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Innovation with Impact
Turning Intent into
Measurable Outcomes

**Leadership with a
People-First Mindset**
Creating Environments
where Talent Shines

Turkey's Top
**BUSINESS
ICONS**
LEADING WITH
IMPACT IN
2025

Osman Aslanali
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Göknur Gıda

How Osman Aslanali is Leading

göknur
Gıda

From Anatolian Roots to Global Excellence



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CONTENTS

THE FRONT PAGE EXCLUSIVE

10

How
Osman Aslanali
is Leading Göknur Gıda—From
Anatolian Roots to Global Excellence



THE STORIES WITHIN

22

Murat Atici
Transcending Innovation, Impact
and the Future of Turkish Tech



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

20

Innovation with Impact
Turning Intent into
Measurable Outcomes



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

26

**Leadership with
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Where Talent Shines

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The Front Page Exclusive

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Osman Aslanali
Chief Executive Officer
(CEO)
Göknur Gıda



Fruits of the hardest and the smartest labor are the sweetest, realized **Osman Aslanali** during his over three decades of business leadership journey that successfully built **Göknur Gıda**—a truly international agribusiness on the premise of adaptability and resilience from the ground up.

Turkey, Aslanali's homeland, has always been a place of vast, lush, and green vegetable farmlands, fruit gardens, and beautiful orchards. However, there's a caveat. The favorable yet fluctuating climate can play spoilsport. That is why, instead of a smooth and upswing journey, Aslanali and Göknur Gıda's saga is laden with many twists and turns. At each turn, Aslanali says he learned his professional life's biggest lessons.

Nonetheless, it is of no use to begin this story in a scattered way. Let's begin from the beginning. All along, playing a defining role in positioning Göknur Gıda as one of Turkey's most prominent agribusiness and fruit-juice companies, Aslanali credits his early years, which taught him the most. "They were like a training guide—a gift to me from my life," he says.

Becoming Truly Global

After graduating from the Middle East Technical University as a food engineer, Aslanali began his career in the foreign trade department of a fruit juice company. Gaining valuable experience, he decided to pursue his own entrepreneurial path. In the late 1990s, together with several partners, he founded a small fruit juice concentrate factory in Central Anatolia — Göknur Gıda. "I became the General Manager and later a shareholder, and that's where our journey began," he shares.

In the early years, their resources were scarce. Aslanali was personally involved in every aspect of daily operations, even on the factory floor. The early 2000s brought a major challenge: China's entry into the fruit juice concentrate market led to a dramatic drop in prices, threatening the profitability of processors worldwide. Despite limited resources, says Aslanali that they navigated this crisis by turning toward specialty fruits such as pomegranates, which gave them a distinctive advantage.

Over time, they realized that relying solely on Turkey for fruit sourcing carried risk. Climate fluctuations and yield variations could disrupt supply and profitability. "We made a decisive strategic move to diversify our sourcing base across major fruit-producing countries — a step that laid the foundation for Göknur's global identity."

"Today, Göknur has a truly international shareholder base with investors from around the world — a milestone that reflects our credibility and long-term vision."

In 2012, Göknur attracted a foreign investor when a private equity firm became a shareholder of the company. This partnership brought financial strength and international expertise, helping Aslanali and his team to accelerate their growth. In 2023, Göknur went public and was listed on the Borsa Istanbul Main Market. Today, Göknur has a truly international shareholder base with investors from around the world — a milestone that reflects its credibility and long-term vision.

The Evolution of Leadership: From Hands-On to Collective Intelligence

As Göknur Gıda began its monumental shift onto the global stage, Aslanali's leadership philosophy underwent a necessary transformation. His early style was "hands-on and operationally focused," dedicated to the tangible: improving yields, optimizing production, and ensuring factory floor efficiency.

However, global expansion necessitated a change toward "empowerment, systems, and strategic agility." Today, Aslanali believes that effective leadership is primarily about creating environments where capable people are free to thrive. Listening to diverse teams across international markets has made the entire organization "wiser and more resilient."

He views his current role as the ultimate strategic challenge: "Leadership, for me, is the art of orchestrating collective intelligence—ensuring that hundreds of individual decisions align with a shared vision."

"Listening to teams across diverse markets has made Göknur wiser and more resilient. Leadership, for me, is the art of orchestrating collective intelligence — ensuring that hundreds of individual decisions align with a shared vision."

Proving the Brand: Establishing Global Trust

Shaping Göknur Gıda's international identity presented formidable early challenges, primarily revolving around perception. Two decades ago, the "Made in Turkey" label in fruit processing was not widely associated with premium quality. Aslanali and his team had to undertake the arduous task of proving, "container by container," that their products could consistently match—and surpass—international standards.

Gaining the trust of local farmers was equally challenging. As a newcomer, Göknur had to demonstrate unwavering reliability before suppliers would agree to long-term partnerships. The company achieved stability by managing limited working capital with prudence, avoiding overextension, and focusing strictly on "steady, disciplined growth."

Furthermore, Aslanali acted early on the nascent organic trend. By investing directly in organic orchards and providing local farmers with guaranteed purchase agreements and essential education, Göknur established itself as a pioneer in the organic fruit concentrate market.

They overcame every hurdle through relentless persistence and transparency, inviting customers to their facilities and openly sharing laboratory results. Aslanali sums up the triumph simply: "Over time, reliability became our brand."

The Competitive Edge: Vertical Integration and Climate

Göknur Gıda's status as a regional powerhouse is a direct result of maximizing Turkey's natural advantages. The country, being the fourth-largest fruit and vegetable producer globally, offers year-round variety, allowing Göknur to operate continuously, circumventing the seasonal constraints faced by many competitors. Crucially, the location near Mersin Port ensures efficient logistics to major global markets.

Internally, the competitive distinction is maintained through vertical integration and innovation. Aslanali ensures control over the entire value chain—from orchard to final product—guaranteeing quality, cost control, and traceability. The recent addition of a bottling plant enables the delivery of consumer-ready products.

Technology is fundamental: facilities are continuously upgraded with modern evaporators and aseptic filling systems. Sustainability is deeply ingrained, with fruit by-products transformed into biogas and natural fertilizer, powering part of their operations. Ultimately, this sophisticated system relies on an experienced and dedicated team whose expertise ensures consistent product quality.

Pillars of Growth: Diversification and Value

Aslanali credits Göknur Gıda's consistent growth to three non-negotiable strategic pillars that eliminate volatility and maximize value:

- **Right Location:** Leveraging Anatolia's fertile lands provides a natural edge. Owning or contracting orchards across various climates ensures supply stability and diversity.
- **Global Diversification:** The company sources from all major fruit-growing regions and exports to over 80 countries, effectively reducing regional volatility and keeping them close to their vast customer base.
- **Full Value Chain Expertise:** Göknur has strategically evolved beyond producing bulk concentrates to deliver high-margin, value-added products such as NFC (Not From Concentrate) juices, custom blended beverages, and plant-based ingredients.

Supporting these pillars is ongoing investments in renewable energy and digital infrastructure, which keep the company agile and sustainable in a demanding global market.



"Turkey is the fourth-largest fruit and vegetable producer in the world. Thanks to our favorable climate, we have access to almost year-round fruit and vegetable varieties."



Defining Success: Integrity and Legacy

For Aslanali, success is viewed through a dual lens of integrity and organizational endurance. Personally, it means achieving "continuity with integrity—growing without compromising one's principles." Organizationally, the goal is not profit, which he sees as merely an outcome, but legacy. The ultimate success is "building a company that outlives its founders," ensuring sustained value for farmers, employees, shareholders, and consumers. "Our mission is to turn fruit, sunlight, and human talent into prosperity that enriches society."

The Pillars of Effective Leadership: Precision and Courage

Given the vast scale of Göknur Gıda, Aslanali understands that his decisions carry immense moral responsibility. The livelihoods of thousands depend on his leadership, requiring him to operate with precision and empathy.

He defines effective leadership by three essential traits: clarity, adaptability, and empathy. Clarity provides stability amid complexity; adaptability ensures survival in fast-changing markets; and empathy connects high-level strategy to the human element. Yet, a final trait supersedes them all: "Above all, courage—the courage to act on conviction even when data is incomplete—separates leaders from followers."

Cultivating Excellence: Learning from Mistakes

Innovation at Göknur Gıda is both cultural and structural. Aslanali has institutionalized cross-functional R&D, forcing engineers, agronomists, and food technologists to collaborate on solutions for future challenges. In this environment, "Mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn, not failures."

Accountability is driven by transparency. Progress is measured not just in metrics, but in improvements. Excellence is achieved when every individual clearly understands how their specific work contributes to the organization's greater purpose. The company actively rewards initiative, responsibility, and collaboration, cementing a culture of continuous advancement.



Global Adaptation: Authenticity in Every Language

With Göknur Gıda's exports spanning multiple continents, Aslanali emphasizes that success demands more than a single strategy; it requires localized engagement. Every market has distinct expectations: Europe demands stringent quality certifications and sustainability standards, the Middle East prioritizes reliability and long-term trust, and Asia values speed and customization.

To manage this diversity, Göknur employs a standardized operational framework complemented by localization. They maintain customer service centers and warehouses in seven global locations for responsiveness. Furthermore, their multilingual teams are adept at understanding regional regulations and cultural nuances, allowing them to co-develop products with partners.

"Adaptation, for us, means expressing our authenticity in different languages."

Leading the Transformation: Agribusiness and the Future

Aslanali views Turkey's agribusiness as standing on the verge of a profound transformation, driven by digitalization,



renewable energy, and sustainable practices. Göknur Gıda is determined to be at the forefront of this evolution.

The company is pioneering agrivoltaic systems, which integrate solar panels directly with orchards, allowing farmers to simultaneously protect crops and generate clean energy. They are also making heavy investments in biogas and carbon-neutral production, aiming to prove that food processing can be both profitable and environmentally responsible.

“Göknur will remain at the forefront—pioneering agrivoltaic systems that integrate solar panels with orchards.”

For Aslanali, the company’s future role is to ensure that Turkey’s agricultural wealth translates into sustainable, resilient prosperity.

Advice to the Future: Start Anyway

For emerging entrepreneurs, Aslanali’s message is one of audacious simplicity and perseverance. He cautions against the common mistake of letting ideas perish due to perceived lack of capital.

“My message is simple: start anyway. True ideas attract the resources they deserve.”

He advises surrounding oneself with talented, positive people who share the founder’s passion and, critically, cultivating patience. In a world defined by instant gratification, he reminds leaders that in agriculture and in business, “everything valuable takes time to grow.”

The Defining Lesson: Stewardship and Integrity

Reflecting on his journey, which began “from almost nothing,” Aslanali identifies two defining lessons. First, the foundation of their reputation was built by consistently establishing real value for every stakeholder—from customers to smallholder farmers. Second, he asserts that growth tests character, and integrity is the only compass that keeps a leader on course.

This principle informs his definition of leadership:

“Leadership, to me, is stewardship—protecting the ecosystem of people, land, and trust that sustains your company.”

“Innovation at Göknur is both cultural and structural. We’ve institutionalized cross-functional R&D, bringing together engineers, agronomists, and food technologists to design solutions that meet tomorrow’s challenges today.”

The Future Chapter: Carbon-Positive Nourishment

Göknur Gıda is now entering an ambitious new chapter that fuses food production with energy and technology. Through significant solar and biogas investments, the company is on track to become one of the region’s first carbon-positive agribusinesses.

They continue to expand their product line into natural juices, plant-based beverages, and functional ingredients, while cementing their social commitment through rural education and fair agricultural practices.

“Ultimately, Göknur Gıda’s mission is to turn the abundance of Turkish soil into global nourishment—responsibly, innovatively, and proudly.”

göknur
Fruit of Fertile Anatolian Lands