

Saatchi & Saatchi consolidates in Saudi

Advertising network Saatchi & Saatchi is sharpening its focus on Saudi Arabia and placing its Riyadh and Jeddah offices under one management.

The move has been made in a bid to build stronger relationships in the GCC's most important consumer market, with a new vision for the agency's Saudi network being mapped out by Adil Khan, CEO of

Saatchi & Saatchi MENA.

Mazen Mehio, who was previously head of marketing for Eastern Africa and Sudan at Etisalat/Canar, has been appointed managing director, overseeing both the Riyadh and Jeddah operations.

"The move signals Saatchi & Saatchi's commitment to grow its Saudi presence, opening new opportunities to share

servicing, planning and creative resources across both offices," said Khan. He added that the changes were part of ongoing efforts to create a more integrated regional network that can better serve the growing needs of existing clients, as well as new business.

Mehio, who has 20 years of industry experience, started his career in Saudi Arabia with

Publigraphics, spending seven years in the kingdom handling accounts such as Lipton and Shell. "With Saatchi & Saatchi's new focus on Saudi Arabia it's definitely an exciting time to be back here and I look forward to the opportunity to help transform our clients' businesses in the kingdom with the support of our regional and global network," said Mehio.

Saatchi & Saatchi has 140 offices in 80 countries, with a client list that includes Procter & Gamble, Toyota/Lexus, DuPont and Novartis.

Khan was appointed CEO for the MENA region in June last year. He has a mandate to grow the agency's regional operation following the departure of Beirut and Amman from the network in December 2009.

Insignia launches media buying wing

Brand communication agency Insignia has launched what is believed to be the region's first media buying service for the travel industry.

Insignia Travel Media Group will provide hotels, airlines, leisure attractions and tourism bodies with strategic media and marketing solutions across the globe. Gaurav Sinha, founder and managing director of Insignia, said: "The pace of change in the media landscape has reached an unprecedented high; media consumption and travel dynamics continue to evolve rapidly and such factors present many challenges to our clients looking to boost visibility and return on investment. We have formed Insignia Travel Media Group to meet these challenges head on, creating targeted media strategies specifically crafted to deliver impact by optimising media channels that are unique and relevant to the travel industry."

The new venture will deal in on and offline media, including in-flight TV, airport billboards, print and broadcast.

"The travel marketing landscape is one of the most complex in the world, and deserves a specialist travel media buying service of this nature. Our ability to match the message, the media and the market, our experience and network of on-the-ground managers makes us best placed to bring this value to our clients," Sinha added.

Insignia is headquartered in Dubai, with offices in London, Delhi and Sydney.

Memac Ogilvy's Jordan office merges with Advize

Agencies join forces to create one of the biggest advertising operations in Jordan

Memac Ogilvy Jordan has merged with Amman-based independent outfit Advize.

The new entity, called Memac Ogilvy Advize, is majority owned by WPP, with the collaboration effectively doubling the size of both parties. Each agency had had around 27 members of staff, and the two offices are set to move into new joint premises within the next few weeks.

Advize, which was founded by Mohammad Kamal in 2004 and had a reputation as one of the most creative agencies in Jordan, had previously been affiliated with Grey, but that affiliation came to an end on 7 January. Wisam Suheimat, who had moved on two occasions from the Ogilvy network to manage



Suheimat... named managing director of Memac Ogilvy Advize

Advize/Grey, has been named as the managing director of the new agency.

The merger follows Memac Ogilvy Jordan's winning of the advertising account for Arab Bank at the tail end of last year, with plans underway to introduce PR, digital and activation to the Amman offering.

Suheimat said: "There are many exciting brands in Jordan that have regional and even global reach, and through the strength of the network and the multi-disciplined approach to managing brands, the agency will aim to raise the bar for both the local advertising and communications industry as well as raise the profile of brands that are coming out of Jordan on a regional and global level."

Qatar Airways calls review of its global advertising account

Qatar Airways has called a review of its advertising account.

The airline, which uses the tagline 'The world's 5-star airline', would not comment on the move.

Batey Singapore won the airline's creative account back in 2007 and teamed up with WPP sibling Bates PanGulf (BPG),

which provided the back-end Arabic support. However, in 2009 Batey became part of Grey Global Group Asia Pacific, a WPP sibling, heralding the end of its affiliation with BPG, which is now in the process of opening its own fully-owned office in Qatar. Since Batey became part of Grey, the Qatar

Airways account has been jointly handled by Grey in Doha. Batey declined to comment on the review.

Last year, Qatar Airways was voted the third best airline in the world following the annual 2010 Skytrax survey of 18 million passengers. In the survey, it was also honoured as the best

airline in the Middle East for the fifth consecutive year.

The Qatari national carrier is one of the customers of the twin-deck Airbus A380 'super jumbos' with five on order and scheduled for delivery from 2012, by which time the New Doha International Airport would have opened.