

EFQM Good Practice Competition 2015

Achieving Sustainable Excellence

Registration form

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The registration form and submission report have to be returned together with the video to Vinciane Beauduin at EFQM (Vinciane.beauduin@efqm.org) by 15 May 2015 at the latest.

Should you have any queries, feel free to contact Vinciane Beauduin via email at Vinciane.beauduin@efqm.org, or by phone on +32 2 775 3510.

Good Practice - Submission Report

Good Practice Title	WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY
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Organisation overview

Boyner Group is the leading non-food and non-electronic retail group in Turkey serving its customers with 9 group companies, more than 25 brands, 500 stores and 12000 employees. Boyner Group has 16 million unique customers and more than 100 million annual visitors. With a vision to provide unconditional customer happiness, Boyner Group provides innovative products and services leading retail sector in Turkey. Boyner Group is very keen on establishing workplace democracy both within its Group companies as well as its supply chain.

Desired Results: (the key objectives of the approach and which of the 10 principles it addresses - maximum 1 page)

■ **Summarise the key objective(s) of the approach you have adopted**

Boyner Group has been implementing various initiatives into its organization to establish Workplace Democracy since its foundation and focused on sustainability of this philosophy for the last decade.

Boyner Group preferred guiding employees with principles and values, rather than managing with discipline rules and penalties.

This journey starts with re-defining group values and “the ways we do business”, integrating them with universal principles, documenting an Internal Constitution, creating devices for communication (whistleblowing inbox, employee representatives...) and conflict resolution (demolishing discipline committees to replace with Ethic Committees)

First of all, the Group focused on “employee rights” and established a well-organized employee policy for the whole organization as well as issuing a declaration for “equality in the workplace”. With this equality declaration, Boyner Group announced that it strongly prohibits all kinds of discrimination against race, color, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political view, ethnic identity, health status, familial responsibilities, trade union membership, physical disability or age. In addition to equality, the right to be represented via a workers’ union, negotiation of bargaining rights and association are freely exercised in Boyner Group companies, in every workplace practice.

Boyner Group recently developed a strategic plan to reflect the democratic approach to its supply chain as well by cascading equality principles. Boyner Group is determined to support other businesses which value human dignity. Boyner Group expects its business partners to show equal treatment and provide equal opportunities to all their employees. As the first private company to sign and adapt UNGC women empowerment principles, Boyner Group is also a strong defendant of women rights in Turkish business ecosystem. Boyner Group applies and spreads women empowerment applications to support the employment of more women and ensure they are equally treated.

Our approach is in coherence with major international norms, standards and major UN and international agreements like UNHRA, ILO principals, UN Women and Global Compact.

■ **What has been improved in detail?**

Internal “Constitution”

Besides defining values, and work-life principles, we derived issues and gray areas bottom-up. Many cultural and global potential conflicts have been defined and questiones have been answered. “Sexual harrasment” and “mobbing” are the two important topics defined openly. Other topics include but are not limited to are: usage of social media, freedom of membership, NGOs, accepting gifts, working with a relative, raising an issue, keeping company secrets, business etiquette.

Principle of Equal Treatment:

Boyner Group offers employees equal opportunities in recruitment, the employment process, remuneration, participation in training, promotion, retirement and all other work related aspects. We do not tolerate discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, political views or affiliation, ethnicity, health status, family responsibilities, union activity or membership, physical disability or age. This definition is currently wider than the local

law. Within Boyner Group, in all our Human Resources policies and practices, such as recruitment, promotion, transfer, rotation and remuneration, we embrace a fair approach; and work in accordance with all current laws and regulations in all business processes.

Monitoring

We have developed a dashboard/control panel to consolidate our data on gender equality and perform systematical monitoring. We produce reports on SAP to keep track of the following data in three- or six-monthly periods.

- Breakdown: Head office/store, manager/others, full-time/flex-time
- Seniority
- Training and Development
- Absence
- Resignation, dismissal
- Childcare services

Freedom of Association:

Employees fully enjoy all their rights to organize freely. Blue collar employees (1380 people, 45% of which are female) working in our group company Altınyıldız Tekstil ve Konfeksiyon A.Ş. are members of the Union, and our employees reserve the right to sign collective labor agreement via worker's union representing them. **Also, membership of our employees to a nongovernmental organization and political parties cannot be restricted. Employees fully enjoy all their rights to organize freely.**

Whistleblowing hotline

We have created a hotline for whistleblowing where our employees can make complaints anonymously. These complaints are handled by the ethics committee and remains confidential.

Ethics Committee

Our Group Companies have their own Ethics Committees besides Group level ethics committee to investigate and discuss any complaints and incidents reported on violations of Group Values and Operational Principles. Verification investigation is carried by the committee members, one of whom is the Employees' Representative named by free internal elections. A communication channel (whistleblowing line) has been created in all Boyner Group companies for the employees to report ethical issues or situations when faced via special e-mail addresses of ethical committees of each company. Issues which cannot be resolved by the concerned company's committee can be settled by the Group level Ethics Committee

Health & Safety committee and worker representatives

Employee representatives hold chairs in all our group companies who deliver the complaints and requests of their colleagues and take responsibility to deliver the decided results in the committee.

Social Compliance in the Supply Chain

We not only carry out our activities on sustaining gender equality in our Group Companies but also track and audit our sourcing partners and prepare necessary regulatory action plans for their improvement and provide consultancy to our suppliers. The audit is carried under labor rights, protection of human dignity, occupational health and safety, non-discrimination, waste management, safe usage of chemicals, energy and water consumption, good governance,

transparency, and accountability. We have audited 45.52% of our direct producers and 11.70% of their associated sub-producers, and prepared regulatory action plans on insufficient and incomplete issues. You can refer to our supply chain sustainability report for further details.

Approach: (a description of what you have done and how this supports your overall strategy - maximum 1 page)

■ **Describe the current approach within your organization**

Boyner Group owned by Boyner Family, is known to be very customer centric, innovative, flexible, passionate and trustworthy. These qualities cannot be ensured by only writing them down as “corporate values”. We needed to maintain this culture through our employees will. Moreover being in luxury fashion and service business, we needed to trust our employees that they would make their best judgement on the sales floor, facing the customers.

Boyner Group preferred guiding employees with principles and values, rather than managing with discipline rules and penalties. This liberal environment, guided with values, protected with ethics committees, made us even more creative, engaged and motivated.

Boyner Group continuously invests in human capital, values human dignity and works actively on diversity and inclusion projects.

Establishing workplace democracy and gender equality both within the group companies and the group’s supply chain is a clear objective of the management team. Setting an example for other private sector companies and cooperating with the public sector is very important for the group as well.

■ **Describe which elements have been implemented**

This journey starts with re-defining group values and “the ways we do business”, integrating them with universal principles, documenting an Internal Constitution, creating devices for communication (whistleblowing inbox, employee representatives...) and conflict resolution (demolishing discipline committees to replace with Ethic Committees)

In addition to inherently present open communication atmosphere in Boyner Group and employee-friendly human resources strategies including workplace rules, work hours, career management, leave policies and compensation and benefits. Boyner Group openly defined the “workplace democracy approach.

The legitimacy comes from the employees. We started this journey with employee workshops. In order to spread these principles and values we continuously hold training and case study sessions.

Everyone in Boyner Group is encouraged to communicate any complaints, distress or suggestions and improvements. Employee participation is very important for determining company-wide decisions as well as ethical issues.

Metrics and KPIs have been frequently measured to provide the equal treatment approach. Some

primary metrics we observe are as follows:

- Percentage of female employees: %47
- Percentage of female employees among head office staff: %48
- Percentage of female employees among store employees: %47
- Percentage of female employees among blue-collar: %45
- Percentage of female managers: %41
- Percentage of female employees in training and development programs: %41
- Percentage of female employees promoted in 2014: %32

■ **Describe how this approach is linked to your overall strategy**

Boyner Group owned by Boyner Family, is known to be very customer centric, innovative, flexible, passionate and trustworthy. These qualities cannot be ensured by only writing them down as “corporate values”. We needed to maintain this culture through our employees will. Moreover being in luxury fashion and service business, we needed to trust our employees that they would make their best judgement on the sales floor, facing the customers.

We have made the decision to publish our sustainability report attached to our annual report since 2013 as a result of **sustainability being our mainstream policy of our business and all of our activities**. We try to implement the good practices which we have the chance to experience in local and international platforms to our work stream as new goals. In 2014, we added Ethics Committee to our current sustainability workgroups.

Deployment: (how the approach was implemented and the major challenges to overcome - maximum 1 page)

■ **Describe how this approach was implemented within your organisation**

Boyner Group follows a participative and rewarding approach rather than a questioning, autocratic and punishing employer perspective. The employees were always part of the implementation. The company always develops open communication channels and puts emphasis on employee demands. The values and principles of the company are clearly defined and communicated to all employees. The democratic and equal point of view is constantly reflected in training and seminars. The fair and equal approach of the management team, human resources policies and communication materials encourage all employees to adapt the non-discriminative, participative and inquiring atmosphere.

Ethics Committees have proven to be a very trusted device, as cases are solved.

■ **What were the major challenges you had to overcome?**

Major challenges includes lack of monitoring systems, lack of training against a non-democratic social culture and lack of national companies for bench-marking since the issue is not familiar in Turkish business environment.

To overcome these challenges, we focused on the following areas.

1. **Lack of monitoring systems:**
We have defined KPIs related to equality, and workplace peace.
2. Social Culture (Turkey)

We had to (and still have to) fight with societal biases, and the autocratic management culture. The internal constitution, ethics committees and the trainings are the major tools of creating new paradigms.

3. Lack of benchmarking

Assessment: (the benefits achieved for you and your stakeholders - maximum 1 page)

■ **Please describe what benefits have been achieved**

In 2014, 33 complaints were made. Recommendations were provided to company managements by ethical committees after preliminary examination, interviews, and defence steps. The number of legal disputes have decreased. Moreover some issues carried on by the employee to the legal arena after the ethics committee decision, have been rejected by courts.

GREAT PLACE TO WORK AWARD

In 2013 and 2014 Boyner Group was chosen a “Great Place to Work”. In both years we were also presented with a special award for our practices in Equal Opportunity offered at all stages of employment from recruitment to promotion for all employees.

Boyner Group’s good practices have been rewarded by many national and international organizations and recognized by world famous organizations such as United Nations and International Finance Corporation.

- **Cem Boyner, President and Chief Executive Officer, Boyner Group, was recognized as a recipient of the 2014 Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Leadership Award at the United Nations Headquarters**
- The Women in Leadership Forum recognized our Chairman Cem Boyner with the Male Champion of Change Award in 2013.
- Golden Compass Public Relations Awards 2013 / We were honored by UNDP Special Prize
- In 2013, Boyner Group was presented with the Great Place to Work Turkey – Special Award for Equal Opportunity and Supporting Women.
- In 2012, Boyner Holding was awarded “Improvement of Social Gender Equality at Work” award by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.
- In 2012, Boyner Holding received FEM certificate guaranteeing gender equality at Board of Director and Executive Board level by complying with gender equality in human resources policies, informing employees about gender equality and raising awareness, and preventing gender discrimination in marketing communication.
- We are honored with the gold award in full-page press ad category in 2012 Spotlight Awards – Global Communication Competition organized by League of American Communications Professionals – LACP with our ad “What Women Want In Business Life” published on March 8, 2012 and placed 46th in best 100 communication works of 2012

Aiming to raise public awareness for gender equality in employment, set an example for companies and corporations in Turkey and also keep the issue under the spotlight in the media, Boyner Group

has been publishing special press ads since 2008 on International Women's Day, emphasizing that women should be seen as individuals and that women should make a demand for their citizenship rights.

In 2014, Boyner Group was the sole representative of the sector in an international meeting held by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe- UNECE- in Geneva among 300 government representatives and UN representatives.

In the World Woman Conference, held by UNECE, 56 member countries that carry out activities to establish gender equality, we have shared our practices in establishing gender equality, business world strategies for representation of women in management levels, necessity for developing in-corporate policies to guarantee in senior management and board level and success in their execution, breaking down employment data based on gender to help monitor and improve these policies, defending gender equality both inside and outside the organization and being a role model to trigger these activities positively.

Refinement: (the lessons learned and planned next steps - maximum 1 page)

■ **What are the lessons learned?**

Upon our studies developed for workplace democracy we have come to understand that pursuing a holistic approach on the issue is very crucial. Handling the issue as a management approach and applying it to the corporate culture is also very important. Rather than creating and distributing separate policies on 'equality', 'gender' or 'democracy', adapting the idea that creating a workplace environment suitable for these values is more important.

Another lesson we learned is that organizing different training programs for "mobbing", "sexual harassment in workplace" and "gender awareness" helped us establish the corporate culture for "gender free" and "gender equality". These trainings made a great impact for our employees.

We have also learnt that these practices supported employee engagement and helped us build a strong employer brand.

■ **Summarise the planned next steps if applicable**

We want to deliver our studies to our supply chain and business partners as the next steps. We have become members in WE CONNECT and SHE WORKS platforms and defined our commitments:

- To purchase more from women entrepreneurs
- To help women suppliers develop their businesses