

The Journey to 50/50™

A series of articles in which CEOs share their experiences of moving their companies towards gender equality.



Özgür Tort, CEO, Migros

Career snapshot

I joined Migros 25 years ago. I started off in project management, and then went on to lead International Investments, and Customer Relationship Management, before being assigned as Chief Operations Officer of Ramstore retail operations in Russia, where I served for four years before returning to Migros Turkey as Chief Human Resources Officer. Since 2008 I have been the CEO of Migros. I am also a board member of the Consumer Goods Forum and both GS1 Global and GS1 Turkey. On the national level, I am Vice Co-Chair of the Food Retailers Association and a board member of the Turkish Federation of Shopping Centres and Retailers. I graduated in industrial engineering from Istanbul Technical University and then gained an MS in engineering management at Missouri University of Science and Technology. Although quite a few years have passed, I have not given up on my studies and am currently working on my PhD thesis in the same academic field.



MIGROS
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Migros's D&I journey

In 2019 only 18% of directors and higher executives at Migros were women. We have committed to increasing this figure to 23% by 2023. To help us do this, we have prepared a series of online training programmes called 'Value for Equality'. We also foster the loyalty of our female employees with a project group that works on measures to ensure Migros is numbered among the companies that women most prefer to work for in Turkey. We aim to have at least one female manager in each of our stores, and we support our female employees, including in professions that are traditionally male-dominated. For example, we have 265 female butchers in our stores, all of whom were trained by Migros. Just 1% of the butchers in Turkey are women while at Migros the figure is 9%.

When we redesign working conditions at Migros, we do so with female employees in mind, in order to allow them to better manage their personal lives alongside work. We are shaping our recruitment processes, internal communications and in-house activities in line with the outputs of workshops we have held with female managers. When given a choice of equally competent and experienced candidates, we choose in favour of the female candidate.

Migros's approach

For the last 67 years, we have been designing the future of retail by continuously meeting the needs of all customers beyond even what they can imagine. And in doing so, we have always been committed to acting responsibly and with sensitivity, while also striving for greater efficiency. Ten years ago, we identified sustainability as our way of doing business and we upgraded our 'growth' concept, one of our main strategies, to 'sustainable growth'. In the retail sector, when it comes to shopping on behalf of the family, women make up the majority of decision makers. The inclusion of a female perspective into our processes is vital for the sustainability of our business model.

Learning 1 : Take practical steps to support women's work/life balance

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for many female employees is to establish a work-life balance, especially in the years of pregnancy and early motherhood. That's why we have created an application called 'Happy Mother', which is a follow-up and support system. It consists of a short training programme and video content about the rights of our pregnant employees, healthy eating, child development, and the return to working life after childbirth.

Learning 2 : Prioritize the career planning of female employees

It's vital to offer women targeted support to help them fulfil their career ambitions. We support our female employees throughout their career paths with executive coaching and personal development programmes. Female managers make up 42% of the participants on these programmes and the hope is that this will increase their chances of reaching management level and playing an even greater role in the continued success of Migros.

Learning 3 : Focus on lifelong learning

Allocating resources to employee development contributes greatly both to individual employees and to the wider success of the company. At Migros we are committed to providing in-house and lifelong learning opportunities to all of our employees and have integrated continuous development into our corporate culture. For example, we've established the Migros Retail Academy (MPA) which supports the personal and professional development of employees through partnerships with universities as well as through in-class and online training options.



Next steps for Migros

We are making efforts to implement our long-term objectives and projects by considering our global priorities in parallel with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Being acutely aware of the importance of women's place in management and also of our responsibility in this regard, we aim to increase the number of women executives within our company. It is for this reason that I put my signature to the LEAD Network CEO Pledge.

We're also striving to bring about an increase in the employment and participation of women in the wider world of business, while at the same time ensuring they have an effective role in society and strengthening their presence in all aspects of life. To this end, we carry out projects such as the Woman's Academy and Family Clubs which provide vocational training, aiming to reach a total of 1 million women participants in three years.

Contact us

We hope you have found this article useful. Please share your feedback with Mick Broekhof at mick.broekhof@lead-eu.net or Sharon Jeske at sharon.jeske@lead-eu.net. If you are not already a LEAD Network member, we hope you will consider joining us. We have a fast-growing membership of more than 12,000, all of whom are committed to our mission: to attract, retain and advance women in the retail and consumer goods industry in Europe through education, leadership and business development. Visit our website www.lead-eu.net to find out more.

Next steps for our industry

The pandemic forced us to redefine all of our workflows and practices. We need to be ready with new business models and business lines based on the new realities. Digitalisation is critical to understand and strengthen ties with employees and customers, offer different shopping experiences, ensure efficiency, develop new channels and execute integrated marketing. The winners will be companies which set up data-driven smart systems and, accordingly, Migros is introducing new training to equip our employees with technical competence skills in areas such as artificial intelligence and blockchain. At the same time, it is important to maintain diversity, equality and an inclusive business environment in the new era. Within this context, we believe the number of female executives and their influence on our sector will continue to increase.