



GENDER-SMART BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDY: BOYNER GROUP'S SUPPLY CHAIN STRENGTHENS WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Boyner Group, Turkey



IFC

International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

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Project Overview

With only 16 percent¹ of SMEs in Turkey majority-owned by women, it is a country with a low level of female entrepreneurship. Yet if women participated fully in the economy of the country, it would have greater growth potential. The Turkish Gross National Income could increase by 22 percent² if gender gaps in labor participation were closed. To address the gap between men and women in its supply chain, the Boyner Group, which is the country's largest retail corporation, together with IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, began developing the *Supply Chain Women Entrepreneurs' Empowerment Program* (familiarily known as the "Good for Business" program) in late 2014. Good for Business aligns with the Boyner Group supplier-optimization strategy, which is designed to build capacity within its supply chain and to create closer relationships with selected vendors in a strategic partnership. The Boyner Group is keen to ensure that its cadre of "strategic suppliers" include women-led business.

Project Objectives

The goal of the Good for Business program is to position female-owned businesses in Boyner Group's supply chain so they and the company become more competitive. The program is designed to build an inclusive pool of suppliers, constituted by the most thriving businesses in the supply chain. These are coached to become top performers and to comply with the Group's social and environmental standards.

¹ EBRD. *Women Entrepreneurs in Turkey and Their Banking Relationships*, October 2013.

² Teignier, Marc and David Cuberes. *How Costly are Labor Gender Gaps? Estimates for the Balkans and Turkey*, World Bank 2015.

To achieve its goals, the Boyner Group aims to accomplish the following:

- Raise women business owners' productivity and performance
- Enhance their business with Boyner and other companies
- Expand the entrepreneurs' knowledge of the market(s) in which they operate
- Improve their business and management skills
- Increase their access to market and finance opportunities

Challenges

Suppliers in the retail sector face increasing market pressures. These include unforeseeably long payment terms, reduced prices, and low margins. Such margins lead to cost pressures. The company saw an opportunity to address such challenges by creating an inclusive value chain that would include women, who—as they are globally—are under-represented among suppliers in Turkey. The Group recognized and is addressing the lack of women-owned firms in supply chains, which few retailers are doing.

Daily, women in Boyner Group's supply chain confront layers of challenges that their male peers do not encounter. Many of the women entering the Good for Business program reported that they lacked a clear vision for the

future of their businesses. The burden of dual responsibilities as entrepreneurs and working wives and mothers held them back from reaching their full potential. They were also less integrated than men into support networks, which made market survival and positioning more difficult for women business owners than for their male peers.

Faced with such hurdles, many of the female entrepreneurs in Boyner Group's supply chain found it difficult to keep themselves motivated and to lead their businesses effectively.

How Were Gender Gaps Addressed?

The Good for Business program selected 23 female participants representing 20 companies in Boyner Group's supply chain. In the first cohort, the women attended 12 weekly sessions. Organized into three thematic units, these workshops combined classroom instruction and coaching clinics with certified business and management trainers. Trainees also learned from guest talks by speakers from other organizations in the Good for Business program. Most important, there were networking events, such as a vendor fair, to introduce the entrepreneurs to new potential buyers.

In the first unit, women-owned suppliers learned to better position themselves in the Group's supply chain by closing gaps in interpersonal and leadership skills, business and financial knowledge, access to finance,

and integration into networks.³ Directed toward strengthening women's soft skills, certified trainers facilitated workshops on topics including leadership, human resource management, communication, and motivation. In these sessions, successful Turkish women entrepreneurs were invited to give inspiring speeches to participants.

The second unit was designed to build the women's market knowledge and relevant skills, focusing on product and customer-focused marketing, segmentation and positioning, and business-to-business (B2B) marketing. A certified trainer facilitated the sessions. In addition, experts with in-depth local and sector expertise, such as the Boston Consulting Group, provided their insights into the retail industry and shared market patterns and trends. This helped increase the women's business contacts, widened their networks, and gave them valuable information for strategic planning.

The third unit focused on finance and covered topics such as financial analysis and reading and writing balance sheets. In this training block, three Turkish banks (Garanti Bank, Sekerbank, and TEB) presented their programs for women entrepreneurs. This helped

³ Evidence shows that as a group, women business owners are often excluded from the informal professional relationships that could grant them better access to market opportunities. IFC, *Women & Business: Drivers of Development*, 2011.

introduce the participants to banks that offer specific financing products for women entrepreneurs.

Benefits

- The first cohort of the Good for Business program provided a valuable education for the women participants, who were trained on financial management, cash flow management, market analysis and strategy.
- A peer network among the participating women entrepreneurs was established. In the first two months after the end of the training program, the women made eight new prospective customer or business contacts outside the peer group.
- Women were able to articulate their motivation and vision and to apply technical terminology and concepts when discussing future plans.
- A vendor fair organized by Boyner Group provided an opportunity for the women to market their products and services to potential buyers.
- The program helped foster business networks as well as relationships with banks and other companies.
- Boyner's success with its first cohort of the program prompted the company to schedule a second cohort in 2016.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Use interactive and engaging training methods and minimize theoretical content.
- Emphasize strengthening the relationship with the Boyner Group and providing information on business possibilities over “learning new things.”
- Plan to follow up the training with real commitment and action.
- Create structures that facilitate collaboration among the Good for Business alumnae, so their firms can continue to benefit and cultivate new commercial networks well beyond the time spent in the program.
- Measure the program's effectiveness through control groups.

What the project lead says

Working with a large and innovative company such as Boyner is an excellent way for IFC to reach women entrepreneurs through corporate supply chains.

Sammar Essmat

Regional Gender Lead for IFC in Europe and Central Asia

What the partner says

Through our gender-inclusive practices, we aim to set an example for companies and corporations in Turkey and promote gender equity in the country. Investing in men and women equally is not just the right thing to do. It's also a smart business decision—placing women and men throughout our operations

allows us to tap into a much wider and more diverse pool of resources.

Ümit Boyner

Member of the Boyner Group Board

What the beneficiaries say

We had fun, we learned a lot, and we met each other.

Ms. Işıl Yıldız, Sereda

It really increased my enthusiasm.

Ms. Zeynep Çeltekçi, Zep Tekstil

I could have always stayed in accounting. Now, thanks to the program, I started to look into production and client relations, too.

Ms. Ayşegül Ayar, Ag Moda Giyim

There is no such possibility to meet each other and to listen to such a trainer or to the other companies who presented themselves. In the WhatsApp group we are 18 people and we ask each other how we are doing. I have seen the power of the women. I have seen their strength, they have never-ending resources. It makes me happy.

Ms. Serap Baturay, Moso Deri

Contact Information

IFC

2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA

 +1 (202) 458-2262

 EGibbens@IFC.org

 www.IFC.org/gender

 @WBG_Gender

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