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AGRIBUSINESS

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ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday  
TRAVEL, TOURISM & AVIATION

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP



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## Creating flexible organizations

Organizations all over the world want to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit. Whether they are massive global conglomerates or small companies that just recently made the transition to professional management, they believe injecting entrepreneurialism into their veins will bring back a spark in their company.

Firms with a healthy dose of this entrepreneurial spirit are known for their flexibility and responsiveness. They are dynamic and reorganize quickly to respond to market changes. Their decision-making is smooth and efficient, with little or no bureaucracy. They focus on opportunity and the upside, rather than staring at the downside and risk.

Entrepreneurial organizations encourage independent initiative at every level of the company. They know they will often find themselves in uncharted territory, and they will need to call on the creativity and brain power of everyone in the company.

They know that the only way to thrive in a fast-changing environment is to experiment, and experiments don't always work out well. Entrepreneurial organizations accept this and don't stigmatize failure in one experiment, as long as lessons are learned and applied towards success in another.

These companies also know that employees want to learn, explore, and grow. They take advantage of this natural desire, nurturing it and leveraging it for the company's benefit too, rather than trying to force it into prescribed channels and processes.

If yours is one of the companies that want to bring more of this kind of spirit into their culture, how do you do it?

### Personal development comes naturally, so clear the paths

First, stop wondering whether your employees are up to the challenge. Remember, people by nature want to develop themselves. So when your organization encourages entrepreneurial behavior, your employees will respond to it readily. Do not think of your organizational design effort as coaxing hesitant mules. Think of it as clearing paths for racehorses.

Also remember that experimentation and even the occasional failure are an integral part of the entrepreneurial experience. Accept that your employees will be trying new things. Most of them will go well, but some won't. When things don't go well, focus on extracting and disseminating the learning that you can apply to other projects. Resist the temptation to protect yourself by thickening the layers of rules and procedures. If you tell your employees, "We want you to explore new lands, but only within the boundaries we set," it's like telling a child to "go see the world, but stay in the backyard."

Most employees have heard messages like this before, and they've grown cynical because of it. When an experiment flops at your own company, you'll need to set an example by continuing to support and encourage the employees involved. When the others see they won't lose their jobs because of an experiment, they'll be more likely to step out of their comfort zones.

Employees need quick access to the tools and knowledge that already exist in your company. Don't allow information to waste away in inaccessible silos. One quick way to distribute your company's collective knowledge is to list the tools and their process owners, and to circulate that list throughout the organization. This will help your people quickly locate what they need regardless of where it is in the company.

Finally, don't think that by testing your employees you can find entrepreneurial types deserving of targeted freedoms.

Some years ago, a few large consulting firms tried to conduct tests to see who would make a good entrepreneur, and who wouldn't. Since then, though, we've learned that there is no distinct set of behavioral traits common to entrepreneurial types.

Whether you are designing an entrepreneurial organization from scratch, or trying to reshape an existing organization, the most important guiding principle to remember is that in order to release entrepreneurial spirit, you have to give up some control. This can be especially difficult for mature companies that are used to a command-and-control environment, but without that leap of faith, your efforts to grow the entrepreneurial spirit will be dead on arrival.

# Former broker turns hobby into a business

ISTANBUL  
Anatolia News Agency

After long years of working in portfolio management, a Turkish economist has opened a cat guesthouse in Istanbul's Cihangir district, turning a hobby into her primary job.

Meral Üçel, who worked in portfolio management for 18 years and was selected Turkey's best broker in 1993, has established her own business with the cat guesthouse named Pisipisievi. Due to her love for cats and dogs, she has found homes for many animals over the years.

Having witnessed many crises during her career, she became tired three years ago and decided to leave her job. "The conditions were already not very good in the market. We all faced unemployment. We experienced the things that we never predicted we would." Following her decision, she started not to go to job interviews in her area of expertise, she said, slowly warming up to the idea of opening a cat guesthouse.

Noting that she devotes time in her private life to crafts and animals, her favorite things, Üçel said, "While pondering what to do, I have received a lot advice about opening a restaurant. I had concerns about stepping into trade. It is not easy if you have worked with a salary and are not an old hand at trade. ... But I have found a topic that I love dearly. Now, I have carried my hobbies to weekdays, which everyone dreams of."

### Always loving animals

Üçel used to envy people who work without feeling like they are working, she said, adding that she loves and touches every cat she sees on streets or at other people's houses. "Now, I still

**A former portfolio manager opens a 'cat guesthouse' in Istanbul's Cihangir district, after long years of hard work in the markets. 'Pisipisievi' hosts pet cats for 25 Turkish Liras a day. 'I have carried my hobby to weekdays, something that everyone dreams of,' says Meral Üçel, who was selected Turkey's best broker in 1993**



AA photo

**CAT GUESTHOUSE:** Meral Üçel's love for cats enabled her dream to come true, as the former portfolio manager left an unpredictable job and opened the 'Pisipisi Evi' in Istanbul's Cihangir district, helping cats and their owners.

love them, and people pay me for this. The jobs that are done with excitement always continue. They continue if you put your heart into it."

The cat guesthouse hosts cats for 25 Turkish Liras a day, with daily costs belonging to the owners, Üçel said.

For the situations that require a stay of one to six months, the price is 600 liras per month, she said, adding that the price is open for negotiation for longer periods of time.

The place allows only pets that have the necessary vaccinations and health reports, Üçel said, adding that she also requires all

the necessary information from those who leave their cats. She also said that the area could be enlarged in line with demand.

### Learning whom to trust

Most of her customers are people who look after their animals carefully, she said, adding, "My previous business life, which included overcoming many crises, has taught me whom to trust."

Üçel has made trademark registration after finding the name "Pisipisievi," and purchased Web space, she said. When she decided to open the guesthouse three years ago, the crisis had not started yet, she said.

"But through the experience of so many years, I had had the wind of the crisis beforehand. I warned everyone that a miserable period was coming. The previous crises we experienced had emerged at a stroke, but this time it came from abroad, phase by phase. Those who are not in the business realized this later, and maybe there are people who have yet to realize it."

Besides cats' physical health and psychological health is also cared for at "Pisipisievi," where cats have the chance to wander around. The cat hotel's Web site, pisipisievi.com, focuses on health issues and finding homes for animals.



AA photo

**BAND:** Those that performed Wednesday evening include Mehmet Bulduran of Temsa Global, Ibrahim Orhon of ToyotaSA and Hulusi Derici from Marka Ajans.

## Executives forget the crisis in concert

ISTANBUL  
Anatolia News Agency

A club consisting of chief executive officers formed by two Turkish economy magazines has come together to get over the crisis blues and perform a musical number or two of their own.

Members of the "CEO Club," which operates under the leadership of Capital and Ekonomist magazines, performed with a band during an event held at Conrad Hotel with the support of the raki brand Tekirdağ Rakı Altın Seri. At the event named "Ceo'lar Fazla Meseide," or "CEOs on Overtime," CEO Club members, with instruments, accompanied P&G Turkey Managing Director Saffet Karpaz and his group "Fazla Meseai," or "Overtime."

Speaking at the opening of the event, Capital Editor-in-Chief Rauf

Ateş said that normally they hailed summer with a breakfast or dinner, but this time such an event was to really blow out the anxiety caused by this year's economic distress. Top executives are seen as "pedantic people that sit and give orders at their firms," said Erdal Karamercan, CEO of Eczacıbaşı Holding, a prominent Turkish industrial group with 40 companies and 9,500 employees. "I thank Capital, which has enabled us to display that we have a life other than managing firms. Through them, we have advanced to human grade," he said.

During Wednesday night's event, CEO Club members also sang songs, besides accompanying Fazla Meseai with their instruments. "İşin Ötesi," or "Beyond The Job," a jazz band featuring businesspeople, also performed at the event.



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