

Riza Davutoglu

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EDUCATION

Marmara University

Master's Degree in International Banking 1990-1992

Marmara University

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration 1984-1989

University of Tehran

Bachelor of Conservatory, Classical Guitar Department 1979-1983

EXPERIENCE

Freelance

Independent Exporter 2018 – Present

- Since 2018, I have continued my career as an independent exporter, expanding my global trade network and focusing heavily on direct collaborations with U.S.-based companies.

GESAŞ Genel Gıda A.Ş.

Deputy General Manager 2016 –2018

- During my tenure, I led the restructuring of the company's export strategy and directed its expansion into the U.S. market. I launched comprehensive structural transformations to align the production process with FDA regulations, including label formatting, ingredient standardization, and HACCP documentation. As a result, the company made its first direct shipment to the U.S. in 2016, delivered to the Port of New Jersey.
- We also repositioned traditional products like tahini, Turkish delight, chocolate spread, biscuits, candies, and halva to meet U.S. consumer expectations for gluten-free and additive-free offerings. GESAŞ quickly emerged as a pioneering Turkish brand in the "Mediterranean specialty" category in the U.S. market.

Birida Gıda

Founder and CEO 2002 –2016

- I founded BİRİDA GIDA and transformed it into a global export-focused company with eight production facilities and a presence in over 60 countries. Over 14 years, I developed and launched five international brands—Jellibella, Fiorebella, GoldenJus, Ararat, and Clean & Shine—taking them from concept and formulation to global market success. Under my leadership, BİRİDA grew into a multi-category industrial group with 42,000 m² of production space and 36,000 m² of storage, manufacturing confectionery, powdered beverages, coffee, and household paper and cleaning products.
- As Founder and General Manager, I oversaw all aspects of production, budgeting, and export strategy, achieving an annual turnover of approximately \$2M and managing a team of 20+ employees. I restructured our operations to establish specialized production lines and secured ISO 9001 and ISO 22000/HACCP certifications to meet international standards. Our brands gained strong global visibility through participation in leading trade fairs such as Gulfood Dubai, ISM Cologne, and Prodexpo Moscow, as well as in markets across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

Kervan Gıda

General Manager 1998 –2002

- During my four-year tenure, I reported directly to the Board of Directors and managed an export department overseeing a production-sales budget exceeding 80 million Turkish Liras. I restructured the export unit, signed over 30 new distributor contracts in the Middle East and Central Europe, and expanded the group's foreign sales volume by more than fivefold. The multilingual trade team I built formed the foundation of the company's current export network to 85 countries. Additionally, I established a company in Moscow to expand into the Russian market, trained the local team, and oversaw operations.

Eczacıbaşı Holding
Export Manager

1994 – 1998

- During my four-year tenure, I led international sales operations, opened new markets, and increased the company's export revenue by 15%. I was directly involved in key construction tenders abroad, personally handling the visits, audits, bidding, and implementation processes. I secured numerous contracts, especially in the Balkans, Russia, Cyprus, and Eastern Europe. This experience prepared me for managing much larger-scale operations.
- I led a 12-person multilingual trade team, and over four years, we increased group exports by 1215%, generating approximately \$10 million in additional revenue. I also established two new distribution networks in Central Europe and Asia and led the group's first "EPC + supply" model projects in infrastructure tenders. This performance not only strengthened Eczacıbaşı's position in foreign markets but also established me as one of the key decision-makers behind the group's global growth vision.

Toprak Holding
Export Manager

1990 – 1994

- I reported directly to the general manager and played an active role in determining pricing strategies, selecting target countries, and expanding the customer portfolio. I led a sales and operations team of four. The performance of the export unit was a critical factor in the overall success of the holding's industrial group. The methods I developed were adopted by other export units within the group, making me one of the decision-makers shaping foreign trade strategies in one of Turkey's largest industrial conglomerates.
- When I began, the paper factory's annual export volume was around \$550,000. Through strategic analysis, pricing revisions, and market expansion efforts, I increased this figure to \$8.5 million in a short period. This success was widely recognized not only within the company but also across the export sector.

LANGUAGES

- English (Native)
- Turkish (Native)
- Persian (Native)

SKILLS

- **International Trade & Export Strategy:** Proven success in exporting to over 65 countries across five continents; deep understanding of cross-border trade dynamics and compliance.
- **U.S. Market Expertise:** 25+ years of direct trade experience with the U.S., including in-depth knowledge of U.S. regulations, consumer behavior, labeling laws, and logistics systems.
- **Business Development & Market Expansion:** Skilled in identifying and capitalizing on growth opportunities; experienced in building new export channels and global market entry strategies.
- **Leadership & Strategic Vision:** Recognized for strategic leadership in international trade; experienced in guiding companies toward sustainable and culturally sensitive global growth.
- **Cross-Cultural Negotiation & Communication:** Strong cross-cultural negotiation skills with a focus on building long-term, trust-based business relationships between Turkish and American partners.
- **Client Portfolio Management:** Maintains an extensive global client network; excels in leveraging partnerships for mutual business development and export success.
- **Regulatory Compliance & Import/Export Operations:** Expert in navigating complex trade regulations, labeling requirements, and customs processes for diverse international markets.
- **Cultural Diplomacy in Commerce:** Committed to promoting cultural understanding and cooperation through international trade activities and business models.
- **Strategic Planning & Execution:** Long-term growth planner with a track record of executing commercial strategies that align with economic and cultural objectives.