

## **Global Ad & Marketing Spend Projected to Grow 9.8% in 2026, as Recession Fears Wane & Huge Influx of Media Spend Expected on Winter Olympics, World Cup & Political Elections**

**STAMFORD, CT – Feb. 12, 2026 (PRWeb)** – Global advertising and marketing spending decelerated in 2025, rising 6.6% to \$1.920 trillion, but spending growth is projected to accelerate to 9.8% in 2026, as stiffened tariff policies and recessionary fears have begun to wane and a massive influx of media expenditures on the Winter Olympics, FIFA World Cup and political elections in 40 countries are expected to propel the strongest industry growth in years, according to new research released today by leading media economist **PQ Media**.

The slowdown in 2025 growth was caused by several factors, including economic uncertainty over more stringent tariff policies, fewer federal elections and the lack of major international sporting events that tend to drive up advertising and marketing spending due to increased consumer time spent with various key media segments, such as broadcast, cable and streaming video, among others, according to the 13<sup>th</sup> annual **PQ Media Global Advertising & Marketing Spending Forecast 2026-2030**.

The global advertising sector grew 5.2% in 2025 to \$832.07 billion, while the overall marketing sector expanded 7.7% to \$1.088 trillion. Global digital & alternative media spending increased 11.4% to \$1.069 trillion in 2025, while traditional media spending grew only 1.2% to \$850.67 billion, per PQ Media.

The US remained the world's largest media market in 2025 and ranked seventh in spending growth. Total US ad & marketing investments rose 7% to \$757.56 billion last year, a deceleration from the 9.6% gain in 2024, with only a handful of special federal elections to fill vacant seats, and no international sporting events. Growth was driven by increased consumer spending on products, such as automobiles, prior to the tariff-driven price increases in 2025. Major brands also upped their use of smart technology marketing (STM), particularly artificial intelligence (AI), and a rise in retail media campaigns that incorporated ecommerce-focused SEO marketing, a channel that PQ Media has begun tracking in this year's edition of this *Forecast* report.

The US is expected to post much stronger growth in 2026, when it tri-hosts the FIFA World Cup with Canada and Mexico, as well as the specter of hotly contested Senate and House races, which we project to heat up even further in 2028, when the US hosts the Summer Olympics and what is expected to be a fierce Presidential election campaign that will produce record ad and marketing spending.

Several years out from the interruption of secular trends by the global pandemic, PQ Media analysts have observed that many media segments are again mirroring TV's even-year/odd-year growth swings fueled by international sporting events and federal and local elections worldwide. For example, retail media is growing as official sponsors increase budgets, particularly if there is a large contingency of athletes or the country does well in specific sports, like the Netherlands and speed skating during the Winter Olympics. Meanwhile, political campaigns are shifting away from their high reliance on broadcast TV as ratings plummet and younger demos choose subscription streaming instead of ad-based video. Thus, campaigns are turning more to other traditional media, like direct mail, or digital & alternative media that engage voters, such as podcasting and influencer marketing.

"Early pacing data in 2026 shows that brands are increasing their budgets for the even-year events, but also due to consumers continuing to purchase products despite rising costs. We expect the overall advertising and marketing sector to decelerate again in 2027, with fewer elections in major global markets and the lesser attendance at international championships like the Rugby and Cricket World Cups, as well as the Women's FIFA World Cup," said **PQ Media CEO Patrick Quinn**. "As we've observed since 2018, STM will continue to be the fastest growing of the 47 digital & alternative media we track, up 30.5% in 2025, as AI becomes more user-friendly, particularly for local small businesses, and includes more sophisticated measurement tools for global brands."

What remains unknown, however, and could impact ad and marketing growth in 2026 and 2027 are the growing geopolitical tensions around the world. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is in its fourth year. The Israel-Hamas cease-fire accord could end in a moment's notice if there is an unprovoked attack. The US has honed its focus on Iran and Venezuela, while unrest has emerged in Pakistan after recent bombings and ISIS attempting to gain a foothold in Nigeria, among others.

The shift to digital & alternative media from traditional platforms has continued unabated, commanding a 55% majority share of overall media spending worldwide in 2025, up 12.5 points from 42.5% in 2020. Meanwhile, 12 of the 20 leading global markets spent over 50% of all media budgets on digital & alternative channels, led by top-ranked Australia at 73.7%, while the US ranked seventh with 60.4%, according to the **Global Advertising & Marketing Spending Forecast 2026-2030**.

### **About the Report:**

**PQ Media's Global Advertising & Marketing Spending Forecast 2026-2030** covers nearly 200 media sectors, silos, platforms and channels, including the ad & marketing sectors; 15 hybrid traditional & digital media silos; 10 overall digital & alternative media platforms; 46 digital & alternative media channels; and 11 overall traditional media platforms. A site license includes two deliverables: 1) PDF Report & Analysis with a 444-slide deck with hundreds of datagraphs, expert insights and detailed profiles of the top 20 global markets; and 2) Deep-Dive Excel Databook providing thousands of datasets covering the 2020-2030 period by country, media sector, silo, platform and channel. To download a Free Executive Summary and Sample Datasets, click the link above to access the landing page.

### **About PQ Media:**

**PQ Media** delivers intelligent data and analysis to leading media and technology organizations worldwide through annual market intelligence reports and custom market research services. PQ Media uses a proprietary econometric methodology to define, segment, size, analyze and project growth across over 300 traditional, digital and alternative media, which are covered in our annual **Global Media Forecast Series 2026**, a three-report package delivering the only holistic view of the industry landscape via three KPIs: advertising & marketing spending, consumer media usage, and consumer media spending. Click on the **GMF Series** link above for more information on each report's content, pricing, and our Special Enterprise Bundle License.

### **Media Contact:**

Patrick Quinn, PQ Media, 203-921-5249, [pquinn@pqmedia.com](mailto:pquinn@pqmedia.com)  
Leo Kivijarv, PQ Media, 203-273-7081, [lkivijarv@pqmedia.com](mailto:lkivijarv@pqmedia.com)