

Altug Acar

Hediyemo



“ I saw an opportunity to create the leading social and mobile gifting platform in Turkey. ”

COUNTRY	Turkey
INDUSTRY	Technology
EMPLOYEES	6
YEAR SELECTED	2012
WEBSITE	http://www.hediyemo.com/

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

With social media innovations like Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare all emerging from North America, Turkey may seem like an unlikely birthplace for the next transformative social media company. However, the Turkish-born social-gifting company, Hediyyemo, has not only pioneered the social gifting movement in Turkey, it is one of the first companies of its kind in the world. Through its online platform, Hediyyemo enables individuals and businesses to purchase gifts and gift vouchers online and send them through SMS, email, and Facebook without needing to provide a physical delivery address. Since Hediyyemo's launch in 2010, the social gifting market has virtually exploded, with new players emerging in North America, Europe and Latin America. This momentum has been reflected in Hediyyemo's growth.

Altug Acar has always had a deep passion for Internet and mobile enterprises. After receiving an MBA from the University of San Francisco in 1999, Altug had his first entrepreneurial experience working at a start-up and an incubator in Silicon Valley. He went on to gain valuable experience in both the Internet and telecom space while working at the Silicon Valley based companies Red Herring Communications and Semotus Solutions. In 2002, Altug returned to Turkey in the hopes of starting his own business, but soon realized that the Turkish stock market crash of 2001 had left an unfavorable climate for new business ventures. Instead, Altug joined Turkcell, the Turkish telecom giant. During his seven years at Turkcell, Altug led the development of strategic growth areas including mobile payment, mobile marketing, and mobile internet services.

When Altug left Turkcell in 2009, he knew that he wanted to build a business that took advantage of developments in mobile technology. Around this time, Altug and his wife Pinar tried to send a congratulatory gift to their friend, a recent mom, but realized they had only her mobile number, not her address. This experience highlighted an unaddressed market opportunity in mobile gifting. Through subsequent research, Altug learned about Gifticon, the pioneering South Korean mobile gifting company. Inspired by the Gifticon model, Altug and Pinar launched Mobil Hediyyem, a website through which customers could send gifts via SMS. Altug was able to sign on major clients for the beta testing phase, despite initial skepticism about the model as it had not yet been proven in either the U.S. or Europe. In response to customer requests for alternate gifting channels such as email and Facebook, Mobil Hediyyem transformed from a strictly mobile gifting platform to the first mobile and social gifting platform in Turkey. One year later, Hediyyemo (derived from the Turkish word for "gift") officially launched with eight merchants.

Hediyyemo offers its customers a convenient and practical solution to send gifts in the absence of the recipient's physical address. Through the Hediyyemo's user-friendly web and Facebook sales-interface, customers can choose from 500 products, 300 gift vouchers in various price ranges, and numerous promotional gift vouchers from dozens of merchants. Once a gift is selected and paid for, customers simply have to submit the recipient's phone number or email address. Alternatively, customers can send gifts through Facebook wall-posts. Customers may include a personalized message to accompany the gift. Recipients receive an electronic gift code by SMS, email, or Facebook (according to the sender's request) and can redeem their gifts and gift vouchers directly with the merchant. Hediyyemo primarily works with companies seeking new ways to send gifts to employees and clients.
