Bedriye Hülya

b-fit

“ I saw an opportunity to enable Turkish women to empower themselves. ”

COUNTRY	Turkey
INDUSTRY	Consumer
EMPLOYEES	414
YEAR SELECTED	2009
WEBSITE	b-fit.com.tr

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

B-fit, Turkey's first national chain of women-only gyms, has allowed over 25,000 women to collectively lose over 15 tons. Bedriye Hülya, founder of the company, has enabled hundreds of women to own b-fit franchises and thus become entrepreneurs in their own right. And she isn't done yet: full of energy and passion for her business, Bedriye plans to expand throughout Turkey with the ultimate goal of having one b-fit gym in every Turkish neighborhood. In a region often characterized by conservativism, Bedriye is giving women a chance to work and workout.

Raised in the Turkish port of Izmir, Bedriye studied Management Science at Turkey's prestigious Dokuz Eylül University and then went on to get a Masters degree in International Relations from Istanbul University. Following graduation, she secured a job in the Turkish resort town of Bodrum, where she became a serial entrepreneur. Over the last 20 years, Bedriye has founded a popular fusion restaurant, two boutique hotels and an importing company, among other small ventures. Overflowing with both intellectual curiosity and entrepreneurial drive, Bedriye returned to academics part-time in 1998, splitting her time between Turkey and New York, where she took courses at Columbia and CUNY Universities. Despite being simultaneously involved in several businesses and two prestigious universities, Bedriye had energy to spare. Though she had never before mastered a workout regime, Bedriye decided to join a women-only gym in New York, where she was first introduced to a 30-minute rotation program. In 2004, Bedriye returned to Turkey imbued with strength from her consistent workouts. Striving to connect her career in business to her passion for female empowerment, Bedriye decided to adapt the women-only 30-minute work out gym for a Turkish audience.

With funds pooled from her personal savings and investments from some close friends, Bedriye opened the first branch in February 2006, in a middle-class neighborhood of Izmir. After just one month of operations, and without any advertisement, the gym had already attracted 50 members. Bedriye soon realized that a franchising model would allow b-fit to grow quickly and take advantage of demand. She has since grown the business to over 200 gyms in a variety of socio-economic and geographic locations.

Before b-fit, women in Turkey had limited alternatives when it came to fitness. Highly fragmented, the fitness market was made up of expensive gyms in urban areas and low-quality gyms in rural areas. There was no national chain that catered to women, and because of Islamic traditions, many women were uncomfortable exercising in coed gyms or outdoors. With b-fit's 30-minute, female-only gym, women have found a moderately priced, comfortable work-out.

Bedriye is a source of inspiration for every woman to walk through b-fit's doors. She speaks at universities and works with multiple Women's Entrepreneurship Associations. Through her conception of b-fit, Bedriye has enabled Turkish women to empower themselves, both in the workplace and the workout place.

ENDEAVOR AND B-FIT

Through mentorships and key introductions, Endeavor Turkey has helped Bedriye resolve licensing issues, execute a franchise financing strategy, and properly structure financial outsourcing and reporting.

Bedriye demonstrates commitment to Endeavor by speaking at universities.