

2021: Year of recovery for marketing budgets globally

The just released Warc *Global Marketing Index: A review of 2021* shows a remarkable year of recovery for this 12 month period that is being led by digital, mobile, TV and Out-of-Home (OOH).



Source: © fabio formaggio [123rf](#) OOH is one of the mediums leading the recovery in 2021

The Index provides a review of trading conditions, marketing budgets and staffing for this 12 month period.

"The Global Marketing Index (GMI) 2021 shows a consistent overall increase in growth throughout the year, which culminated in November recording the highest Global Headline Index value since the inception of the report in 2011," says Zoe McCready, senior research executive, Warc.

"This reflects an industry that is largely weathering the impact of the pandemic as it rapidly adjusts to new trading conditions which point to the ongoing strength of digital and mobile channels driven by the continued rise of e-commerce," adds McCready.

Key findings of the GMI 2021

1. Recovery maintained in 2021

Over the last 12 months, growth has been maintained across all key indices globally and regionally, signalling that despite the twists and turns of 2021, key successes such as vaccine programmes across the world have helped markets set themselves up to live with Covid rather than despite it.

This is supported by further analysis from Warc Data, which show a 23.8% resurgence in marketing budgets across channels in 2021, valued at \$771bn, with digital and mobile media up (41.9%), OTT video (41.6%) and search (39.4%). TV is up by 5.5% from last year and OOH up by 21.8%.

2. Zero-Covid strategy disruptive to growth

Although key indices in the Asia Pacific Region (APAC), Europe and the Americas remain in growth, it is a tale of two halves. APAC markets, which have operated a zero Covid strategy, saw decreased rates of growth in the summer, in line with restrictions being imposed, contrasting to markets in Europe and the Americas which decided to live with the virus and consequently saw the highest rates of growth in the same period.

Despite this, markets in APAC have since recovered with marketing budgets and trading conditions showing a higher level of growth compared to Europe and the Americas.

3. The Great Resignation

The economic fallout of the pandemic that has resulted in the mass exodus of workers across America, now coined as 'The Great Resignation' has been captured in the GMI as staffing levels in the Americas have consistently outperformed Europe and APAC in 2021.

However, the movement is not limited to the Americas as staffing levels in both Europe and APAC have seen an increased rate of growth in Q4. From August onwards, global staffing levels have seen the highest rates of growth since the inception of the GMI, with November and December at 65.3 (the highest index value). Consequently, this is likely to remain a challenge in 2022 as regions battle with factors such as Brexit, work life balance and the worker employer relationship.

"Increased staffing levels recorded globally make up for the impact of the Great Resignation, however, this could present productivity challenges in 2022, especially in the Americas, due to factors such as skills shortages," says McCready.

Warc's GMI provides a unique monthly indicator of the state of the global marketing industry, by tracking and analysing current conditions among 1,000+ marketers, including marketing budgets, trading conditions and staffing levels. This is accompanied by additional analysis from Warc Data.

The GMI 2021 is available to read in full [here](#)

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