



# Is it wise to launch a daily now?

## Abu Dhabi plans its first Arabic-language daily business newspaper

### FORUM

On the surface, the plan to launch the UAE's first Arabic-language daily business newspaper in January would seem an exciting prospect.

But questions linger over the outlook for *Alroya Altiqtis-sadiya*, a heavyweight broadsheet based in Abu Dhabi which will apparently cover all aspects of the country's lively commercial scene.

With dips in circulation and advertising revenue hitting many publishers and gloomy economic forecasts for the coming year, is this a good time to launch such an ambitious print media venture?

The founders of *Alroya Altiqtis-sadiya* clearly think so. The newspaper will be the first activity of a newly-formed group called I-Media, whose parent company, Das Holding, is backed by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, Minister of Presidential Affairs.

Following the launch of the newspaper, there are plans to introduce an associated financial news website, mobile news service and radio channel. Qusai Aljamous, who has been appointed executive editor-in-chief, declined to comment on the launch. But earlier statements suggest an intention to provide in-depth news and fuller analysis than other titles.

Tarek Daouk, managing director of Starcom MediaVest Group (SMG) in Dubai, says: "In general, from a readership point of view, it's not a bad idea. When things are good, business people tend to go by



Daouk

**MAYBE**  
**Tarek Daouk,**  
**managing director,**  
**SMG**

"When things are good business people tend to go by their gut feeling. But when things are bad, people seek more information. They investigate their decisions."



Elzubeir

**YES**  
**Mohamed Elzubeir,**  
**managing director,**  
**mediastow**

"What is happening today is a correction, not a disaster. A new newspaper might be less likely to sell ads to real estate developers but it's not the end of the world."



Katrib

**NO** Paul  
**Katrib,**  
**regional managing director,**  
**Universal Media**

"In normal times, it would be tough to break through with a new publication. At the present time, it's going to be 10 times tougher."

their gut feeling. But when things are bad, people seek more information. They investigate their decisions."

Mohamed Elzubeir, managing director of mediastow, the Dubai-based media analysis consultancy, says: "It's probably not the best time to launch a new daily, but it's not an impossible time. There is a gap in the market for quality," he says. "If you are not putting something out that is worth reading, you are wasting your money."

With regards to whether there is advertising revenue available to support another daily newspaper, Elzubeir says: "What is happening today is a correction, not a disaster. The UAE is still cash-rich. The federal government has no intention of scaling down its plans for the next 20 years. A new newspaper might be less likely to sell ads to real estate developers but it's not the end of the world."

But Paul Katrib, regional managing director of Universal Media, would question the launch of any new publication until more is known about the financial conditions of next year. "In principle, there is definitely a gap in the market for an Arabic business newspaper but with the situation as it is now, I would personally suggest a cautious approach for at least six or seven months, when we know more about how the economic situation will unfold. In normal times, it would be tough to break through with a new publication. At the present time, it's going to be 10 times tougher."