



2021 Ones to Watch: Zeynep Ekemen, Silver Defender

September 21, 2021 - Spotlights

Name: Zeynep Ekemen

Title: Managing Partner

Company Name: Silver Defender

Real estate associations or organizations that you are currently a member of: ICSC, New Jersey Board of Realtors

How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles?

At its core, Silver Defender's products give back to everyone they touch. The nature of Silver Defender products creates cleaner spaces—work, home, transportation—anywhere you go, we go. We have learned quickly over the past year that cleanliness isn't personal, it's global. It is not just about the business; it is about the greater good and ensuring cleanliness for people around the world. I've always been driven by a deeper purpose to make the world a little better and that feeling has driven me to accomplish a lot. That hope and vision of a better future is an incredible motivator.

Favorite quote:

Someone once told me the definition of hell is, "The last day you have on earth, the person you became will meet the person you could have become." That really stuck with me and has helped me focus on the best next step at every challenge. As a person, I am constantly evolving and taking lessons from past experiences to grow. Keeping self-awareness front and center, knowing where you've come from and paying close attention to the decisions that have been most—and least—helpful, are all essential for growth.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

In 2020, Silver Defender announced its partnership with Table to Table, the New Jersey based, not-for-profit, food rescue program. Silver Defender covered all the truck handles and steering wheels to ensure the safe delivery of food throughout the community and donated its films for Table to Table's offices covering high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, phones and coffee machines, among others. We additionally donated its antimicrobial adhesive films to the rescue program's 5th Annual Golf Classic. Over 550,000 meals were provided as a result of the fundraising event. Silver Defender also collaborated with YAI, one of the largest developmental disabilities service providers in the New York metropolitan area, to protect one of the most vulnerable populations in the pandemic.

What led you to your current profession?

I had been thinking about this idea to create cleaning products with silver ion technology for a long time, but once we started to invent Silver Defender, we really saw how big it could be. There was just so much need for a non-chemical cleaning solution, even before the pandemic. Imagine a surface that gets cleaner the more it is touched. That was just remarkable and as soon as I realized I could help bring this solution to the world I was all in. Cleaning products are generally built for short-term use. There is a lot of waste and a lot of chemicals involved. Simply put, there is a better solution, and we made that happen.

Top three things on your bucket list:

1. Trying to make Silver Defender a household name like Clorox, Purell and Lysol.
2. Being on the cover of Forbes
3. Being on '60 Minutes' with Silver Defender

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