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ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Innovative brains awarded in contest

ISTANBUL  
Hürriyet Daily News

Results of the second "Got an Idea" entrepreneurship contest, organized by Özyeğin University and LabX, were announced at the British consulate in Istanbul on Wednesday.

The top three contestants received their awards from Hüsnü Özyeğin, president of Özyeğin University's board of trustees, and Pinar Eczacıbaşı, chairwoman of the Young Executives and Businessmen's Association, or GYAD.

"Countries that improve entrepreneurship improve faster. That's why I will never stop supporting young entrepreneurs," said Özyeğin. "At Özyeğin University, our first aim is to support entrepreneurship and make our university an entrepreneurship center."

Özyeğin handed the first prize to Ahmet Bahadır Özdemir, who discovered a new tool called Reklam-TV, an Internet Protocol Television-based model, in which television content that is received by the viewer through technologies used for computer networks. Özdemir received 200,000 Turkish Liras from LabX and 40,000 liras in cash and a 30,000 liras-worth education package from Özyeğin University and technology support from Cisco Systems. He was also awarded with an internship in Britain by UK Trade and Investment. Özdemir called being an entrepreneur "an illness that is hard to cure." The second project, a multiple dental implant system created by Aras Şimşek, Emre Özyılmaz and Mustafa Serhat Mertöglü, received 30,000 liras. The third project is called El6, a new generation mobile socializing platform created by Batuhan Kılıç, Ozan Can Köseley and Metin Serhat Atayer.



**HESITATION:** The enterprises interviewed by a textile and apparel technology center deem the creation of unfair competition due to the imitation of new products and technologies as the primary problem in research and development. Textile industrialists in Manisa are hopeful about an incentive in this file photo.

# Lack in research focus

BURSA  
Anatolia News Agency

Enterprises in the textile sector attach more importance to product development than research and development, or R&D, a survey by a technology center based in the northwestern city of Bursa has revealed.

The Bursa Textile and Apparel Technology Center, or BUTEKOM, conducted the R&D Inventory Poll in order to reveal R&D activities in the textile and apparel sectors.

Speaking at a press conference held to assess survey results, İbrahim Burkay, vice chairman of the Turkish Exporters' Assembly, or TIM, and chairman of the Uludağ Textile Exporters Association, or UTİB, said that BUTEKOM was founded to focus and direct the sparse R&D activities of all textile and apparel enterprises in Bursa and its surrounding region.

Within the scope of the poll, 100 large-scale and 642 small- and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, were interviewed, he said. Some 62 percent of the

**A recent survey by a Bursa-based technology center shows that research and development, or R&D, activity is not a first priority for textile and apparel companies. In the survey, 62 percent of the large-scale enterprises and 18 percent of the small- and medium sized enterprises, or SMEs, said that they have R&D functions**

large-scale enterprises and 18 percent of the SMEs said that they have R&D functions while the rates are around 90 percent and 100 percent respectively for product development.

### Market creation looms large

Large-scale enterprises and SMEs prioritize the activities that aim at creating a market, said Burkay, adding that project-based work comes later in both groups. They deem the creation of unfair competition due to the imitation of new products and technologies as the primary problem in R&D. In this respect, they need to be informed on how they will protect the product, process and "know-how" as well as their legal rights.

Noting that the sector provides employment to approximately 2 million people directly, Burkay said: "The textile and ap-

parel sector is not just a key sector but also a priority sector. The sector does not have long-term plan. Its production capacity is at least five times its current consumption capacity.

It does not have marketing, direct reach to consumers or distribution channels, which makes the sector seem like contract manufacturers. With the development of R&D awareness in all organizations and ensuring necessary support, it will be possible to increase international competitive power and rank among developed countries."

Besides R&D activities, the formation of innovation infrastructure in all organizations and the expansion of innovation awareness should be among the basic goals of all enterprises, according to Burkay.

Listing some suggestions for R&D, he said: "A national textile R&D policy should be devel-

oped. Turkish textile should create added value and focus on R&D activities. The formation and development of the firms that can come up with new technological ideas and discoveries should be encouraged."

### Cost benefits for research

The enterprises that spend a certain amount of their turnover in R&D should benefit from a less cost advantage in loans, he said. "Significant reductions of tax and insurance premiums are necessary, not only for the staff working at tecnoparks but also for the R&D staff in enterprises' R&D departments.

The firms whose R&D expenditures are above a certain portion of turnover should be provided with graded reduction for energy.

The firms' investments to establish R&D units and R&D staff should be exempt from taxes."



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## Is it only a matter of a unique idea?

**Just because your idea is unique doesn't mean it will turn into a successful business. Most business success comes from taking existing ideas and improving on them**

When was the last time you used AltaVista? Most people these days have never even heard of it, but AltaVista was the number one Internet search engine before Google burst onto the scene. Back in the day, when you needed to find something on the Web, you went to AltaVista. It was the dominant player. You had to be crazy to go up against it.

The founders of Google, however, decided to do just that. They thought they could provide a more capable search technology, so they took something AltaVista had done well, and they set out to do it better. They certainly weren't the first to index the Web, but they became successful because they did it better than the others.

Since its early days, Google has also been admired for its clean, simple page layout. It wasn't the first search engine to try that, either. AltaVista had a clean page layout, too, but it decided to move away from that simplicity for a more complicated page design. Google quickly filled the vacant space, adopting AltaVista's original, simpler design. At that time, Google was virtually unknown in the business, and adopting a design that had just been dropped by the dominant player in the industry was considered a risky move.

Today Google owns 80 percent of the global search market. AltaVista's market share withered long ago to single digits and it barely even rates a tiny blip on the radar screen. Very few people have heard of AltaVista, but everyone knows Google.

### Building on ruins

When you're thinking about starting your own business, it's natural to want to have a unique idea. After all, you imagine, if you can offer a product or service no one has offered before, you'll have a competitive advantage. For many people, finding that unique idea is an essential prerequisite to starting a business. But are they wasting their time waiting for inspiration to come? Does one really need a unique idea to find commercial success?

The fact is, most successful businesses were built on the ruins of someone else's original idea. Before Google, even before AltaVista, there was Archie. Archie was the world's first search engine, designed by a student at McGill University in Montreal. It brought him some minor fame at the time, but it never became a sustainable business. Just because your idea is unique doesn't mean it will turn into a successful business, because most business success comes from taking existing ideas and improving on them.

There are many ways to improve on an existing idea, but most of them fall into one of two categories. The first is improving the quality of the product or service itself.

Your product might not be the first of its kind, but does it do something better than the ones that came before it? Google started because its founders decided they could provide better search results than AltaVista, and even though Google now practically owns the search market, it still works relentlessly to continue improving the quality of its search results.

Another way to improve on an existing idea is to form a stronger emotional bond with your customers. When two products are similar, customers will pick the one they feel closest to. That emotional connection often comes from face-to-face contact, but not always. Look again at Google. When was the last time you picked up the phone and talked to that nice customer service person at the Google help desk? Google doesn't form an emotional connection because it has friendly customer service, Google forms an emotional connection because it makes the internet easy.

By almost any measure, Google is an immensely successful business, but it didn't start out as a unique idea. Google's founders were not the first to say, "Hey, I have a new idea, let's index the Web," or "Hey, I have a new idea, let's have a clean white page." So if you want to start your own business, don't spend too much time sitting around waiting for an original idea. It's okay to get started with something that already exists, and make it better.



**JOB:** The small- and medium-sized enterprises that obtained certificates within the first five months of the year will provide jobs for 4,899 people.

## Small firms receive incentive support

ANKARA  
Referans

Within the first five months of the year, 347 small- and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, obtained incentive certificates in Turkey, official figures have revealed.

These enterprises will make fixed investments worth 281.1 million Turkish Liras, providing jobs for 4,899 people. Within the framework of these investments, \$68.3 million worth machines and equipments will be imported, according to the latest Treasury data.

Out of the 347 incentive certificates given to SMEs between January and May, 292 certificates were given to manufacturing industry. Service sector obtained 34 certificates while agriculture got 12 and mining 9 certificates. It is expected that manufacturing industry firms

will effectuate fixed investment worth 229 million liras, and supply 4,106 jobs. These firms announced to import machines and equipments worth \$61.8 million. The firms with certificate in service sector are expected to make fixed investment of 30.5 million liras, add 437 jobs and import 5.6 million liras worth machines and equipments. Agricultural enterprises' fixed investment will total 12.5 million liras. Providing employment for 192 people, these firms will import \$177,000 worth machinery and equipment. Mining sector, in which SMEs are expected to invest 9.1 million liras, supplying 164 jobs, is expected to import machines and equipment worth \$716,000. In terms of regional distribution of the certificates, Marmara ranks first with 100 SMEs.



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