

Why is Al Jazeera America Shutting Down?

✖ By Ronn Torossian, CEO & Founder, [5W PR](#)

Why they thought America had an appetite for yet another liberal leaning news network is tough to figure. The slot of interesting [international news agency](#) was already filled as well. So where, exactly, did Al Jazeera think they would find their niche?

Turns out, that question is little more than academic. Al Jazeera America is shutting its doors, and doing so while offering its employees very little warning. It's likely little consolation, but everyone knew this was a long shot. When your business plan calls for up to a decade in subsidies just to pay the bills, you know you're in a risky situation. Still, though, to be fair, ten years is TEN years, not three. But that's all the Qatar-based financiers of [Al Jazeera America](#) gave their fledgling network before pulling the plug.

Surprising, considering several factors. First, Al Jazeera America had weathered a storm the sort of which has taken down many other news agencies. The founder was booted along with several other employees. These included immediately filed lawsuits against the company. Still, things were looking up, and current leadership, as well as the rank and file, were smiling, hopeful.

Adding to the shock factor, things were looking up at the



first of the year. Media reports have various network locations being sent brand new broadcasting equipment as late as a few weeks ago. Recruiters had feelers out, looking for fresh new news talent. There was no warning. The closure went off like a bomb.

Sure, morale was on the upswing, but bottom line numbers were not ... and business is business.

Timing was likely part of it. In the midst of a hotly contested and apparently eternal presidential race, the major established brands had a place at the table. AJAM was seated in the next room with the kids and the upstart internet-based pundits. Think about it: [Fox](#) hosted multiple debates, so did [CNN](#). [MSNBC](#) and [ABC](#) both had a shot. Even [Fox Business](#) was given a chance to shine, hosting a debate many viewers needed a map and a Sherpa to find on the dial.

[AJAM](#) got none of this. Left out in the cold as viewers flocked to the other brands, the company continued to languish. Few watched regularly, and fewer still referenced the network's coverage of the same stories over the competition.

It would always have been a tough sell. The timing made it nearly impossible to grab positive brand momentum.

About the Author: *Ronn Torossian is the CEO and founder of New York City based [Public Relations Firm 5W PR](#).*