

# Entrepreneur Success Stories Turkey

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2020



**Building Markets**

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# Success Story: Ananas Epoxy Ev

Meet Abdulrahman Milli, Owner of Ananas Epoxy Ev



"I have spent my whole life working as an employee in various companies and fields, and now I am really proud that I have my own business, my own brand, and my own products that I market to customers."



"Building Markets has had a tremendous effect on my company. They introduced me to many businesses, and I was able to sign sales contracts with some of them."



## Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.

I started out my career in Turkey supplying tables to restaurants, and later worked at an interior design company, where I began to experiment with my current unique creations. My dream came true two years ago when I launched my own company. Ananas Epoxy Ev is a furniture company that produces home and office furniture and household items, utilizing epoxy resin, stone and wood materials.

## How is your business doing now?

Our sales have just started picking up again, after the pandemic hit. Thankfully, even though our sales decreased and we experienced a difficult time, we did not stop working and produced as many tables as possible so that we

would be ready for sales after we re-opened.

## What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?

My lack of knowledge of the rules and regulations in Turkey was a huge obstacle for me when I first tried to enter the Turkish market, but we were able to overcome it through constant communication with and support from consultants.

## How has this business changed your life?

There have been many challenges to face, since I am not in my homeland, but this company has made me appreciate my success. It has been a great opportunity to start a business and to earn a living. I also see this business as a transformation on a personal level

because I have spent my whole life working as an employee in various companies and fields. Now I am really proud to say that I have my own business, my own brand, and my own products that I market to customers in foreign countries.

## What are the next steps for your company?

We want to concentrate more on exporting. So far, we have started exporting to the USA and Iraq. We are now working on developing an independent line for the KSA. In addition to this, I aim to open a huge sales gallery to display our products. We are also looking at increasing our production capacity to meet the needs of a more diverse clientele base and creating higher-quality tables at lower prices.

## What is the smartest move you made to increase sales?

During the pandemic we signed more contracts with local e-commerce platforms. I am thankful we have made the switch just in time since everything has moved online now.

I have also founded "Ward", a new online marketing platform aimed at the Arab craftspeople in Istanbul. It has the positive impact of helping them build new networks while promoting their products.

## Tell us about your partnerships with Turkish businesses.

We have had partnerships with some of the big Turkish e-commerce companies. These were challenging as we struggled with understanding contracts in the Turkish language, meeting strict terms for a startup, and finding

the necessary information to make our storefronts successful.

## What advice do you have for other business owners?

The most important thing is to never imitate other products. Try to be unique, and produce new things that are not already available in the market because the sales potential of such products is higher.

## Which Building Markets services did you most benefit from?

Building Markets has had a tremendous effect on my company. They helped introduce me to many businesses, including some with which I was able to sign sales contracts.



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# Success Story: Ay Nour

Meet Ahlam Muhibaldeen, Owner of Ay Nour



**"Any female entrepreneur that wants to start a business should be passionate and motivated about what she wants to do. She should never give up, no matter the challenges."**



**"This business has been my source of inspiration, motivation, and financial stability."**



## **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your business.**

In 2015, I came to Turkey from Syria, settled in Hatay, and spent two years working as a volunteer in a project to support children who have been separated from their parents. In 2018, when I moved to Gaziantep, I was sure that I wanted to start my own venture and began participating in many workshops offered by local organizations. By December of that year, I was able to register my company, which was initially just a gym, cafe, and library, but slowly I was able to expand operations and add other services. Today, we work in the fitness and beauty sectors providing cosmetic and salon treatments, nutrition and physiotherapy services, as well as other related activities.

## **How is your business doing now?**

Our business had a strong start, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we had to completely shut down for two months. Even after re-opening in June, things are not the way they used to be.

## **What challenges have you faced as a Syrian woman entrepreneur in Turkey?**

As a woman who wears a veil, my appearance alone was a challenge when doing business as people were initially hesitant to interact with me. My lack of knowledge of the Turkish language was also a huge barrier.

## **What are the next steps for you and your business?**

Currently, we are concentrating on growing our online presence by joining social media platforms, such as YouTube and WhatsApp. We also have additional goals to expand the business, including buying the property we currently rent, opening other branches, and adding new equipment to the facility.

## **In what ways did this business change your life?**

This business has been my source of inspiration, motivation, and financial stability. I have been able to continue my volunteer work while still being able to provide for my family.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

If I could give advice to other women entrepreneurs, it would be to start a business you are truly passionate about and motivated by. Without this, she will not have the drive to persevere. She should never give up, no matter the challenges. As long as she believes in herself and her work, she should continue in spite of any obstacles. She should remember that she can always ask for support from her friends and the people around her, and ask for advice from those who are interested in seeing the business grow.

## **How did you benefit from Building Markets' services?**

Building Markets' online learning platform has been very informative. I have also been able to participate in their virtual mentorship bootcamps and training sessions.



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# Success Story: AySafa

Meet Mohammed Yaser Alsabsabi, Owner of AySafa



"This company has allowed me to escape the paycheck-to-paycheck life and helped me become a self-reliant businessman."



"Moving forward, we want to implement the suggestions we received through Building Markets' consultancy services and focus on developing a unique brand for our business."



## Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.

Initially, we began studying the geographical advantages of Turkey's landscape. Goods produced in Turkey have a great reputation in the Arabian Gulf. Today, AySafa is a food and beverages company, established in Kayseri. We supply Turkish-made food and natural spring water products to the Gulf region.

## How is your business doing now?

Currently we have strategically focused our exporting operations on Kuwait, which is an advantageous approach due to the currency exchange.

## How has this business changed your life?

This company has allowed me to escape the paycheck-to-paycheck life and helped me become a self-reliant businessman.

## What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?

It has been difficult to understand the tax system in Turkey. Accessing the market in Turkey has also been difficult. You really have to prove yourself to gain people's trust.

## What are the next steps for your company?

Moving forward, we want to implement the suggestions we received through Building Markets' consultancy services and focus on developing a unique brand for our business. We want to focus on setting ourselves apart from the competition. For example, we are looking into manufacturing flavored water in glass bottles, which is something that has not been produced in Turkey yet.

## What advice do you have for other business owners?

In the beginning, entrepreneurs have to make sacrifices. So, if you are not passionate about being an entrepreneur, I would not recommend opening a business.

## Which Building Markets services did you most benefit from?

We use Building Markets' Matchmaking Platform to access tender opportunities and have taken their course on tender applications. The information we receive from Building Markets is always trustworthy and accurate and their services are truly valuable.



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# Success Story: Dandy 3M

Meet Mostafa Dandy, Owner of Dandy 3M



"Ninety percent of the problems that small enterprises face stem from trying to rush profits...They must develop plans and goals."



"There is strong competition in Turkey, so it is important to learn Turkish and build strong relations with Turkish companies."



## Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.

I used to live in the Emirates, where I formed good relationships and was able to gain experience in various different fields. Around four years ago, we established our company Dandy 3M, in Istanbul, focusing first on foreign trade, then international shipping, and eventually fashion and car rentals. Today, Dandy 3M is a multi-faceted company, offering services in the field of international cargo shipping, car rentals, and international trading of fashion and food.

## How is your business doing now?

During its first year of operation, the company's performance was weak, but, with dedication, we succeeded. Recently, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, we had to

halt most of our services, but we have gradually relaunched them and things are improving.

## What are the next steps for your company?

We are planning to expand our fashion trade services. Currently, we have three employees in our fashion department, and I want to bring on more staff so that each employee can specialize in marketing to a specific country.

## What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?

So far, the biggest challenge for me has been dealing with financial consultants. Work life in Turkey is completely different from that in Syria and in Gulf countries, in terms of laws and regulations. Additionally, language was a major barrier for me entering the Turkish

market. My son, who runs the company with me, was able to learn Turkish quickly, which has helped us overcome this barrier.

## How has this business changed your life?

Previously, when I lived in the Gulf, I owned a company and worked in real estate. When I came to Turkey, I began to take part in totally different fields. Since Turkey is situated in a strategic geographic location, it really opened up new horizons for me in trade. Before I moved here, my friends in the Gulf told me I would fail. However, after four years of owning this company, I can tell them that I am successful.

## What is the smartest move you made to increase sales?

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we moved to digital marketing and I built a website for our business. This was crucial for us in overcoming the crisis and increasing our sales.

## What advice do you have for other business owners?

It is important to research each project you are interested in pursuing, before starting any business. As an owner, you have to be patient and bear the difficulties of working life. Ninety percent of the problems that small enterprises face stem from trying to rush profits, and hence they fail. They must develop plans and goals that match their business models and marketing needs. There is strong competition in Turkey, so it is important to learn Turkish and build strong relations with Turkish companies.

## Which Building Markets services did you most benefit from?

Building Markets has had a positive impact on my company and has allowed us to build a network of business connections. Through this, I was introduced to new companies and signed contracts with many of them.



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# Success Story: Ehsan İnşaat

Meet Ahmad Alahmad, Owner of Ehsan İnşaat



“Being in Turkey has really expanded my domestic and international connections.”

“When you start a business, it is important to specialize in a sector in which you not only have an interest, but also growth and development potential.”

## Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.

We are a general trading company that provides equipment, tools, and products to Syria, such as: water filtration systems, medical equipment and medicine, raw materials for construction, and even toys for children. We decided to start this company because we found that Northern Syria had a scarcity of raw materials that hindered its ability to rebuild in areas affected by the war. Our primary goal has been to provide these materials from Turkey.

## How is your business doing now?

Our work was affected by the pandemic due to flight restrictions, which impacted our ability to trade and deliver orders on time. However, this did not

cause too much damage to our company.

## What are the next steps for your company?

We are currently focusing on importing products for children from China to send to Syria.

## What have been the biggest opportunities and challenges for you in starting a business in Turkey?

Once you start your business, you automatically start building connections. Being in Turkey has really expanded my domestic and international connections. At first, one of the biggest challenges I faced was my lack of Turkish language skills, which really affected our business development. Additionally, I am the only person managing business operations. I am a PhD

student here in Turkey, so trying to balance studying and running a business has put a lot of pressure on myself and my family. I have to travel a lot for work, but it is necessary to provide for my family.

## What has been your experience with tenders?

When I worked at a trade company in Syria, I had noticed that most imported products were coming there from Turkey. After I moved to Turkey, this is how I got the idea to start a business that was involved in applying to tenders and exporting to Syria. It is not easy to start applying to tenders because they are time consuming and the results are not guaranteed. However, I gained experience and began to understand which tenders and organizations I was most competitive for. My business eventually won around 13-14

contracts, totalling almost 300K USD.

## What advice do you have for other business owners?

When you start a business, it is important to specialize in a sector in which you not only have an interest, but also one in which you have growth and development potential. There is a lot of competition in Turkey, so you have to focus your efforts and energy into one specialization.

## Which Building Markets' services did you benefit most from?

I have participated in Building Markets' tender application seminars and receive their tender distribution services. These services are very beneficial to us and provide us with access to business development opportunities.



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# Success Story: FWNT

Meet Fadia Shaker, Owner of FWNT



**"My experience in Turkey has expanded my horizons. In Syria, our ideas were restricted, and here we are able to unleash our ambitions and realize our dreams."**



**"Knowing that our games make a difference in children's lives helps to keep me going and face all challenges head-on."**



## **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your business.**

Our business started as an educational center for children. We tried buying games suitable to our curriculum but were not able to find what we were looking for in Turkey. Buying the toys from abroad, the costs were too high. Instead, with the engineers who work with us, we decided to make our own toys with a laser machine and a 3D printer. Today, we manufacture unique educational toys and games for children, ages 5-14 years. Each of these games comes in a variety of editions, complete with an individual informational booklet. Our main goal is to encourage children's interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and simplify its concepts from a young age.

## **What are the challenges you have faced as a Syrian woman entrepreneur in Turkey?**

Learning the Turkish laws and regulations is a great challenge to doing business here as a foreigner. On top of that, balancing my childcare duties and my professional work has at times been difficult.

It was very difficult for us to access the Turkish customer market, so we have focused mainly on Syrians. Despite this difficulty, doing business in Turkey has expanded my horizons. In Syria, my education center was quite traditional and our ideas were restricted. But, in Turkey, we are able to unleash our ambition and realize our dreams.

## **How have you overcome these challenges?**

I always make sure that I finish whatever I decide to do. I also have a great staff supporting me and standing behind me in this work. We do this work for children and what we are doing has a lot of meaning for us.

## **How did this business change your life?**

This work has been a great opportunity for us to train thousands of people through our games. Knowing that our games make a difference in children's lives helps to keep me going and face all challenges head-on.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

The most important piece of advice I can offer is to do business honestly, work with your staff transparently, and always be respectful and appreciative. We have always done our best to live up to this, and thankfully I have a great team that believes in the work we do, standing behind me and supporting our company.

## **Which Building Markets services did you benefit from?**

Building Markets' online Matchmaking Platform has allowed me to develop brand awareness for my company. They have also helped my business stay up to date on the latest tender opportunities available, when finding the right information can be time consuming and difficult for a small company.



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# Success Story: Injaaz Tech

Meet Mohammad Naser, Owner of Injaaz Tech



**"Prior to registering my business, I spent a year planning and studying the market, and even then there were unanticipated challenges when it came to running the business in reality."**



**"Focus on something you are passionate about and have a background in. Do not give up easily."**



## **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.**

Before we started Injaaz, I already had 10 years of experience working in the public sector. I noticed there was always difficulty finding quality IT support when a technical problem arose. So, I decided to gather together freelancers, who specialized in different fields, to provide businesses and organizations with solutions to their technical problems. Today, Injaaz Tech provides these IT services to companies and organizations in Gaziantep, Istanbul, Ankara, and inside Syria.

## **How is your business doing now?**

Even after the pandemic, our business is doing very well. Due to the shutdown, many businesses were forced to switch over to remote or online work. Since we specialize in this sector, this switch benefited us.

## **What are the next steps for your company?**

We are currently working to increase our outreach to more organizations and institutions.

## **What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?**

The biggest opportunity I found in establishing a business in Turkey is the open market- you can move around, import, and be flexible. The challenges I faced were in regards to policies. If a person does not have a solid understanding of Turkey's domestic economic policies, they will have a difficult time sustaining their business.

## **How has this business changed your life?**

My life has definitely changed for the better. There is a big difference between working as an employee and being an entrepreneur. When you work as an employee, you have limited space for improvement. As an entrepreneur you have the freedom to change aspects of your work as you see fit. It's very fulfilling to work on something you are passionate about.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

Focus on something you are passionate about and have a background in. Do not give up easily. There is a statistic that around 70% of startups fail within their first year, either because they were not prepared enough or they gave up when there were setbacks. Prior to registering my business, I spent a year planning and studying the market, and even then there were unanticipated challenges when it came to running the business in reality.



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# Success Story: Lazord Çikolata Evi

Meet Lobna Heli, Owner of Lazord



**"It took a great deal of time and effort to start my own business here, but it has been a great opportunity to experience the satisfaction of success."**



**"I have a strong relationship with many other Syrian women entrepreneurs, and we are really committed to supporting and motivating each other to work and succeed."**



## **Please introduce yourself and your company.**

My name is Lobna Heli and in 2015, I came to Turkey from Aleppo, where I was a senior professional. When I first came to Turkey from Syria, I was working as a volunteer to help other refugees. After a while, I began to consider starting something of my own in order to provide financially for my daughters. I decided to open a chocolate dessert shop, in Gaziantep, in November 2017. Eventually, this became a restaurant that serves not only chocolate but also Syrian and Turkish food.

## **How is your company doing now?**

We are resuming work now, after temporarily closing due to COVID-19. Even during our closure, we tried to make use of our time by promoting and marketing our products from home. We also launched

"Humanity Gathers Us", a charity kitchen campaign, which increased sales and helped cover expenses and any financial loss the pandemic caused. The campaign, which allows Syrian and Turkish women in our community to distribute grocery gift cards to families negatively affected by the pandemic, is still ongoing, and it has played a crucial role in promoting our brand and gaining customers' confidence.

## **What challenges have you faced as a Syrian woman entrepreneur in Turkey?**

It was a huge challenge for me to open a business outside of my homeland. I was struggling with some financial difficulties and had to work with a very lean budget. I also did not know the Turkish language or legal system very well.

## **How have you overcome these challenges?**

I had to seek the consultation and guidance of tax accountants to help me and also made a huge effort to learn Turkish.

## **What are the next steps for your business?**

Our restaurant concept is around home cooking, so we are planning to launch our own line of frozen food products, such as kibbeh and joshpara.

## **How has this business changed your life?**

It took a great deal of time and effort to start my own business here, but it has been a great opportunity to experience the satisfaction of success.

## **How do you see your role in supporting other businesses led by Syrian and Turkish women?**

I have a strong relationship with many other Syrian female entrepreneurs, and we are really committed to supporting and motivating each other to work and succeed. We provide free marketing services for products handmade by widows who are supporting their families and participate in other social service initiatives supporting Syrian women.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

First listen to training professionals and mentors before you start a company because it is really important to learn the rules and regulations of the country you live in. Second, choose your accountant carefully and consult specialists to guide you on the right path.

## **Which Building Markets services did you benefit from?**

The training, mentorship, and counsel we received from Building Markets played a crucial role in the development of my business. In fact, there was a point this year where we were going to close down our project, but thanks to valuable advice from the Building Markets training team, we were able to continue our work during the COVID-19 lockdown.



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# Success Story: NOVAPAK

Meet Humam Adi, Owner of Novapak



**"Turkey is such a large manufacturing force in the international market, and this allowed us to increase our sales by 15%."**



**"Entrepreneurs in Turkey need to understand that the Turkish market is unique in its model and structure. We spent an entire year studying the Turkish market and our sector."**



## **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.**

We are a hygiene product company that produces and sells facial tissues, toilet paper, and other similar products. In 2013, we started a business in Iraq/Kurdistan close to the border of Turkey, but we faced many challenges with policies, manufacturing malfunctions, and discrimination. Our products were selling well but these issues we faced really affected our production. As a result, in 2017, we decided to relocate to Gaziantep.

## **How is your business doing now?**

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, our sales actually increased because the international market stopped importing these products from China and started looking for

alternatives. Turkey is such a large manufacturing force in the international market, and this allowed us to increase our sales by 15%.

## **What are the next steps for your company?**

We currently export to seven countries and we are planning to expand this reach.

## **What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?**

The market in Turkey is very competitive, especially in our sector. The production and manufacturing aspect of our work is not an issue, but marketing and selling our products is difficult. Further, being Syrian in Turkey has proven to be a challenge when trying to create a business network within the local market.

## **How has this business changed your life?**

After establishing and getting past the initial startup stages of our business, we have become comfortable financially. This has allowed us to stop worrying just about survival and to start focusing on bettering our business and ourselves.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

Entrepreneurs in Turkey need to understand that the Turkish market is unique in its model and structure. We spent an entire year studying the Turkish market and our sector. This allowed us to gather important information, such as where to source the best quality paper materials from and where the highest demand in the market is. This helped us prepare for when we actually established our business. This research and preparation as well as investing in online marketing is what helped us better our reputation and increase our sales.

## **Which Building Markets' services did you most benefit from?**

We participated in Building Markets' mentorship program. Our mentor was a very successful businesswoman who was able to counsel us and share with us her experience and expertise in trade and business. She guided us through online marketing strategies and was always available to help.



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# Success Story: Oliver Tekstil

## Meet the Founder of Oliver Tekstil



**“Last year, our company ranked third in Adana amongst all menswear manufacturers. Now, our goal is to become first, not just in Adana, but all over Turkey!”**



**“Experience and relationship building are the most important parts of running a business.”**



### **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.**

Oliver Tekstil is a clothing manufacturer that specializes in menswear. Our company was originally founded in Syria. In 2013, due to the war, we relocated to Turkey.

### **How is your business doing now?**

When I first moved my company here, I faced so many problems, as I was entering a market that I had very little information about. With time I adjusted to this new environment, and thanks to my background and experience in the field, I was able to build strong relationships in the Turkish market.

### **What are the next steps for your company?**

Last year, our company ranked third in Adana amongst all menswear manufacturers. Now, our goal is to become first, not just in Adana, but all over Turkey!

### **What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?**

There is a lot of competition in Turkey, which was especially challenging for me as a foreigner. Along with my previous experience in the clothing sector, learning Turkish helped me to participate and succeed in the Turkish market.

### **Tell us about your partnership with Turkish businesses.**

We have contracts with many famous brands in Turkey, which we were able to obtain thanks to our strong business network. The quality of our products played an important and positive role in developing these partnerships.

### **What is the smartest move you made to increase sales?**

I made it my priority to learn Turkish so that I could build strong relationships in the Turkish community and enter the market here. As a result, we were able to make many contacts, which led to partnerships with large companies. We also decided to export our products. Currently, we export around 30% of our production to France, Germany, and Saudi Arabia.

### **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

Experience and relationship building are the most important parts of running a business. Here in Turkey, this is especially true because competition is strong and small companies are easily affected by crises.

### **Which Building Markets services did you most benefit from?**

Our business is registered on Building Markets' Matchmaking Platform, which helps us connect with other buyers and suppliers in the region. We also utilize Building Markets' online learning platform.

# Success Story: Rayat Company

Meet Omran Alhoms, Owner of Rayat Company



**“We had strong relationships in the Syrian market and we were well known. Then we came to Turkey and found it was not as easy to build business relations.”**



**“Anyone looking to do business in Turkey should first start to build relationships with Turkish companies before entering the market because there is strong competition here.”**



## **Tell us about yourself and your company**

We originally founded our company in Syria, specializing in exporting and importing medical equipment. Because of the war there we had to move to Turkey in 2015. We offer medical products such as prosthetics, medical braces, and splints, in addition to providing healthcare facilities with medical equipment.

## **How is your company doing now?**

Currently our company is doing well in spite of the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **What are the next steps for your company?**

We are planning to enter the online market and use social media platforms on a larger scale. Our company also plans to attend exhibitions on the future of medical equipment technology in order to build new business relationships.

## **What are the opportunities and challenges of doing business in Turkey?**

Dealing with the banks in Turkey has been a struggle. In Syria, it was easy to work with the banks, but here, as someone without Turkish nationality, it is difficult to access loans to develop our company. Business life in Turkey is also completely different from that in Syria. The Turkish market is huge and the laws and regulations for doing business are different than what we previously knew. We had strong relationships in the Syrian market and we were well known. Then we came to Turkey and found it was not as easy to build business relations. It takes time through working in the market and learning about its requirements.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

Anyone looking to do business in Turkey should first start to build relationships with Turkish companies before entering the market, because there is strong competition here. Conduct a thorough and realistic market study before starting any business. Otherwise, you cannot understand your chances of success.

## **Which Building Markets services did you benefit most from?**

Having my company verified by Building Markets allowed me to network and make connections with other companies. I attended their training courses and individual counselling sessions to develop my business, and submitted tender bids through the Building Markets matchmaking platform.

# Success Story: Salt and Sugar

Meet Razan Atassi, Owner of Salt and Sugar



"Being an active community member brings me joy and contentment, and meeting with other women entrepreneurs allows us to share and exchange ideas, experiences, and operational updates."



"I am proud of the community I've built and I hope to be an example for other women who are looking for ambition to accomplish anything they want."



## Please introduce yourself and your company.

Salt and Sugar specializes in creating prepared foods and preserved Syrian specialty foods. We also provide catering services. The idea for Salt and Sugar came to me when I was working for a Swedish organization in the field of women's empowerment. We saw that there were many women looking for job opportunities but who didn't have the necessary skills or work experience since they had only ever been housewives. I wanted to present these women with an opportunity where they could use the skill sets they already had, such as cooking. At the same time, we realized there were women in the workforce who did not have time to cook, so it seemed like a great opportunity to fill both needs.

## How is your company doing now?

Due to the pandemic, I halted operations in order to avoid risking the health of my employees and customers. Our sales decreased and now we're basically starting up again from scratch.

## What are the challenges you have faced as a Syrian woman entrepreneur in Turkey?

The main challenge was understanding policies and regulations. I did not have a reliable consultant, which really affected us in the beginning. That's why I always say that any woman who's thinking about starting any sort of project or business needs to first participate in workshops and seminars to learn about local laws and policies.

## What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to owning a business in Turkey?

There are many opportunities here in Turkey to access workshops and seminars as well as networking events for Syrian entrepreneurs. For example, the Syrian Economic Forum helped us register our business and get work permits.

## What are the next steps for your business?

We are currently planning to relaunch next month, considering all necessary health and safety procedures, to ensure zero health risk to our customers.

## How has this business changed your life?

This business has impacted my life immensely. My sense of responsibility towards myself and my community has amplified, and

I'm very pleased that I can connect women in need with a job opportunity in a respectful work environment. Being an active community member brings me joy and contentment, even though it can be associated with a lot of pressure.

## How do you see your role in supporting other businesses led by Syrian and Turkish women?

When I meet with other women entrepreneurs, we're able to share and exchange ideas, experiences, and operational updates. I am proud of the community I've built and I hope to be an example for other women who are looking for ambition to accomplish anything they want.

## What advice do you have for other business owners?

My key advice would be to

participate in workshops and seminars to learn about local laws, regulations, and policies before establishing anything. I benefited greatly from the seminars and workshops that I attended. The information you gain from these activities open up a lot of opportunities and help create a clearer picture and understanding of your potential business. Gather as much information regarding regulations as you can and be sure to engage good legal counsel.

## Which Building Markets services did you benefit from?

Building Markets has provided me with access to helpful training opportunities and business development services, such as invitations to networking events and connecting me to potential grant opportunities.



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# Success Story: Şam Aksesuar

## Meet the Founders of Şam Aksesuar



**“Determine your goals and how to reach them, and plan to upgrade your product constantly to keep up with the market.”**



**“Even though we were working in the same sector in Syria, Turkey has granted us new opportunities and markets.”**



### **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.**

We produce accessories for shoes, slippers, belts, and bags in various colors, shapes, and materials. Our company was officially established in Gaziantep in 2012, but our real start was in 2010. In the beginning, it was an experiment. We own a factory in Syria in the same sector, so we have the right experience. When we found that our work in Turkey was going well, we decided to officially establish our business here.

### **How is your business doing now?**

It is very good, and we are growing in spite of the difficulties during the pandemic. We stopped our work for a while during the COVID-19 lockdown to take precautions, but we have since resumed it. We have sales

contracts with many Turkish companies for shoe and clothing accessories as well as with some major companies abroad.

### **How has this business changed your life?**

Even though we were working in the same sector in Syria, Turkey has granted us new opportunities and markets that we had never heard about while we were in our home country. Turkey has a strong economy, and the market is very diverse and expansive. Launching a business in Turkey was a real challenge for us, but thanks to Allah and hard work, we were able to overcome obstacles.

### **What are the next steps for your company?**

Alongside increasing our personnel, we are upgrading our machinery and other factory equipment to be able to expand our production capacity and meet local and export market demands. We are concentrating on building new exporting partnerships.

### **What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?**

In the beginning, we faced some difficulties in regards to Turkish laws and regulations. Starting a new business in a country where you do not know the rules or culture is not easy. The market here is totally different than in Syria -- even the process for finding new clients and making a marketing plan. There is also much more competition in Turkey.

### **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

At the start of the business, we advise them to establish a partnership with a Turkish citizen or employ Turkish citizens because they will be fully aware of the laws and rules of the country. It is important to research the Turkish laws relevant to the field they will be working in, as well as to understand how the procedures for buying and selling are carried out. Determine your goals and how to reach them, and plan to upgrade your product constantly to keep up with the market.

### **Which Building Markets' services did you most benefit from?**

Our company benefited a lot from the different workshops, training courses, and mentorship sessions held by Building Markets. Through these, we were able to build a network, meet relevant companies, and sign contracts, as well as connecting with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to help us obtain work permits for our workers.

# Success Story: Souq Al Anadol

Meet Saleh Al Abdullah, Owner of Souq Al Anadol



**"All of our services are in the interest of making Turkish goods more marketable and well-known in the international market."**



**"In spite of all the challenges, I think my life would have been much harder without this company. I am grateful for the opportunity to start this project in Turkey."**



## **Please introduce yourself and tell us about your company.**

Souq Al Anadol is an e-commerce and e-marketing company. Through our wholesale website, we display products from thousands of Turkish businesses to international clients who are looking to import. Around three years ago, we noticed that foreign companies were facing difficulties in tracking the origins and costs of the products they were purchasing. So, we decided to start a business in Gaziantep that would provide clients with access to nearly the full breadth of the Turkish market, with negotiable price offers. To facilitate business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce and foreign trade, we provide a full range of services to our clients with product quotations, translation and legal consultations, inspections of goods, shipping, and more.

## **How is your business doing now?**

While our sales decreased slightly during the pandemic, we kept working, and now our situation is excellent, thanks to Allah. Since we opened our Istanbul branch last year, we have achieved a 70% increase in sales.

## **How has this business changed your life?**

Having this company made me feel successful, especially after we launched our new branch in Istanbul. In spite of all the challenges, I think my life would have been much harder without this company, and I am grateful for the opportunity to start this project in Turkey.

## **What are the next steps for your company?**

I aspire to be a global trademark like Ali Baba, where we bring every sector and product to our website and can reach customers from everywhere in the world. In the future, we want to open a large showroom and a bigger warehouse, as we expand our product selection, as well as bring on more staff.

## **What are the biggest opportunities and challenges to starting a business in Turkey?**

Initially, we struggled to come to terms with the unfamiliar rules and regulations of doing business in a new country while also working out air freight logistics, on which nearly 80% of our business depends. We have overcome these challenges by working with consultants.

## **What is the smartest move you made to increase sales?**

We really concentrated on strategically increasing our outreach. For example, we employed the use of targeted online sponsored advertisements and created Turkish, English, and Arabic versions of our webpage to extend our reach globally.

## **Tell us about your partnership with Turkish businesses.**

We work with thousands of domestic manufacturers to display and sell their goods abroad. All of our services are in the interest of making Turkish goods more marketable and well-known in the international market, and we are very pleased to be able to have such a wide range of partners to contract with.

## **What advice do you have for other business owners?**

It is very important to understand the buying and selling process of the country you are planning to launch a business in. First, determine your goals and make a strategic plan to reach them. Then, choose the right place to launch your products into the market. Lastly, be patient, especially at the start of your project.

## **Which Building Markets services did you most benefit from?**

We have benefited a lot from Building Markets' tender distribution services. It has helped us increase our client base.



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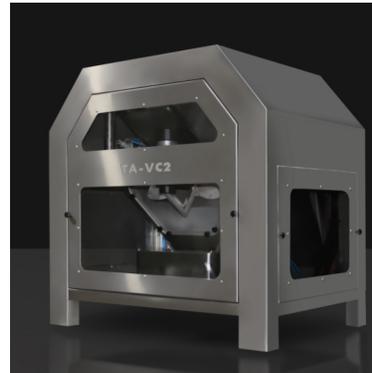
[/listings/souq-al-anadol/](https://listings/souq-al-anadol/)

# Success Story: Taliba Packaging

Meet Kerim Moussa, Manager of Taiba Packaging



“Our struggles had a positive impact on the growth of the company, as they increased our experience and motivated us to do our best.”



“After we moved our factory to Turkey, our vision expanded along with our markets.”



## Tell us about yourself and your company.

We established our company in Aleppo in 1999, where it was a small start-up. After the Syrian war broke out, we moved the factory to Turkey along with our staff. We work in the field of developing and manufacturing packaging machines and production lines, specializing in machinery for food and chemical processing. Our company imports materials and parts from abroad to manufacture the machines, which we then export.

## What are the next steps for your company?

Currently, we have a five-year plan to start manufacturing carton production lines. We are also working on developing packaging machines and increasing production capacity in order to expand to forty production lines per year. Since we have many clients from Algeria, we are working on opening an office there to better serve them.

## What are the opportunities and challenges of doing business in Turkey?

In the beginning, we faced some difficulties with marketing domestically, but we were able to overcome this problem as we became more fluent in Turkish. Due to our initial lack of knowledge of Turkish laws and regulations, we also experienced difficulties with taxes and when importing and exporting. I feel that our struggles had a positive impact on the growth of our company, as it increased our experience and motivated us to do our best.

## How has this business changed your life?

My company has had a great positive impact on my life on both a personal and professional level. While we were in Syria, our company's markets were limited and we only exported to neighboring countries. After we moved the factory to Turkey, our vision expanded along with our markets. We now export our products to Europe, North Africa, and the entire Arabian Gulf in addition to the domestic market.

## What is the smartest step you took to increase sales?

The smartest move we took to increase sales was to study market prices. Low prices play a big role in sales outside of Turkey, but sales inside Turkey depend first on quality. As a result, we took steps to raise the quality of our products four times to fit in the Turkish market.

## Which Building Markets services did you benefit most from?

We attended a networking event held in Istanbul, which was very important to us as we became acquainted with many companies. The training courses are also very useful for us, and our staff and I attended the digital marketing courses provided by Building Markets.



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