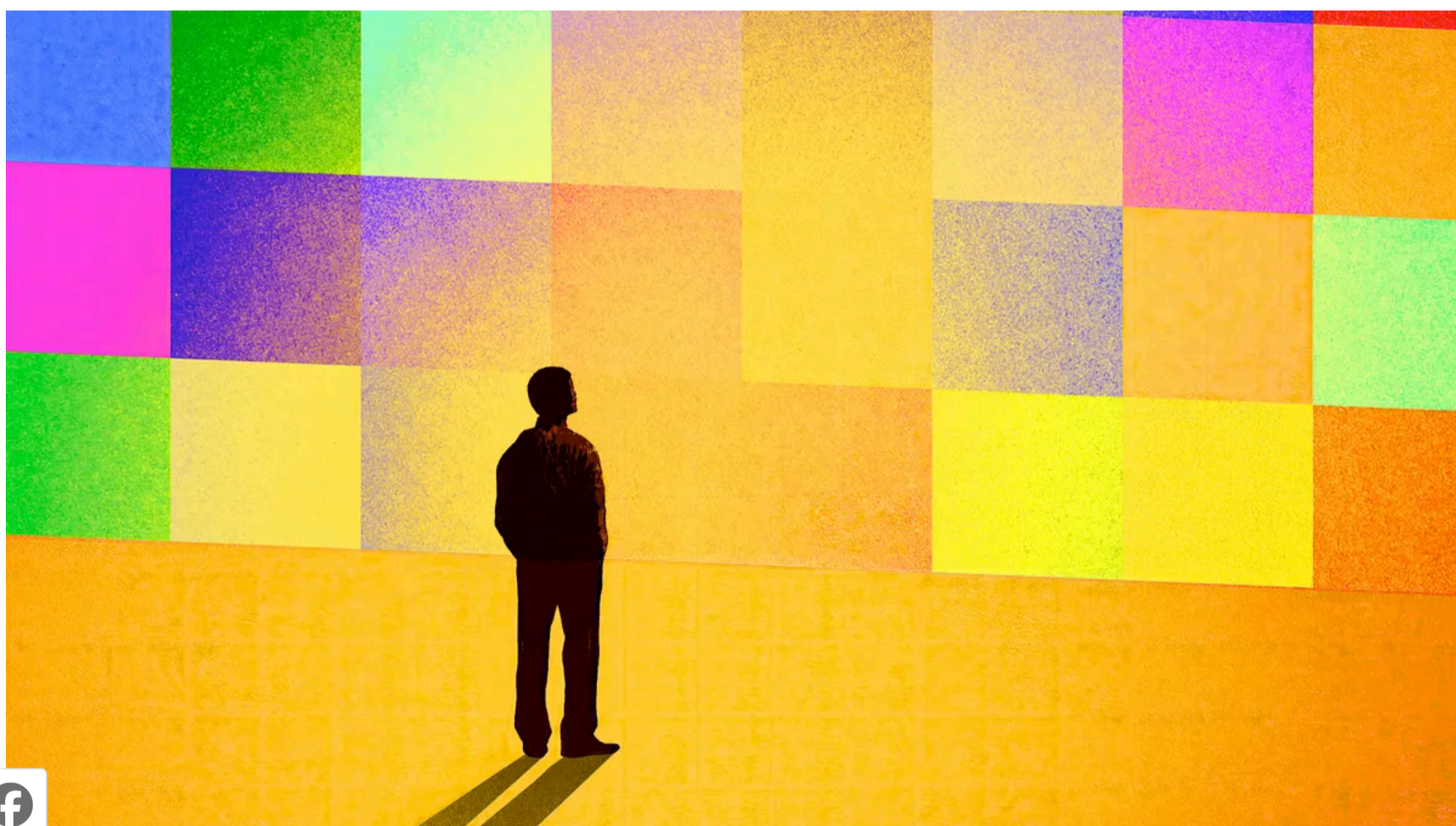


OUTLOOK

The Big Get Bigger, Indies Rise, and AI Takes Root: 3 Agency Predictions For 2025

Industry insiders brace for consolidation and automation in the year ahead.



Consolidation, AI, and a rise of independent agencies will mark 2025. rob dobi/Getty Images

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By Kyle O'Brien

12 HOURS AGO

Meet the creative minds behind viral social media campaigns at [Social Media Week](#), May 12-14 in New York City. [Register](#) now to save 35% on your pass.

Omnicom's acquisition of Interpublic Group changed the face of the agency landscape heading into 2025.

Industry insiders expect consolidation to continue to be a major theme this year, making way for independents to rise.

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Read on for 3 big predictions for agencies in the year ahead.

1. Consolidation will buoy independents

As consolidation continues among holding companies, independents are poised to benefit from the turmoil. There will no doubt be layoffs and departures as a result of the Omnicom-IPG deal, and talent could be snapped up by independents or launch their own agencies, as **they did in 2024**.

“You can merge balance sheets, but you can’t merge authenticity,” said Wil Shelton, CEO of Wil Power Integrated Marketing.

As for clients, as the big agencies get bigger, specialist agencies can add cultural fluency and relevance to the mix, Shelton added.

Eyeing greater opportunities to compete, indie agencies are forming “untraditional” strategic alliances that expand their offerings in the marketplace, said Jorge Jorge Hernandez, CMO at Majority. Adam Levine, CMO at indie agency Luquire, echoed that sentiment, pointing to **indie agency networks** that are sharing insights and supporting each other’s growth.

Tara Fray, partner, head of strategy at Alto, sees upside for independents as brands seek “tighter collaborations, fresher perspectives, and more creative ideas without the bureaucracy.”



Omnicom Confirms IPG Takeover And New Leadership Structure

As consolidation picks up next year, **private equity** will continue to be a likely buyer for agencies on the selling block.

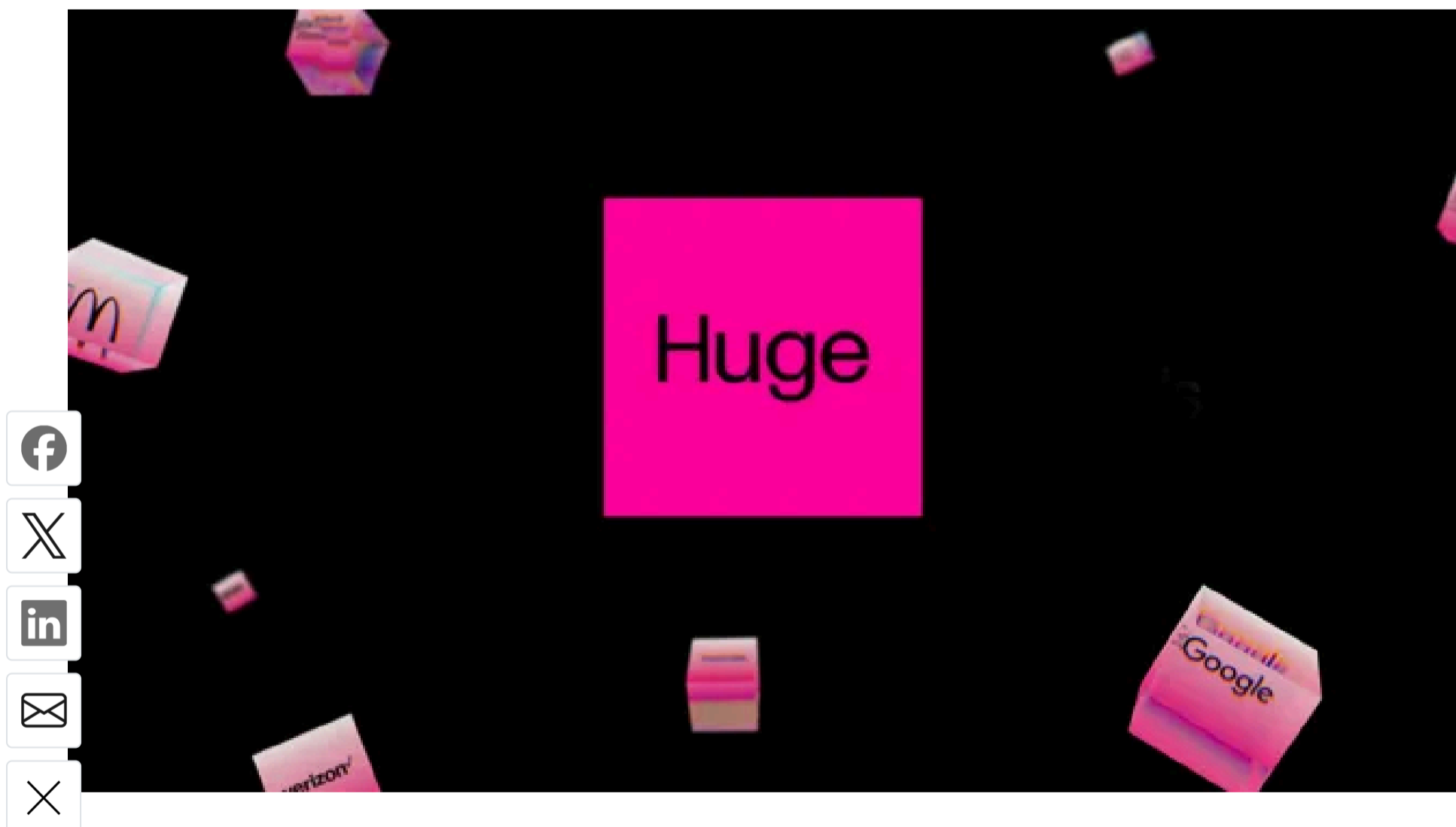
Last year saw a few PE-backed agency deals, including digital agency Huge's sale to AEA Investors in December. Lori Murphree, founder and managing partner at Evalla Advisors, expects such deals to pick up in 2025, thanks to lower interest rates and additional capital left on the table in 2024.

"PE's have also become a more favorable sale for independent agencies that want to continue to grow with an eye to a larger future sale, while de-risking their current investment," said Murphree.

Meanwhile, as holding companies compete with consulting firms like Accenture and tech giants like Google and Meta, Murphree predicts they will look to acquire more data, tech, CRM, and AI capabilities next year.

All of this market movement could prove volatile for vendors and smaller services partners who work with the agencies in question; the Omnicom-IPG deal, for instance, promises to drive \$750 million in cost savings, in part through vendor consolidation.

"When these shifts take shape, there will undoubtedly be questions about where vendors and smaller agencies stand," said Lindsey DiGiorgio, CMO at Yieldmo.



IPG Sells Huge to Private Equity firm AEA Investors

3. AI will reshape the landscape

But balancing creativity and technology is an ongoing challenge. Clients want their partners to bring AI solutions to the table, but some brands have faced backlash for **using AI**.

As a result, agencies will focus their AI use on productivity, efficiency, and personalization, forcing marketers to balance “the trade-offs between efficiency and true creative innovation,” said April Quinn, president of Americas, R/GA, who also predicts a rise in AI-focused agency startups.

“Brands want partners fluent in AI—delivering faster, smarter, personalized content. Strong tech capabilities and sharp strategy will drive bigger scopes of work,” added Jarrod Bull, managing director, MachWon.

Alternatively, the AI craze could force the pendulum to swing back toward human creativity, predicts Andy Berkenfield, CEO and partner, Duncan Channon.

“We may even see a shift from labels that point out content was generated by AI to disclaimers that it was created by actual humans,” he said.



Here Are the Creators Brands Need to Know About in 2025



KYLE O'BRIEN

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