

MARKETING STRATEGY

# The Omnicom-IPG merger brings global scale. But APAC marketers are thinking local.

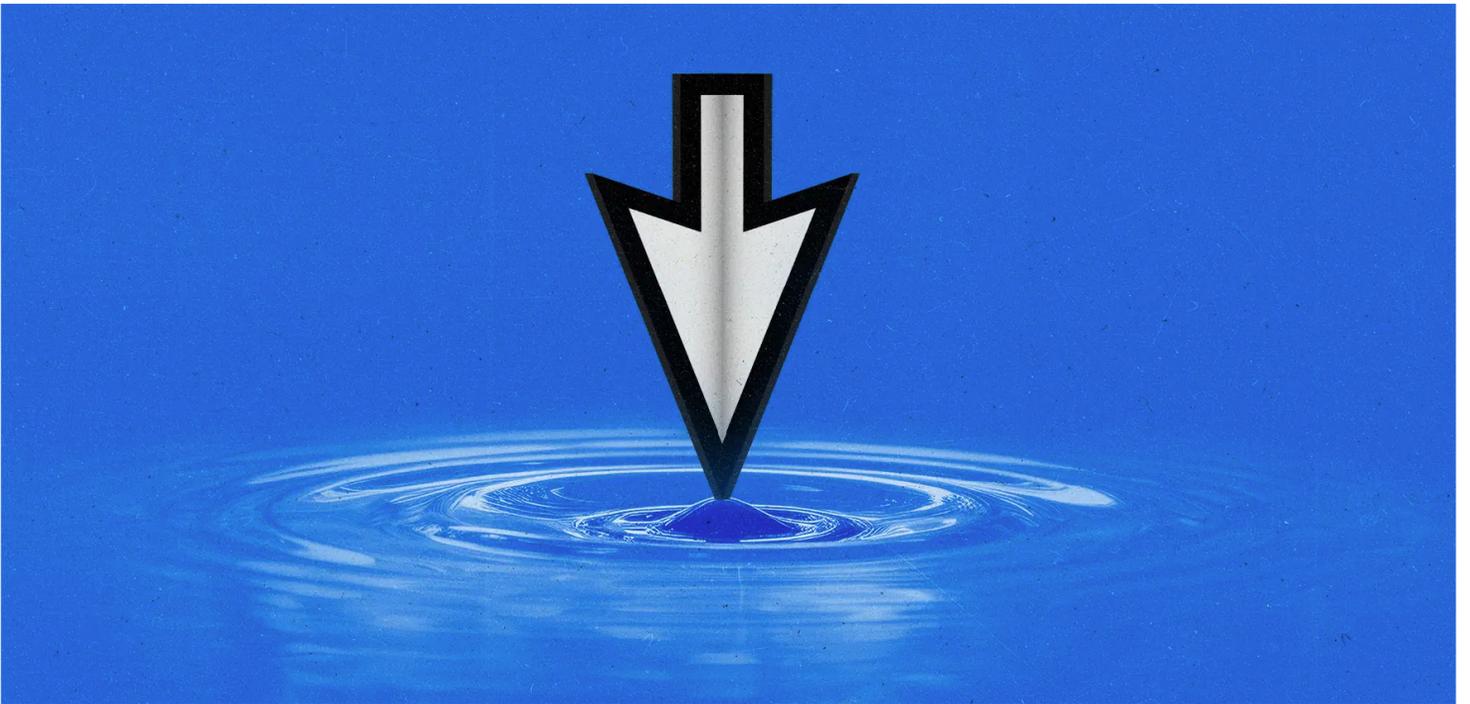


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The [Omnicom-IPG merger](#) created the world's largest ad holding company, scaling its buying power, data and influence. But for APAC marketers, the question is whether the scale of the global powerhouse can work on their terms.

What sets the region apart is diversity. Because APAC spans vastly different media ecosystems, there are natural limits to how far consolidation and centralization can go.

That means effectiveness will be won at a local level. APAC industry leaders predict marketers across the region will increasingly lean into partnerships that deliver genuine local nuance that scale alone can't provide.

"The APAC region is extremely fragmented when it comes to markets, languages and regulations," Céline Gauthier-Darnis, executive vice president of APAC & MENA at Equativ, told The Current. "Due to this, the scale [from the merger] has a limit in terms of what can be centralized."

### Premium media could feel pricing pressure

In the near term, one of the major outcomes post-merger is likely to be increased pricing pressure in the market, particularly for premium media.

"Immediate effects post-merger could be downward pressure on pricing given that the merger creates a larger entity that has increased buying power over competitors in the market," Gauthier-Darnis said. "With available volumes and unrestricted access, we should anticipate an increase in inventory and budget commitments."

For large regional and global advertisers, that scale can translate into more competitive pricing

for large regional and global advertiser users, that scale can translate into more competitive pricing and preferential access. But that same dynamic creates risk for smaller and midsize advertisers, who may not benefit equally from that buying power.

“The larger the client’s media activity, the easier it is to secure the inventory,” Gauthier-Darnis said. “When things are smaller, it’ll be a bigger challenge, but alternative supply paths that are outside of walled gardens will become even more important.”

### **Bigger tech stacks might not improve results**

The merger combines proprietary technology and data, bringing together Omnicom’s OMNI platform with IPG’s Acxiom data assets.

While this looks great on paper — promising better targeting, measurement and optimization — the actual benefits will depend on how well those tools are applied locally.

A senior marketing source in China believes the “unprecedented data-buying leverage” created by the integration of both platforms is a boon for that market.

“This positions the group to offer more sophisticated closed-loop measurement within China’s walled gardens, a meaningful advantage in a market where deterministic data is scarce and platform ecosystems are tightly controlled,” the source said.

Ultimately, though, marketers across the region shouldn’t assume that bigger platforms automatically mean better outcomes.

According to the same source, for local Chinese brands in particular, “the differentiators remain speed, cultural fluency and platform-native expertise — areas where scale alone does not guarantee advantage.”

Darren Woolley, the Sydney-based CEO of TrinityP3, agreed.

“The question is no longer just about size, but whether this massive ‘new’ Omnicom can maintain local cultural relevance while operating as a global data machine,” he said.

### **A shift in marketers’ leverage**

If APAC marketers lose negotiating power post-merger, thinking local might help.

“When a bigger player moves into the region, marketers have less leverage and negotiating power,” Gauthier-Darnis said. “That is why tapping into more localized options is crucial. Risks can be mitigated through unique, locally relevant differentiators.”

That shift also explains why some see new opportunities for independent agencies, particularly for advertisers without global leverage.

“There is a legitimate risk of [non-global advertisers] becoming ‘small fish,’” Woolley said. “We are seeing a ‘vanilla-ization’ of services where bespoke strategy is sometimes replaced by standardized tech templates.”

In Woolley’s view, this has created a “perfect vacuum” for independents.

“The indies are positioning themselves as the antidote by offering senior talent ‘on the tools’ and the agility that a 100,000-person organization cannot match,” he said. “For brands, the choice is now binary: The Platform (Scale) versus The Partner (Agility).”

Over the next five years, he expects independent agencies to increasingly form “micro-networks,” providing “the high-touch creativity and local nuance that the big platforms lose in the pursuit of efficiency.”

### **The question CMOs should be asking now**

One of the most pressing issues for marketers post-merger is transparency.

“If there’s one question CMOs in APAC should be asking, it’s: Can you show me the waterfall of my media spend, from my dollar to the publisher’s pocket, including all principal-trading margins and tech fees?” Woolley said. “With the merger, the layers between the brand and the actual media placement have multiplied.” Woolley also recommended marketers in the APAC region keep a close eye on how data sovereignty and AI ethics are handled.

“As Omnicom integrates IPG’s massive data sets, the local voice of Australian advertising is at risk of being drowned out by global algorithms,” he said.

“The agencies that thrive in 2026 and beyond will be those that can marry this massive scale with human-centric empathy, something an algorithm still cannot replicate.”

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