



Breakfast Roundtable: Insights into Turkey
08.30am, 10 July 2019
Quo Vadis Club
Soho, London



Meeting Notes

Attendee List

First name	Last name	Position	Company
Alexandre	Rizos	Senior Manager – Communications, International	AXA XL
Basak	Beyazzy	Business Development Executive & Energy Trader	Total S.A.





Crochenka	McCarthy	Senior Manager – Open & Executive Master Programmes	ESCP Europe
Dominic	Lyle	Advisory Board	Creative Culture
Elena	Iacob	Account Director	Gutenberg Global
Elif	Toker-Turnalar	Lecturer – Political Comms & PR	Regent’s University London
Katie	Packham	International Membership Consultant	PRCA
Jill	Heller	New Business Manager	Creative Culture
Melanie	Chevalier	CEO and Founder	Creative Culture
Paul	Duncanson	Managing Partner Non-Executive Director	Creativebrief Creative Culture
Peter	Stephenson-Wright	UK Director of Executive Education & Business Development	ESCP Europe
Sami	Can Besceli	Integrated Strategist	Freelance
Yavuz	Sokman	CEO and Founder	TBCCI
Zeynep	Arat	Senior Strategy Manager	Essence

Introductions

To open the event, Paul Duncanson (PD) first welcomed all attendees and introduced the concept of our roundtables. He then asked for everyone to briefly introduce themselves.

PD invited Yavuz Sokman, Founder and CEO of Turkish British Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Elif Toker-Turnalar, Lecturer & Researcher of Political Communications and Public Relations with expertise in Turkey, to share some of their knowledge and insight on the Turkish political, social and economic conditions. PD also asked that they share any insights on managing marketing and communications activity in the country.





YS provided insights on economic relations between the UK and Turkey and noted the continuing strength of the Turkish economy.

ETT identified that a current topic of conversation within Turkey is how the market will be impacted post-Brexit. She mentioned that amongst Turkish citizens, social media usage is becoming so common that it may be taking over television as the dominant form of media consumption now. Elif referenced the social, political and economic polarisation within Turkish culture and the common understanding in Turkey that there is a major shift happening within the country.

General Discussion Points

Politics and Economics

Despite challenges facing the political and economic landscape in Turkey within the past few years, the Turkish market has proved to be resilient.

There are currently tensions in the Turkish political sphere and a major cultural shift occurring in tandem with the rise of technology and social media. Notably, almost 40% of the country support the political elite/governing party whilst half of Turkey's population is under 31 years old, meaning that youth have a major impact on the landscape. What is of economic value to political leaders tends to become a priority within policy.

There is also not a major cultural and political divide between rural-based and urban-based Turkish citizens. Rather, the polarisation in Turkey tends to be based on a religious divide, in which attitudes and emotions are deeply rooted.

Although the Turkish market is attractive, a brand cannot enter it successfully without considering the current political, economic, and social polarisation in the nation. Importantly, it was noted that a polarised Turkish landscape does not imply that a brand cannot connect with both sides of the political, economic and social spectrums. However, there is always a risk of alienating one or the other, so brands must consider their target audience's political views, economic statuses, cultural backgrounds and levels of education in order to accommodate accordingly.

Brexit is an international topic of conversation right now and will impact global economics and politics, including Turkey. Irrespective of how and when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, TBCCI is confident in saying that economic relations will either remain the same as they are currently or they will improve. Currently, 92 different categories of products are traded between the UK and Turkey, and there are no customs on goods except steel, coal, and agricultural products.

Turkish culture

The Turkish cultural landscape is polarised and tense. In the last six years, there has been a shift in cultural and political identity amongst young people, evidenced via social media. But not all young people are necessarily left-leaning, and there is also a major religious divide within the Turkish national culture.





Istanbul is the trendsetter of the country and most other locations in Turkey eventually tend to follow suit.

Main advertising channels

Television and social media are the main communications channels, but around 90% of television content is controlled or monitored by the government, whereas social media has more user generated content.

Brands are using social media in very clever ways that challenge traditional notions of advertising. Social media influencers are also extremely popular and impactful in the Turkish market and can be used as a mechanism for advertising.

Use of social media

All ages engage with social media in Turkey. There is a widely held feeling that social media is a directory to the world, so even when Turks are not actively engaging, they keep their accounts open to be able to access content, at any time.

The 55+ age group in Turkey is spending more time on social media than ever before, which for them is used to push forward ideas (not ads). Some brands are using this effectively by incorporating their product into a popular trend on social media rather than explicitly producing an ad for it.

More people than ever, both young and old, are reading on social media. People are consuming news, articles, and social media content at the highest amounts yet.

Social media is used in both Turkish and English. Over time, there have been English words repeatedly used in Turkish vernacular that have now become mainstream to use and are often used within Turkish social media content as well, even when the content is written in Turkish.

Doing business in Turkey

The Turkish population is very brand-conscious and interested in spending their money on international brands, regardless of whether the consumer holds secular or religious belief. This brand consciousness emerges from the 1980's, when idealisation of foreign products emerged as a consumer trend.

There is loyalty to both local products and international ones, but the latter do have an advantage in the Turkish market as they are often viewed as new and intriguing

British brands and goods are held in extremely high regard in Turkey. Turkish people want to come to the UK to shop, and Turkish businesses come to the United Kingdom in order to reach markets that the United Kingdom has easier access to. Medium-sized Turkish companies are most commonly using a UK base to sell to other markets under UK trade laws, like Latin America.

There are many shopping malls in Turkey and brand recognition is high. It was emphasised that there are many Middle Eastern tourists in Turkey who are a market that businesses should consider. Due to





the geographic location of Turkey, there are lots of tourists from various markets that might be shopping in Turkish shopping centres.

The topic of the alcohol industry was discussed, as advertising alcohol explicitly is illegal in Turkey and the social acceptability of alcohol varies. There is plenty of dark marketing for alcohol brands, with no branded content. Instead, alcohol brands use visual cues and experiential marketing to get their messages across. It was even noted that alcohol brands' creative constraints can lead to exciting, innovative developments in advertising, as brands continue to invest in experiential marketing. Additionally, alcohol brands must trust their consumers to pick up cues.

Exporting goods from Turkey to other markets can give brands more authority.

Tips for brands

Overall, Turks are very receptive to foreign brands. There are bloggers for everything, and people loyalty follow influencers. These have influence internationally and are extremely popular amongst young people.

It is vital to know your brand's DNA and core values and see how it fits into the Turkish market.

Mélanie Chevalier concluded the meeting summarising key learnings and asking our local experts to share some do's and don'ts when it comes to operating and communicating in Turkey.

Do:

- Be aware of values of different groups, especially religious groups
- Use local PR agencies or contacts to connect with the local market
- Use social media, blogs, and influencers
- Tap into the Middle Eastern market
- Consult service providers and attend many fairs and meetings to get to know the market

Don't:

- Have an initial business meeting without the highest ranked person in your company
- Fulfil any requests without consulting local, professional service providers
- Make any decisions without considering regulations or local traditions
- Underestimate Twitter!

The meeting concluded at 10.30am.

