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Industry weighs in on Omnicom-IPG acquisition, job cuts

Omnicom's aggressive integration plan, from sunseting agencies to deep layoffs, has left thousands of staff in limbo. Industry leaders weigh in on the current state of adland.



Since the completion of Omnicom's historic US\$9 billion takeover of IPG on November 26, the network has unveiled a sweeping internal overhaul, including the retirement of three storied creative networks: DDB, FCB, and MullenLowe.

Only three creative agencies remain: BBDO, TBWA, and McCann, in addition to six global media networks, OMD, PHD, Hearts & Science, Initiative, UM, and MediaHub.

The move comes alongside 4,000 new redundancies, on top of deep workforce cuts both companies had already made over the past year. Now the world's largest agency holding company, it employs some 105,000 staff, down from around 128,000 in late 2024.

At IPG, restructuring ramped up through 2025, cutting a total of 3,200 jobs, including 800 roles in September. Omnicom had already shed roughly 3,000 positions prior to the merger's completion.

The major restructures have left both staff and agencies in limbo. Industry leaders across adland are weighing in on the landmark merger, its sweeping job cuts, and the stirred debate over what comes next.

Campaign has compiled some of these perspectives below.

Veronica Millan Caceres
Chief information officer, Ogilvy

Many of you know that I wrote my dissertation on the advertising industry. My focus was on Interpublic (and WPP), so I have some words to say now that IPG no longer exists, having studied its history, the way it worked, and having spent a good portion of my working life there.

As I review what Harper wanted IPG to be, I realise the irony that so much of this is what the industry is still trying to accomplish. This acquisition by Omnicom is the end of an era, the end of the first holding company, which has invariably transformed the advertising industry entirely. Omnicom, Publicis, WPP, and the other holding companies out there would not exist today if IPG had not paved the way for a different way of looking at growth and acquisitions.

Good luck, largest holding company of the world, Omnicom! It's a new era.

Robert Schwartz
Global chief marketing officer, Starcom

There are moments in any industry that feel less like news and more like a closing chapter.

But it's the aftermath that stings: agencies like DDB and FCB—names that defined the very notion of modern creativity—folded into a newly merged corporate mass. Four thousand jobs are projected to be eliminated. Thousands more quietly reorganised, repurposed, or absorbed. And for those of us who grew up on the mythology of this business, it feels like the lights just went out in a part of town we once knew by heart.

DDB isn't just an agency. It's Bill Bernbach walking out of Grey in 1949 because he believed creativity mattered more than hierarchy. FCB isn't just another holding company logo. It's the bones of a century of ideas—some legendary, some forgotten, all part of the long lineage of people who believed that smart thinking could change behaviour.

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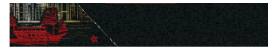
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Now they're former subsidiaries of a subsidiary. Pages in a historical brand architecture deck.



And the jobs—those 4,000 jobs. It's easy to treat that number as an accounting line, a cost synergy, a necessary realignment. But those are people. Strategists who learned their craft in late-night war rooms. Young creatives still holding onto the stubborn belief that ideas matter. Account leads who could walk into a room and talk a client off a cliff with nothing but conviction and their own genetic dynamism.

It's an entire ecosystem being compressed for the sake of shareholder efficiency.

Some will land elsewhere. Some will reinvent themselves. Some will leave the industry entirely. All will feel the loss—not just of a job, but of an identity shaped in the service of a business that once promised magic. And sometimes even delivered it.

And yet, despite all that, I keep coming back to the same thought: If there's any constant in advertising, it's that reinvention follows every collapse.

Bernbach himself tore down the structures of his day. David did it. Mary Wells did it. Jay Chiat did it. Lee Clow. Goodby. Hayden. Droga. Every generation has had to rebuild something broken.

(One last personal thought: if/when they come to retire Ogilvy, it's pitchforks and torches at dawn.)

Justin Billingsley
Consulting fractional CMO & former global chief growth officer, Monks

First: How do you merge two teams and make gender diversity worse? Three women out of 15 leadership roles. 20%.

IPG had claimed to have achieved gender parity at all levels, both in the U.S. and globally, before this transaction with a formal commitment that made diversity a "cornerstone" of how leadership and businesses were evaluated.

Both companies publicly championed diversity as a strategic priority and competitive advantage. IPG earned a 100% rating on the Corporate Equality Index for 15 consecutive years.

Yet somehow, combining these two organisations produced a leadership team that's 80% male. That's regression. And it signals about whose perspectives matter, whose experience counts, and what "best and brightest" actually means to this organisation.

Second: Stop calling this a merger. Just stop.

12 out of 15 top positions went to Omnicom executives. Of the nine division CEOs, the real power seats, eight came from Omnicom. Dana Maiman holds the only IPG executive position at that level.

When 80% of leadership comes from one side, that's not a merger of equals. That's an absorption. Which is perfectly fine, acquisitions happen. But the "merger" language obscures the reality. John Wren told Campaign it was "incredibly balanced, as if it were a merger of equals." (He is just too funny). The numbers tell a different story. Be honest about what this is.

Darren Woolley
CEO, TrinityP3

As this is effectively a takeover/acquisition, rather than a merger, it is clear the dominant player is Omnicom, and the game plan we are seeing and hearing being played out will be Omnicom-led.

But as for which network brands will survive and which will disappear, that could be a patchwork quilt based on market and regional strengths and dominant client preferences. But as the agency brands are effectively the entry door to the offering, they will be less important except for those clients that still believe they are buying the brand and not a solution.

While IPG showed strong profit margins and a good cash position ahead of the acquisition, its revenue was declining, while Omnicom was demonstrating steady revenue growth. But they will be hoping that the combination of the two will be more than the sum of the parts. But since it has taken almost a year from announcement to being finalised, there is a lot of time and ground they need to make up.

But this will not be the end of the consolidation we will see happening in the industry in the foreseeable future. This is because agency networks and their holding companies need to transform from the suppliers of advertising services to marketing communications and customer management platforms that offer major advertisers a neat and bundled solution to their growth challenges.

Andrea Cook
CEO at JAM CRM & former global innovation officer, McCann

I spent 50% of my career with Omnicom and 50% with IPG. I hate this expression. Behind every 'darling' being 'killed' are humans and hard-won specialisms our industry can't afford to lose

If Omnicom and IPG manage this merger with real discipline, integrating platforms, unifying data, investing in tech and talent, and making the tough calls on legacy structures and leadership, the combined group could reset the bar for what the world's largest clients expect from their partners.

But—and it's a really big but—holding-company scale only works if it doesn't suffocate agility, specialism or creativity. Fail on that front, and we'll see an (even greater) surge in demand for specialist agencies that offer what big networks often struggle with: authenticity, edge, speed, and deep category expertise.

In my opinion, size is irrelevant. Intelligence wins. And the agencies that can integrate, interpret, and deliver value that their clients can see will define what's next.

Thinking about all my 'darling' friends, mentors, colleagues and partners and praying your exceptional talents find endless runway in this new world.
Hugs.

Nandini Jamm
Co-founder, Check My Ads Institute

They're going to spin this in all kinds of ways but never forget that the Omnicom-IPG merger only went through because its leaders agreed to effectively stop doing brand safety.

Marketing is made up of four Ps: product, pricing, promotion and PLACEMENT. It is a four-legged table. Imagine throwing away one of those legs because the POTUS told you to.

The new Omnicom has less to offer advertisers than it ever has. They're laying off 4,000 talented people,

which I'm sure is enough to scare the living shit out of anyone who might be tempted to go off script to do what's right for their clients.

The new, submissive, AI-worshipping Omnicom is now also a three-legged table. And if they're willing to do that to themselves, what do you think they'll do for you?

Brand safety—the single biggest concern in the advertising industry—is not an optional little toggle, as many would like it to be. It's the soul of marketing itself.

This is historic, alright. And while a handful of executives and MAGA thugs might be cheering tonight, I just don't think this move will stand the test of time.

Lindsay Mouat
CEO, ANZA

No surprises in the scale of cuts. The "synergy benefits" from the "merger" were well signalled 12 months ago. Maybe some surprise on the retained global agency brands but perhaps not after all the recent reckons. As always, thoughts are with the people who will be affected.

Jason S. Cohen
Global chief integration officer, Clareast Health & former SVP, Omnicom

After spending 30 years at Omnicom, I've watched the company evolve through multiple eras of transformation. The recent merger with IPG and the announcement of approximately 4,000 layoffs is another one of those moments that hits hard—whether you're still inside the organisation or part of its long history.

This isn't a post about nostalgia or corporate spin. It's simply an acknowledgement that behind every workforce reduction are real people who contributed real value. Many of them helped build the foundation that made both companies what they are today.

To everyone impacted: I stand with you. I've worked alongside some of the most talented, dedicated, and resilient people in the industry, and I have no doubt that many of you will continue to do great things in whatever comes next. Change at this scale is rarely easy, but talent like yours doesn't simply disappear—it finds its next opportunity.

Wishing each of you strength, clarity, and momentum as you navigate the next chapter. If I can support anyone in the transition—connections, conversations, or just perspective—my door is open.

Tim Hurley
Global managing director, Touchdown PR

As an Omnicom agency alum, I sympathise and empathise with those impacted. Everything about it hurts. The timing—three weeks before the holidays. The scale—4,000 is a BIG number.

The already-large community of talented PR, advertising, marketing and creative professionals who have lost their positions in recent months due to cutbacks, M&A, etc. If anyone in my network or my network's network wants to talk, strategise, or grab a cup of coffee, please reach out.

Chuck Hemann
Chief integration officer, Assembled Intelligence & former Agency Leadership Council, IAB

An unfortunate outcome of the merger is the layoffs affecting several thousand people. If you are among those impacted, I want to say I'm sorry. No matter how challenging it might be, please remember that you are talented and that you matter. Some companies value your experience, and our company is one that would welcome your expertise.

There is never a good time for layoff news, but the holiday season makes it particularly difficult. It is important that we support each other during this challenging time.

John Kovacevich
Founder and creative director, Agency SOS

Holy Smokes! *Omnivore*, er, Omnicom's opening move is to devour three legacy global networks! DDB, FCB, and MullenLowe just got gobbled up. Thousands to lose their jobs before the end of December.

Any remnants still floating in the monster's stomach juices will be absorbed into the remaining global agencies: BBDO, TBWA, and McCann. That's not all. All entities with the name "IPG" (IPG Health, IPG Mediabrands, etc.) are being eliminated, too. The full carnage will take a little time to sort out.

You're going to read a lot about "efficiencies" and "synergies," and some finance bro is probably popping champagne at the news, but lots of people are about to see a lifetime of work get wiped off the map. And many are going to be sitting around the kitchen table this holiday, figuring out what to do about health insurance in the new year.

It's a sad day.

Alexandre Kazuo Kubo
Creative director, 72andSunny

What to say about Omnicom's acquisition of IPG? Two holding companies I've worked for. And now, agencies I've been part of (including DDB) are being dissolved.

There's the historical side of it. Iconic networks like DDB, FCB, and MullenLowe disappearing. For me it hits even harder because I also worked at JWT, the oldest agency in the world, which vanished after a similar merger between Wunderman and VML. Watching the history of our industry fade out like this is genuinely sad.

And then there's the human side.

The number of talented people being laid off, struggling to land on their feet, is overwhelming. In the Omnicom + IPG deal alone, we're talking about 10,000 jobs lost in a single year. Add to that the recent cuts from other giants—11,000 at Accenture, 7,000 at WPP—and you start to see the real scale of what's happening.

I'm not usually a pessimist or an optimist. I try to be a realist. And the realistic view this time is... unsettling. We're watching a historic reshaping of the advertising industry. And it comes with a real cost.

The excerpts are publicly available on LinkedIn and are edited for clarity and brevity.

Source: *Campaign Asia*

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