



## **2021 Year in Review: Zeynep Ekemen, Silver Defender**

December 28, 2021 - Spotlights



Name: Zeynep Ekemen

Job Title: Managing Partner

Company Name: Silver Defender

What was the biggest lesson you learned while working during the pandemic?

When we began Silver Defender, we did not know the demand that the product would have. To sit down and actually learn about the technology and the product as a whole was overwhelming at first. I spent many nights working until 1 a.m. or later. I was learning a new industry which means pushing yourself and pacing yourself. I made mistakes, everyone does, but I always learned from them and kept going. That kind of perseverance can make or break you in the beginning, and it certainly made me.

How has your working environment changed over the last year?

Silver Defender launched in January of 2020. Starting a company and then shortly going into a global lockdown is not ideal and can be jarring, as it was for so many. From a small room in my home, I was able to bring Silver Defender to what it is today with the help of my team. We had our first sale on March 25th, just a few short days after the world shut down. We went from our first sale to being used on every continent in one year – all from my home office.

What was your greatest professional accomplishment or most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2021?

Z Realty Group has executed eight deals with one of its longest running clients, The Learning Experience. In 2021 I was honored with the NJBIZ Best Fifty Women in Business. In 2020, Silver Defender was awarded the ISSA Innovation Award for Services and Technology. In 2021, Silver Defender was awarded the Gold Stevie Award for Entrepreneur of the Year in Manufacturing and the Silver Stevie Award for Startup of the Year in Business Products Industries. We grew a startup from local to global in one year, and Silver Defender currently does business on every habitable continent.

What are your predictions for your industry in 2022?

Silver Defender products to be more widely used across every industry in both domestic and international markets. We will continue to provide a sense of safety and peace of mind to businesses and consumers across the globe. We will continue to bring a sense of normalcy back to everyday life with our effective and innovative products.

What is the best advice you received in 2021, and who was it from?

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.