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ADVERTISING MARKET

IN IRAQ

FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE MARKET SURVEY

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IRAQI ADVERTISING MARKET

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1. INTRODUCTION

The advertising market in Iraq is to a great extent traditional. Modern advertising as we know it, is yet to be properly institutionalized in the market. Nevertheless, Iraqi people are usually open to try new products introduced through advertising, but this attitude may not necessarily lead to a shift in habits or a customer churn.

The most common ways through which Iraqi community might consider changing habits are the following:

- recommendations from senior people, friends, relatives or popular religious or political figures
- cheaper pricing
- attractive packaging
- easy-to-use/understand products with clear efficiency compared to existing products
- cultural campaigns launched by Westerners, Gulf countries or Europeans

2. OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

The use of posters and leaflets is not very common in Iraq and is less effective. Outdoor advertising on billboards has some impact but is not available in a regulated manner. In fact, direct negotiations with owners of a suitable building with view have to be carried out in order to rent space. Municipalities do not contribute to developing such spaces directly and intermediary companies should be contacted to organize outdoor advertising.

3. TV COMMERCIALS

There are 20 official TV channels in Iraq. Except for Al IRAQIYA that is state owned and away from political partisanship, other channels are affiliated to various political parties. It is therefore important to identify the orientation of a TV channel before using it.

[Al IRAQIYA](#)

Al Iraqiya is a satellite and terrestrial public broadcaster and television network in Iraq that was set up after the fall of Saddam Hussein. It is an Arabic language network that serves upwards of 85% of Iraq's population, and is viewed by a significant percentage. Information on how to order a commercial or subtitle commercial on this channel is available on the website. Depending on the air time of commercials, costs could range from 300 to 2000 USD per second.

Other popular TV channels are [Al Hurra](#) and [AlSharqiya](#). In Kurdistan region, [Kurdsat](#) is the most-watched channel in Kurdish language.

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4. NEWSPAPER AD

The top newspaper in Iraq (available in paper and online) is called [Alsabbah](#) with a circulation of over 50,000 copies. All government tenders, recruitments and announcements usually appear in this low-priced newspaper. The cost of a printed ad on this newspaper could range from USD 5 to 10 per centimeter depending on the coloring, size, the page in which the ad appears, etc. [Azzaman](#) is also another popular general paper in Iraq with slightly higher prices.

5. DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Iraq is a country with a population of about 40 million people with 60% under 25 years old. About 70% of people live in cities. Internet in Iraq is cheap, fast and free of censorship. The overall state of insecurity in the country has been a driving force behind the high rate of mobile and internet penetration among the population.

MOBILE ADS

There are over 40 million mobile phone subscribers in Iraq with the average data speed close to 10 mbps. About 77% of internet traffic goes on mobile data while 21% use PCs to connect to the internet. The high penetration rate of mobile phones in Iraq provides a great opportunity for SMS advertising. The three major operators in the competitive mobile sector include Zain Iraq, Asiacell and Korek Telecom.

SOCIAL MEDIA

About 21 million people in Iraq are estimated to use social media with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp. Commercial ads on these platforms are usually another effective way to reach potential customers.

6. OTHER ADVERTISING CHANNELS

YELLOW PAGES

[Yellow Pages](#) is a relatively popular advertising tool for businesses in Iraq. The publication with over 10,000 copies is usually available in commercial centers, hotels although not updated in regular intervals.



MAGAZINES OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Chambers of commerce in Iraq also publish their own periodical magazines. A good example is Afaq Tijaria (Business Outlook) published quarterly by Baghdad Chamber of Commerce in 1000 copies circulated in the Baghdad club and association, Ministry of Trade and Baghdad International Airport and also in flight. Ms Aseel Safa, Public Relation manager of the chamber is available at relations@baghdadchambers.com or WhatsApp +964 771 881 0607 to receive order requests.

Last but not least, consulting firms located inside the country can also assist foreign companies in identifying, negotiating and placing ads in various media in Iraq. Alrafedain Group is one of such companies that can be reached through: Ms Sheida Javaheri, Executive Manager at info@shafaqlaw.com. They have high-profile clients among Iranian exporters and a good network in the Iraqi market and also a physical office in the capital, Baghdad.

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