

ABIDA BAHAR KÖKSAL

FOUNDER, ABK AMERICAN LANGUAGE COURSES

Could you briefly tell us about yourself, your childhood entrepreneurial journey, and how you founded ABK American Language Courses?

I was born in Germany in 1995. I first encountered entrepreneurship at eight, selling toys at local markets. My entrepreneurial spirit grew from a desire to make my childhood dreams come true. I believed I would one day turn those dreams into reality. I have enjoyed communicating with people since childhood. Meeting people and building networks gives me wonderful energy. With my strong appetite for life, I dreamed of creating a project that would enrich the lives of children and adults. I believe a child's heart is special and that adults always carry their inner child with them. I founded ABK American Language Courses to build a strong educational brand that creates new opportunities in foreign languages and prepares people for the world.

How did you transform a Kayseri-based venture into a national education brand?

Knowledge doubles approximately every 18 months, so what we learn can quickly become outdated. Remaining current is therefore essential, so I regularly plan training programmes for myself and my team. A leader's desire to learn and develop is a powerful source of energy that nourishes the entire team. Work occupies a large part of our lives, so making that time enjoyable is crucial. If we stop learning, it becomes inevitable that we will feel as though we are falling from a great height. Ultimately, we are all responsible for contributing value to the collective. In short, continuous learning and keeping ourselves up to date became the most important strategy in transforming our Kayseri-based venture into a national education brand. A happy team that is passionate about its work and believes in a shared goal is highly unlikely to produce unsuccessful results. So to speak, even elephants can become ants.

How do you standardise educational quality for everyone, from children to adults?

Every individual's relationship with the world is shaped by childhood experiences. In fact, we are all children at heart. Children are the ones who bring the greatest joy to our institution. Young children never forget how adults treat them; instead, they shape their futures through the behaviours they observe. That is why we value every child. Alongside teaching them a language, we strengthen their self-confidence and create space for them to discover their talents. We approach our adult students with the same understanding. Our instructors sincerely strive to help them recognise their potential and prepare for international foreign-language examinations

with confidence in themselves. Most importantly, through the speaking clubs we offer for life, they develop the ability to think, interpret, and express themselves in a foreign language. In this way, they can both succeed in international examinations within their fields and reach the overseas goals they have dreamed of, while also speaking the language more fluently in everyday life.

How has founding and growing an education brand as a woman shaped your management style?

First and foremost, I believe in the work I do, and this makes me happy.

The energy born from that belief is reflected in my management style and also nourishes my team. While supporting the development of my colleagues, I try to convey the importance of being disciplined and determined. I once read that determination resembles a sharp sword; it cuts through the obstacles we encounter on the path toward our goals. Discipline and determination make goals attainable, and the most beautiful part is that this strength exists within all of us. As a woman leader, I combine the German discipline I carry within me with sincere communication that inspires my team.

What is your most ambitious growth target, and what roadmap will you follow?

Our most ambitious goal is to make ABK an authorised examination centre for an international examination organisation based in Germany. By enabling our students to complete the entire process, from education to examination, under one roof, we want to place our brand in a stronger position aligned with European standards.

What is your clearest advice to new leaders who hesitate to establish and grow their ventures because of uncertainty and obstacles?

If you have an idea that excites you so much that you can hardly wait for morning, the only thing you need to do is believe in it wholeheartedly and take action without wasting time or waiting for someone to support you. I founded ABK in late 2020, during the most uncertain period of the pandemic. Many people told me, "This is not something that can be done during a pandemic." Do not allow visible or invisible obstacles to distract you. We may have negative experiences; however, when



When you walk with
determination on the
PATH
you believe in,
SUCCESS
is not a possibility;
it is the RESULT."

we turn towards our dreams instead of giving up and believe in them with all our hearts, what ultimately comes true will be the dream itself. As Atatürk said: "Victory belongs to those who can say, 'Victory is mine.' Success belongs to those who begin by saying, 'I will succeed,' and can say, 'I have succeeded.'"