

Interview: Pervin Ejder - Managing Director, Ejder Kimya, Turkey



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The managing director of Ejder Kimya, Pervin Ejder explains

how the landscape for API and raw materials suppliers has evolved in Turkey, and how the company has pivoted into more value added and total packaged solutions to accommodate changing market dynamics.

As an introduction for our readers, Pervin, can you please give an overview of where Ejder Kimya stands today and describe what you're focusing on now as managing director?

Established in 1999, Ejder Kimya was initially set up to supply the pharmaceutical industry with raw materials, but we eventually incorporated cosmetics and food products into our portfolio as well. Over the years, we've managed to develop productive long-term relationships with several leading multinational companies such as Kerry, Merck and Ajinomoto. With quality service and competitive prices, we've now positioned ourselves as the key supplier of raw materials and APIs to Turkey's pharmaceutical industry. We've started to diversify into other areas as well. For instance, three years ago, we partnered with a MNC to establish a microbiology lab, intended for developing our knowledge base within food supplements. Last year, we bought out our partner's shares, and have since used the facility to supply test services for the global cosmetic industry.

In the last ten years, the cosmetic industry in our country has shown 10 percent growth per year. As a rapidly expanding market, consequently, our cosmetics line of business has been about 65 percent of our annual turnover. We provide full service to our customers in cosmetics – from the supply of raw materials and APIs, to R&D services and finished product tests. Given these fundamentals, we plan to allocate our portfolio in a similar way in the coming years.

Pharmaceuticals will remain a key segment for us, as that's where our background and expertise lies. We are planning to make various investments in pharmaceutical industry, like research and development.

Ejder Kimya is a key supplier to the Turkish pharmaceutical industry, which has gone through some significant changes over the last few years, both growing substantially in terms of volume, and facing a challenging business environment. How have you structured the business to maintain competitive?

To remain a reliable partner in companies' supply chains, we focus on maintaining the utmost standards in quality while offering attractive price schemes. With this philosophy, we've managed to hit our growth targets year-over-year, despite the challenges in the local industry. From my perspective, our success so far has been a function of the industry's own emphasis on quality. That's mainly because sourcing cheap raw materials with poor quality often leads to a higher total cost of ownership. All of our multinational and local customers, especially when it comes to APIs, are aware of the detrimental implications of valuing price over quality—a mindset that has only served to benefit our positioning.

With pricing and regulatory challenges common across all industry players today, we're seeing many pharma companies such as Drogosan and Santa Farma looking to exports in hopes of unlocking demand, and in turn profitability. In this context, can you elaborate on the company's export initiatives?

We've been exporting to countries such as Iran, Lebanon, Algeria, UAE, and now we're focusing on selling our laboratory services to European countries including Italy and Spain. We're not only exporting from stock, but also from transit trades in conjunction with several partners, further bolstering our export activities—now accounting for approximately 50 percent of our business.

The industry-wide emphasis on R&D and innovation has constituted a subtle but growing interest from first-mover companies such as Abdi Ibrahim and Atabay in higher value-added areas such as biopharmaceuticals. From Ejder Kimya's position, to what degree has this trend altered the supply chain dynamics?

Turkish pharmaceutical companies' R&D initiatives have been quite successful. Most local companies have large R&D facilities, several of which are investing heavily and making strides in biotechnology. We are pleased to see local companies, who have historically been associated with generics manufacturing, investing in this more innovative and higher value-adding segment. As this field has only formed very recently, the percentage in the industry is not very high in Turkey or the rest of the world. That being said, we are currently taking part in the field with the value-added biopharmaceutical products of our new suppliers as well as our existing ones. Along with biopharmaceuticals, we retain our close relationship with business development departments by giving advice on value-added product projects.

As the founder of Ejder Kimya, how do you envision the firm's role alongside Turkey's ambitions in becoming a world-class economy for health services?

As I mentioned before, our operating philosophies is to offer the best quality products at the best price. Aside from that, Ejder Kimya regards itself as not just a supplier, but also a total solutions partner. We work with our customers on all steps of the supply lifecycle from planning to training. Given the company's longstanding relationships with its clients, Ejder Kimya possesses the flexibility and insight to accommodate the needs of all our customers.

In the coming years, we will focus on building up the company's R&D capabilities and maintaining the standards in quality, trust, and value that Ejder Kimya has come to be known for. In the future, we hope Ejder Kimya will become the complete partner for R&D services and raw material/APIs supply solutions across cosmetics, food, and pharmaceuticals.

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