



How to Start a **MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS SETUP** IN DUBAI

Dubai has become the creative capital of the Middle East. Global talent, investors, and creators are flocking to the city's dynamic entertainment and media landscape. Thousands of blockbuster production houses and media companies are operating in Dubai. Whether you are into film production, content creation, gaming, advertising, or digital streaming, Dubai offers a fertile environment for every kind of media entrepreneur.

Media and entertainment business in Dubai benefits from the Emirate's cutting-edge infrastructure, easy business policies, and global location. Additionally, free zones like Dubai Media City, Studio City, and Production City further attract creative minds from across the globe.

However, to start your own media and entertainment company in Dubai, you will need the right business license, registration, visas, business bank account, and more. This blog will walk you through the entire legal process of media company setup in Dubai so that you can start immediately.





MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Dubai's creative industry today is known to be one of the world's most cherished and in-demand industries. It is backed by strong government support, and over the years, the government has invested in creating a supportive ecosystem for media and entertainment companies. Initiatives like the Dubai Creative Economy Strategy further enhance the appeal of the creative sector for investors and entrepreneurs worldwide.

According to Statista, revenue in media market UAE is expected to reach USD 2.45 billion in 2025!

For those looking to enter the sector with their business, there are many opportunities. There are segments like radio, television, advertising, gaming, motion pictures, music, filming, printing, and others in which you can participate.

MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IN DUBAI

Media activities in Dubai include any activity related to the production and distribution of various forms of media content. Here are some common types of business activities in the media and entertainment sector that you can consider:

- Radio and TV broadcasting (including IPTV, OTT, and VOD services)
- Video and arcade games (interactive and non-interactive) developed and sold in the UAE
- Film production and screenings of artistic works
- Newspapers and publications
- Book fairs
- Electronic and digital media activities
- Photography services
- Media and advertising consulting
- Design and production of advertisements
- Distribution and sale of audio-visual recordings

Remember that for each specific activity, there may be different legal requirements.



Legal Requirements for Media and Entertainment Business in Dubai

Before we look at the process of starting a media and entertainment company, let us quickly go through the top legal requirements for the same. Let us look at these one by one:

Media business license:

To start and run your media and entertainment business successfully in Dubai, you will need a trade license. The license is issued by the Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) or the respective freezone authority in coordination with the Dubai Media Council. Based on the activity you choose, you must get the appropriate type of media company license in Dubai, such as:

- Broadcasting License
- Gaming License
- Film Production and Screening License
- Newspaper and Publication License
- Book Fair Organizing License
- Electronic and Digital Media License
- Photography Services License
- Media and Advertising Consultancy License
- Advertising Design and Production License



Permits and approvals

Based on the media activity you choose, you will need to get approval from following authorities:

- **National media council:** For any kind of media activity, you need to get approval from the UAE Media Council.
- **Telecommunications And Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA):** For online and telecom related media ventures.
- **Dubai Film and TV Commission (DFTC):** For film permits and on location shooting.
- **Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM):** For large scale events like concerts.
- **Ministry of Culture and Youth (MoCY):** For cultural events or activities related to arts and heritage.

How to Start a Media and Entertainment Business

Following are the steps to start a **media and entertainment business in Dubai**:

Step 1 – Choose the business activity

Start by choosing the activity for your business. As you are planning to start a media and entertainment business, the activity can be such as media production, publishing, gaming, photography, etc. Just make sure the activity you choose is permitted by the government.

Step 2 – Select the legal structure

Next, choose the legal form of your business. It can be an LLC, a sole establishment, a civil company, or a branch of a foreign company.

Step 3 – Register the trade name

Next, choose a name for your company and make sure it complies with the local naming guidelines. Then get it registered with the relevant authority.

Step 4 – Get the initial approval for business

Get initial approval from the DET or the respective free zone. This approval lets you move ahead with the business licensing process as it confirms that the government has no objection to your business establishment.

Step 5 – Get the additional approvals

For almost every media activity in the Emirate, Media Council's approval is required. Whether you are producing, publishing, distributing, or publicizing content, you will need direct approvals and permits from the authority, such as filming permits, event permits, publication permits, influencer licenses, social media advertising permits, etc. This ensures that whatever content you are putting out in public follows UAE laws, values, and standards.

Step 6 – Lease office space

Find a suitable office space for your business. In the mainland, having a physical office is a main licensing requirement. In free zones, you can get flexi-desk or co-working space options as well. Free zones like Dubai Media City and Dubai Studio City offer stunning studios and infrastructure.

Step 7 – Apply for the media company license

Apply for the right media license for your company. You can apply through DET if it is a mainland business setup or through the chosen free zone authority. Fill in the application form, submit the necessary documents, and pay the required fees. Your application will be reviewed by the authority, and once approved, your license will be issued to you.

Step 8 – Get bank account setup

Open a corporate bank account, which is essential for managing the transactions and finances of your **media and entertainment business in Dubai**. You can choose a domestic or international bank based on your needs and eligibility. Working with a business consultant can help handle this process seamlessly.

Step 9 – Set up your studio

Now that you have your license, it is time to start operating. Before that, set up your studio. Media and entertainment is a creative field, and your office should complement that. Invest in equipment, internet, content management software, and gadgets as per your business requirements.

Step 10 – Hire staff

Hire creative people with brilliant minds. Mostly in the media business, there is a requirement for editors, videographers, producers, marketers, writers, animators, event planners, and operations staff. If you are planning to hire foreign nationals, ensure they have the UAE work visa and labour card.

Step 11 – Secure your IP

Register your trademarks, copyrights, and intellectual property through the legal process in Dubai. Your creative assets are yours, make sure no one misuses them. The law provides protection for your intellectual property, so ensure proper registration and documentation.

Step 12 – Ongoing compliance

Always keep your business on the right track. Follow all applicable laws, stay updated with new regulations, and renew your licenses and visas on time. Register for corporate tax (CT) and VAT if required. If your business falls under the 9% corporate tax bracket, make sure to pay your taxes on time.

UAE Media Council's New for Social Media Influencers

According to the new rule established by the UAE Media Council, individuals who publish promotional content on social media platforms are required to obtain an advertiser permit from the Council.

- The permit is free of charge for the first 3 years for UAE citizens and residents.
- It is required irrespective of whether the promotion is paid for or unpaid.
- The permit number must be displayed on all social media accounts used for promotional content.
- The permit must not be used by any third party.
- Compliance with UAE media standards and regulations is mandatory.
- For citizens and residents, the permit is valid for 1 year and is renewable.
- For visitors, the permit is valid for 3 months and is renewable.



DOCUMENTATION FOR MEDIA LICENSE IN DUBAI

Here are the documents you will typically need to start a **media and entertainment business in Dubai**:

- Your passport copy
- Passport sized photo
- Visa and Emirates ID copy (if you are UAE resident)
- Trade name reservation certificate
- Lease agreement for office space
- NOC from current sponsor, if applicable
- Your business plan
- Articles of association of company

There may be additional document requirements. For more accurate details, we recommend getting in touch with Dubiz Business Setup.



COST OF DUBAI MEDIA LICENSE IN DUBAI

The cost of a media company license in Dubai starts at AED 30,000 onwards. There are several expenses involved in setting up a media business in Dubai, and these may vary from one business to another. Visa costs, approval fees, studio space costs, marketing expenses, and other related charges together make up the total cost of your business setup.

If you need a clearer picture of costs, you can talk to our experts, and they will let you know.





Freezones Meant for Media Companies

There are certain freezones in Dubai and UAE that specialize in media and entertainment and offer spectacular environment for business setup.

- Dubai Media City
- Dubai Production City
- Dubai Studio City
- Dubai Design District (D3)
- DMCC – Gaming center
- Dubai Internet City (DIC)

Benefits of Setting up a Media Company in Dubai

Here is why you should start a **media and entertainment business in Dubai**:

1. High media consumption

Dubai's market has a high appetite for content of all forms, whether offline or online. Whether it is video streaming, podcasts, short-form videos, films, vlogging, gaming streams, or lifestyle content, fresh content is always enjoyed here. With a 99% internet penetration rate, people spend a lot of time engaging with good content.

2. Strategic global location:

Dubai's location between Europe, Asia, and Africa makes it a powerful global gateway. You can easily distribute content, manage cross-regional operations, and collaborate with international clients.

3. Dedicated free zones:

Media-focused free zones are designed specifically for the media and creative industries, and they offer amazing benefits such as 100% foreign ownership, full profit repatriation, world-class studios, tax exemptions, and a simple business setup process.

4. Tax benefits

You will find one of the world's most favourable tax regimes in Dubai. There is zero personal income tax and corporate tax exemption, making Dubai a profitable and cost-effective base for your operations.

5. Government support:

Initiatives like the Dubai Creative Economy Strategy and National Media Council regulations and programs actively promote the growth of the creative sector. The recent Golden Visa for creative professionals is a great example.

6. Advanced infrastructure:

For smooth operation of your media business, you get top-notch production studios and equipment, high-speed internet, and advanced logistics in Dubai.

7. Networking opportunities:

Dubai's calendar is always packed with local as well as international events like Dubai International Film Festival, CABSAT, Dubai Lynx and GITEX Global. You can collaborate, gain exposure, and network with industry leaders and professionals.

CONCLUSION

Starting a **media and entertainment business in Dubai** is a profitable venture, especially for those whose creativity has that spark. To get started, you will need to follow the setup process as explained in this guide.

You will need a business license from the competent authority as well as a permit from the Dubai Media Council to start your legal operations. Taking assistance from professional companies or specialists can speed up the process of setting up media company in Dubai.



Dubiz

Can Help You With Media Business Setup

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