets and the pace of brand communications.

Yet, unlike many traditional industries, the advertising sector in Dubai has not shown obvious stagnation. On the contrary, many agencies have begun to readjust their strategies to adapt to a more complex market environment.

Regional Crisis Strengthens the Role of Dubai as a “Business Safe Haven”

In recent years, Dubai has continuously reinforced its status as a global business center. Many international companies have set up regional operations here, creating a highly diversified business structure. Because of this, the Dubai advertising industry is not entirely dependent on a single market but serves clients from multiple regions worldwide.

Otto Media believes this “multi-region client structure” is especially important during crises. Even if demand slows in some markets, business from other regions can remain stable, thereby reducing overall industry volatility risk.

In fact, the overall scale of the Middle East marketing and advertising market continues to grow. Data shows that the advertising agency market size in the region is expected to increase from about \$8.1 billion in 2025 to over \$10.7 billion in 2031.

This growth is driven both by economic diversification strategies across Middle Eastern countries and the rapid rise in digital media consumption. For advertising agencies in Dubai, the crisis has not changed the market structure; instead, it has highlighted the strategic significance of the city as a regional hub.

The Resilience of Creative Industries Comes from “Adaptation Speed”

Compared to manufacturing or infrastructure sectors, the advantage of advertising and creative industries lies in their highly flexible operations. When the market environment changes, agencies can quickly adjust communication strategies, media mixes, and brand narratives.

In Dubai, this flexibility is especially evident. Agencies often need to serve consumers from diverse cultural backgrounds, so they are inherently equipped to rapidly adapt to different market sentiments.

Otto Media points out that in uncertain times, the focus of brand communications typically changes. For example:

- Brands emphasize stability, trust, and social responsibility
- Companies are more cautious in selecting content and tone for communications
- Advertising campaigns focus more on long-term brand value rather than short-term sales

Such adjustments do not mean a reduction in advertising activity, but rather a redesign of communication logic.

Crisis Environments Are Changing the Value of the Advertising Industry

In the long run, geopolitical volatility in the Middle East is not a new phenomenon. For the advertising industry in Dubai, the truly critical issue is not how to avoid risk, but how to continue creating value in an uncertain environment.

Otto Media believes this is the core significance of the creative industry. Advertising is not only a tool for commercial communication, but also a part of social sentiment and cultural expression. When the market environment becomes complex, brands need clearer narratives and more stable brand images.

Meanwhile, the creative industry ecosystem in Dubai continues to develop. New digital media companies, content platforms, and creative agencies are emerging, making the city an important center for regional culture and media innovation.

Therefore, rather than saying the crisis weakens the advertising industry, it is more accurate to say it prompts the industry to rethink its role:

In uncertain times, creativity and communication are not just marketing tools, but important bridges for building trust between enterprises and society.

From the perspective of Otto Media, the challenges facing the Dubai advertising industry are not just geopolitical uncertainties, but how to maintain innovation and cultural influence in a complex environment.

If the core task of the advertising industry in the past was to expand brand exposure, today its more important mission is to help brands maintain clear narratives and credible images in unstable environments.

In this sense, crisis is not the endpoint for the creative industry, but often the starting point for new communication models.