Ozlem Fidanci – CEO, Philips Middle East and Turkey



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Ozlem Fidanci, CEO of the Middle East and Turkey at Philips, shares the collaborative approach Philips has implemented in Turkey and its successes, provides insights into future collaborations and discusses the importance of a holistic approach focusing on preventive technologies.

Can you tell us about Philips' history and shift to healthcare?

Throughout Philips' 128-year history it has helped improve people's lives. From its beginnings in light bulbs and televisions, Philips made the move towards healthcare in the 2000s and started to focus less on high-volume electronics. In 2015 we separated our lighting business from the rest of the company.

Within its healthcare offering, Philips has evolved from providing individual services and products towards health innovation and health technology, delivering care across the continuum. Having a holistic approach across healthy living, prevention, diagnostic, treatment and homecare and connecting it to IT technologies is Philips' unique position.

How has your professional career been shaped by this shift in the company?

Philips has been in Turkey for 89 years. In my 20 years with the company, I have seen a lot of developments and progression. I joined Philips as a marketing manager, focused on Domestic

Appliances and Personal Care consumer products, and spent a lot of my career in this area. In 2008 I took the leading role in merging Consumer Electronics and Domestic Appliances & Personal Care organizations of Philips and has become the General Manager for the merger called Consumer Lifestyle Turkey

After this, I went to Singapore as the Head of Marketing and Strategy in Philips Emerging Markets. In that position, I worked with emerging countries and was able to apply those strategies to countries from China to Brazil. Afterwards, I was appointed as Vice President and General Manager for Philips Consumer Lifestyle, Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) in 2011 based in Dubai. This helped me improve as a cross-cultural leader. As the company began to place greater emphasis on healthcare I wanted to grow in the same direction and, in 2015, I became VP of Health Systems for the Middle East and Turkey. For me, this change of direction was extremely timely as I was able to experience Philips's move into personal health and health systems propositions from their inceptions. As of January 2018, I'm the CEO of Philips Middle East and Turkey.

What have been some of your proudest achievements in your current role?

We are bringing global propositions to our region. For instance, in Turkey, we are bringing integrated solutions to city hospitals. Philips played a major role in this achievement in partnership with the public sector. Additionally, in Turkey and throughout the region we are bringing some of the latest innovations in health technology such as electronic medical records, and connective care technologies and services. We are very active in delivering solutions rather than merely providing bringing products.

In order to provide working solutions, you need to collaborate with different industry players as well as co-create together with your customers. In the healthcare area challenges are so big and complex due to rising chronic diseases and increased costs thereof, at the same time opportunities to create a stronger health delivery system are there too. Philips is leading in providing solutions across the continuum of care thanks to its integrated approach and a strong focus on customer needs.

You are known for your partnerships with governments, hospitals, and academic institutions. How successful have these been in Turkey specifically? What other projects are you working on here?

Turkey has been tremendously successful in creating access to public health services. We have worked closely with the MOH and PPP Companies to bring city hospitals to life as part of a transformation in healthcare. In addition to that, we are also working on a very strong proposition, partnering with the public and private sector for the purpose of monitoring patients at home.

For instance, we are working on a project to create a service model for sleep and respiratory patients to ensure close follow up, adherence to medicine and clinical treatment at their home setting. This is a completely different approach than leaving patients alone with the subscription. Instead, we would like to take a proactive approach and manage risks together with healthcare providers. With that, we are convinced that we can improve the outcomes of the patients as well as drive the costs down.

What conditions are needed to make Turkey a more attractive manufacturing hub?

Creating medical technology can sometimes be complex due to its sensitivity and the fact that a manufacturer has to adhere to certain codes. Before the technology gets certified and can be accessed by the public it requires R&D and Clinical Studies. Turkey has significant capacity to create health technology thanks to its dynamic labour force, young population and incentives from the government to ease investments. There are also significant opportunities to collaborate across the healthcare value chain.

However, there need to be more win-win situations created for both global players and Turkish interests. I believe that Philips is able to identify these scenarios well and I see our technology and innovation helping Turkey to develop medical device technology in the future.

What are the products and services that differentiate you from your competitors?

Philips is uniquely positioned since we are able to cover the entire health continuum. One of the main challenges globally as well as in Turkey is the rise of chronic diseases. These are associated with people’s lifestyles. If a person has high stress, poor eating habits and a lack of sleep they can develop chronic diseases. All around the world we make a difference to people’s lives by delivering locally relevant, connected solutions that support healthier lifestyles and those living with chronic disease. Philips is focusing on keeping people healthy. As an example, in order to help people to eat more healthily, we developed a product that can fry food with air instead of oil with the same taste. Additionally, we provide hospitals with the most advanced technologies that enable them to

use artificial intelligence in order to increase the accuracy and preciseness of diagnostics which will lead to higher quality treatment and better patient outcomes while again at more affordable costs.

What are some special aspects of Philips that you value in particular?

Our aim to improve the lives of 3 billion a year from 2025 onwards is really very motivating and inspirational. In addition to that, we aim to make our organization the best place to work for the ones who share our vision. The learning opportunities and the opportunities for growth given to employees within the Philips organization are vast. I was given countless opportunities to expand my abilities as a leader that I would not have been able to find elsewhere. Our brand itself, how well it is recognized and how it remains relevant over the years is amazing.

What are your strategic priorities for the next five years?

Our strategic priorities are focused mainly on improving the lives of patients. We are aiming to improve the lives of three billion people a year by 2025. My strategic priority is to bring the latest innovations and connected technology to deliver great healthcare in the Middle East and Turkey region.

What is your final message on Philips and on Turkey?

As Philips, we believe in Turkey and we are committed to the country. We have been here for the last 89 years and determined to grow further here. I would like to invite our partners and customers to come together to address the biggest challenges in healthcare and work on the immense opportunities leveraging on our technology and innovation power.

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