

Interview: Arafat Yadigar - General Manager , Winalite, Turkey



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Consumer healthcare products manufacturer Winalite is working to penetrate the Turkish market, but with regulations complicating bringing their portfolio from China, general manager Arafat Yadigar is looking to develop a Turkey specific portfolio in collaboration with the Turkish health products and pharmaceutical manufacturing sectors.

Your promotion to General Manager is very recent— February. What have been some of the most difficult decisions that you've had to make so far?

I started working for Winalite in February of 2012 as assistant General Manager. However, I had to resign from my position in September 2014 due to some failings in the organization and some things that I wasn't really in favor of. In February 2015, I received an offer from the head office to go back to the company as its General Manager. The trust I had in Winalite products and the people in the company struck a chord in me and I came back. Initially I was faced with a very challenging period in which reorganization and restructuring of the management of the company were handled in tandem.

My priority was to render the business run by Winalite Turkey more success oriented and in the short run to gather back the members of the company that distanced themselves from us due to previously experienced issues and to establish a strong team.

To be able to achieve this we recruited nine well-educated and knowledgeable people in the initial stage and brought these people up to par regarding the mission and objectives of Winalite. We endeavored to put the business on track with members and a team of people who are fully committed to their jobs. The Internet Ordering system of Winalite was at the time put on freeze in Turkey by the head office. In other words, it was not possible for members to place any orders for almost a month prior to my return to the company. During the first few weeks after the system was re-activated, the volume of orders we received was very high.

During the first three months of my return to Winalite, my team and I worked very hard to get business back on track. During this period, I spent many nights in my office. Towards the end of May, the churning in the company started to calm down and the system started to run smoothly; presently the business runs without a hitch. We were also quite successful in minimizing the damage that this challenging process might have caused to the company; only 100 out of 8000 members left us for competition. We owe this largely to the patents and certificates that we obtained from International Inspection Bodies and Institutions such as the Ministry of Health in Turkey that certified the quality and safety of the products that we distribute.

How do you assess the status of Winalite in Turkey after achieving stability as a company?

In consideration of the fact that our branch is currently only three years old, we can say that our present sale and distribution network is very small. If the strategy implemented during this period were a suitable one, we could have had 80,000 members by now. Right now, our short-term objective is to be able to expand our network to cover 20,000 people. After that, we aim to reach 100,000 members as guided by a correct approach. We have confidence in our products, our team of people and never stop dreaming and aiming big.

How does Turkey's portfolio compare to the global portfolio of Winalite?

At Winalite headquarters, there are more than 500 product varieties in different categories, such as food products, health care, personal care, hygiene and household goods, etc.

Presently, there are nine different products in Turkey's portfolio. From among these, the Winion Hygienic Pads, Winskin series skin care products, V7 Cosmetic Series, A.O.Stick Hydrogen Rich Water Stick, Anion Dechlorine Showerhead, Knee & Wrist Healthy Support, lip nourishing Winalite lipstick, WelSmile toothpaste, Winwave thermo-therapy products containing the magnets used in

magnetic current therapy and anion therapy are leaders in terms of sales. We desire to expand our portfolio of products within next year, and to serve this purpose we are in search of products that are complementary to our line and produced in Turkey as well.

However, it must also be said that finding the right products is rather challenging, as our product range is very specific. All Winalite products are required to be one hundred percent natural as well as being free of any chemicals. Additionally, the headquarters run regular tests to make sure that our products do not contain any pollutants. During the production process, regular testing and inspection of products are carried out at each and every stage. Our quality control standards are very high. Moreover, all our products are made of fully natural materials and components while possessing properties specific to advance technology set them apart from similar products, increasing their efficiency and foster the well-being of our customers.

Lastly, we are only interested in products that are manufactured by only one manufacturer, who is in possession of a patent and uses technologies specific to the product.

Can you give us some examples of the products that either are in your portfolio or that you want to see in your portfolio as manufactured by using special technologies?

The best example to this could be the Winion hygienic pad. This product is of very high quality, extremely absorbent and additionally it does not contain any chemicals, is made with adhesives of natural content instead of chemical and contains the patented “anion cartridge” of Winalite. This cartridge releases negative ions that have the health advantage of reducing the pH of the vagina. We hope to find products that are manufactured in Turkey bearing designs based on the same principles.

Our objective moving into the future is to add products that have no adverse health effects and to the contrary foster human health, free of any chemical substances, and which are manufactured naturally by employing advanced technologies.

From a marketing perspective, how do you introduce the advantages of your products to your customers?

As a Network Marketing company, we usually introduce and promote our products in introduction meetings arranged to take place in conference halls. Our members make detailed presentations that show the benefits and advantages of our products clearly and we assist them by official documents such as patents and permission certificates, and provide information and research

support. To give an example, Winion products are approved by the Urogynecological and Pelvic Aesthetic Surgery Association in Turkey thanks to the health benefits it offers women.

Are customers in Turkey open to seeing new, alternative products made with advanced technology?

At first glance, people in Turkey are hesitant due to the fact that our products are manufactured in China. There is a perception that products manufactured in China are of inferior quality. However, after seeing and trying our products, they immediately come to realize their advantages. The next hurdle is to persuade them to accept the high prices. Production of highest quality is naturally costlier, requiring the sales prices to be higher. When we persuade people to try our products, they usually continue using them as they become aware of the positive impact of these products on their lives and consider the money spent as a good investment.

You told us that your future oriented objective is to be able to attract more members. What is the strategy you will adopt to increase the number of members from 8,000 to 20,000?

Before all else, we have confidence in Winalite products and our members. We will be expanding our marketing network and the number of members by accepting more members and introducing our products to a wider coverage of people.

From now on, our objective will be to expand our product range and in the process, we will be meeting the requirements of the public while having our company grow.

What are your other priorities for the next five years?

Before all else we must make sure that Winalite establishes itself in Turkey. After its position in Turkey is secured, we can start targeting European markets. Winalite currently has five companies in Europe. However, our objective is to be able to manage the markets in countries such as the Arabian Gulf Countries, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq and a majority of the European market from Turkey. Due to the excellent geostrategic placing of Turkey, our headquarters strongly supports this idea and desires to see Turkey as a regional center in the near future.

Presently we are six in Winalite's global ranking, and we presently follow Korea, Malaysia, Russia, Japan, and naturally China, which could be considered one of our own. Our objective is to reach first place by leaving everyone behind. Winalite, on the other hand, endeavors to become the

largest Global Network Marketing Company in the world. The fact that in 2007, we have achieved sales of 100 million USD by means of Winion hygienic pads demonstrates to us that the target is quite achievable.

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