

CONTACT

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Open to relocation

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CORE EXPERTISE

Group strategy & planning
Investment & portfolio decisions
Corporate venture capital
Subsidiary governance
Digital & AI transformation
Data & analytics
Full P&L leadership
Board & committee work

INDUSTRIES

Telecom · Retail · Banking
Technology · Consumer goods
Automotive · Industrial equipment
Energy · Healthcare · Pharma

CURRENT BOARDS

Arena · BIST-listed
Independent Board Member, 2022–
Chair, Remuneration & Nomination; member, Audit, Corporate Governance, Early Risk Detection

Türkiye AI & Technology Association
Founding Board Member, 2020–
Chair of the Board, 2026–

TÜBİSAD
Board Member, AI Committee Chair, 2023–

15+ years across 10+ boards

Barış Karakullukçu

Strategy, Investment & Digital Executive · Former CEO · Independent Board Director

SUMMARY

Strategy and investment executive who has worked on both sides of the capital decision: running businesses and deciding where to invest. At Türk Telekom, reporting to the CEO, managed group strategy, planning, business development, digital transformation, digital products and the investment process. Built İşbank's AI Startup Factory and corporate venture company from inception; 100+ investment decisions across seven funds. Earlier led the transformation of a national retailer as CEO (Harvard Business School case), ran IBM's consulting business in Türkiye and was a Partner at Accenture, with programmes in 25+ countries.

STRATEGY, INVESTMENT AND DEALS HIGHLIGHTS

- **Corporate venture capital:** set up İşbank Group's evergreen corporate venture company; chaired its board, then ran it as General Manager. Founded AI Startup Factory: 26+ investments from 2,500+ ventures evaluated, 90% of them raising follow-on funding within two years.
- **Investment decisions:** investment committee member across seven VC, CVC and impact funds: 100+ investment decisions, combined portfolio of $70M+.
- **Capital allocation and deals:** managed Türk Telekom's investment process in 2020–2021 (2020 capex plan: TL 6.4bn). Supported the completion of Juniper Networks' 2021 deal with Türk Telekom's US subsidiary Netsia: exclusive global licence of its Open RAN RIC technology, patents and engineering team, with a committed purchase by Türk Telekom. Wix partnership (2020) for SMBs.
- **Telecom corporate venture:** executive board member of TT Ventures: eight startups in 2020–2021 across digital health, edtech, energy and AI, including DoctorTurkey, Virasoft, MentalUP, Syntonym and B2Metric. Oversaw the PİLOT accelerator: 73 graduates, 30 of them raising investment.
- **Group digital and AI:** defined Türk Telekom's 11-initiative digitalisation plan; led Turkcell's Data Driven Company Program.
- **Family holdings, multi-industry:** first non-family CEO at Mudo; projects for Sabancı, Borusan, Akkök, Boyner, Anadolu and Eczacıbaşı groups; five years based in Germany, expat assignments in the US, China and Korea.

EXECUTIVE CAREER

Co-Founder · Aionire — 2025–present

AI advisory and venture-building company: GenAI strategy, AI transformation and responsible-AI governance for enterprises, boards and investors; ecosystem design and synergies between startups, corporates and ecosystem partners. Venture building with four startups: co-founder of two, including Skillmark; advisor to Lufios and Truedge.

Türkiye İş Bankası Group — 2022–2025

Next Generation Entrepreneurship President · Founder & CEO, AI Startup Factory · Chair, then General Manager, 100th Year Technology Ventures

Led the group's entrepreneurship agenda, with execution responsibility for two evergreen vehicles (combined fund size $30M+): AI Startup Factory and the group's corporate venture company.

- Delivered 30+ collaborations between portfolio startups and corporate partners.
- Investment committees: AI Startup Factory, 100th Year Technology Ventures, Maxis Yenilikçi & Atlas, Founder One Impact, Arya Women Investment Platform, Tibas Ventures.
- Chaired LiveWell (healthtech); board member, Softtech Ventures (venture building company).

PREVIOUS BOARDS

Chair, 100th Year Technology Ventures and LiveWell; executive board member, TT Ventures, TTPAY, TTES and Softtech Ventures; board member, Turkish Informatics Foundation

EDUCATION

Executive MBA
Koç University, 2001

BSc Industrial Engineering
Bilkent University, 1996
Full scholarship

Executive education

AI Leaders, Stanford HAI, 2026

Competing in the Age of Digital Platforms, Harvard University, 2021

Leading Organisations in Disruptive Times, INSEAD, 2020

Digital Transformation: Platform Strategies for Success, MIT Sloan, 2020

Business Intelligence and Analytics (MIS), Boğaziçi University, 2000

LANGUAGES

Turkish (native) · English (fluent) · German (professional)

RECOGNITION

Harvard Business School case "The Transformation of Mudo" (No. 416-015, 2015)

50 Most Powerful Women in Business, Fortune Türkiye, 2012 · 2014 · 2016

Top 50 Women CEOs, Ekonomist, 2012 · 2014–2016

Digital Transformation Leader, IDC, 2021

Power Women, GlobalData, 2020 & 2021

Author, *Timeless Intelligence* (2026)

NETWORKS & ACADEMIA

YASED: Chair, Technology & Innovation Working Group, 2019–2022

Özyeğin University: lecturer, EMBA and MBA

Sabancı University: Advisory Board, guest lecturer

Bilkent University: IE Advisory Board, 2006–

EXECUTIVE CAREER, CONTINUED

Chief Strategy, Planning, Business Development & Digital Officer · Türk Telekom Group — 2020–2022

Reporting to the CEO; member of the executive committee. Group strategy, business planning, business development, digital and subsidiary governance.

- Led the group's 2020–2024 strategic and business plan, presented to the Board in 2020 and re-based for the pandemic.
- Set the strategy and governance model for the group's five subsidiaries; executive board member of TT Ventures (CVC, also investment committee), TTPAY and TTES.
- Built a multi-year operating-efficiency programme into the plan.
- Defined the group digitalisation plan: 11 initiatives across digital products, channels, customer journeys, data and analytics, agile working and network virtualisation.

Country Managing Director, Global Business Services · IBM Türkiye — 2018–2019

P&L responsibility for IBM's consulting business in Türkiye across three service lines: a team of about 200, including outsourced staff.

- Set the 2019 strategy and a five-year growth plan: focus on core clients and joint large-deal governance with other IBM units.
- Rebuilt the sales pipeline and business development structure; brought in five senior hires across financial services, telecom and consulting.
- AI delivery included Anadolu Sigorta's IBM Watson claims project (2019): photo-based damage assessment 70% faster.

Chief Data & Analytics Officer · Turkcell — 2017–2018

- Led the company-wide Data Driven Company Program: analytics vision, governance, operating model and a three-year roadmap.
- Designed seven workstreams, including Customer 360, real-time modelling, pricing optimisation, micro-segmentation and a converged data mart, and took most of them live.

CEO & Board Member · MUDO — 2012–2016

Full P&L leadership of a national lifestyle retailer: 120+ stores in 26 cities, 2,400+ employees, c. $200M revenue. First non-family CEO; led the transition from a founder-run business to a corporate structure.

- Turned the home division from operating loss to profit in two years, with revenue up 26% and gross margin up 7 points.
- Tripled e-commerce sales and built the omni-channel organisation; World Retail Awards finalist 2014–2015 (Omni-Channel, eCommerce, Store Design).
- Cut inventory loss from 7.0% to under 1% in fashion and from 9.5% to 4.5% in home.
- Brought Mudo into the Turquality programme; SAP Quality Award Türkiye 2015.

Partner & Managing Director · Accenture, Germany, US, China, Korea, Türkiye — 2001–2012

Partner from 2010; earlier Senior Manager and Manager

- Led the Products Industries practice in Türkiye: consumer goods, automotive, industrial equipment, pharma, retail and travel. Clients included Borusan Holding, Arçelik, Anadolu Efes, Coca-Cola İçecek, Unilever and Renault.
- Based in Germany 2001–2005, delivering multi-country transformation programmes in 25+ countries for Clariant, DuPont and Celanese.
- Expat assignments for Germany-led projects: US, about two years (Clariant, Charlotte 2003; AZ Electronic Materials, New Jersey 2005); China and Korea, six months each.

Earlier career — 1996–2001

Senior Management Consultant, PwC; SAP Consultant, IBIMSA (IBM–Sabancı JV).