

KARANDAAZ PAKISTAN

Case Study on

Bakhabar Kissan: Building Trust Through Strategic Partnerships and Governance

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The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of Karandaaz Pakistan or the donors who have funded the study.

1. BAKHABAR KISSAN – THE START OF A JOURNEY

In early 2017, Khizer Khan, who belonged to a family with roots in the agriculture sector in Pakistan, decided to quit his seven-year technology career, and jump into the family legacy of agribusiness. Exploring the landscape of agriculture in Pakistan, Khizer along with his uncle Ibrar Khan decided to establish Bakhabar Kissan (BKK), initially as a mission to revolutionize the agricultural sector by leveraging his expertise in technology and profound understanding of the agriculture sector. Recognizing the crucial gap in information access to farmers, which impacted farmers' decision making and agricultural productivity, BKK commenced providing advisory services related to crop health, farming inputs, pest and disease control and weather conditions, to bridge this gap. Initially operating with a small team of 5 from a modest residential house, BKK focused on offering subscription based advisory services to farmers across Pakistan, setting the foundation for what would become a transformative journey in the years to come. BKK envisioned itself as the premier information and data hub for agriculture in the country, leveraging data to assist farmers in optimizing their produce by providing data-driven insights on crop health, market trends, weather forecasts, early warnings for pest & disease control and best practices.

Understanding farmers' information needs and behaviour was identified as a critical initial step in designing effective information infrastructure that could bridge the information gap and drive sustainable agricultural development, growth of the sector, and ultimately contributing to national economic growth.

Delving deeper, some of the key information problems include:

1. Lack of Access to Market Information:

Farmers struggled to access timely information on market prices, leading to difficulties in pricing their produce competitively. This resulted in reduced profits for farmers.

2. Limited Knowledge of Best Practices:

Without access to updated information on modern farming techniques, farmers continued using outdated methods that result in poor yields and are less sustainable.

3. Lack of Access to Early and Proactive Warnings:

Farmers faced difficulties in receiving timely alerts regarding potential pest outbreaks, diseases, and natural disasters, hindering their ability to take preventive measures.

4. Risk Management Challenges:

Farmers faced challenges in assessing and managing risks such as weather fluctuations and market volatility due to inadequate information. This made farming a more precarious livelihood.

5. Lack of Access to Financial Information:

Limited access to information on financial services and opportunities hindered farmers' ability to seek investment opportunities in their farms and improve productivity.

In addition to the information challenges above, another critical challenge farmers faced was acquiring quality products tailored to their specific farming needs, considering climatic conditions, such as soil type and weather conditions.

Bakhabar Kissan was founded with an aim to bridge the information and fulfilment gap. Recognizing the necessity of a tailored information infrastructure, the focus was on providing need-based, location-specific, accurate, reliable, and timely information. The entity also expanded its outreach through collaboration with telecommunication companies to empower rural farmers. However, as the organization grew and its product offering, it encountered several challenges:



- **People Management:**

BKK's expansion required the recruitment of skilled individuals who possessed a unique combination of agricultural and technological expertise, and who believed in the company's vision and mission. However, assembling such a team proved to be a challenge. Initially, the absence of a formal HR function within the organization resulted in the CEO investing significant time in HR processes, consequently diverting attention away from strategic priorities.

- **Stakeholder Confidence and Trust:**

BKK relied heavily on the data gathered from farmers for its services, making the collection of accurate and consistent information crucial for its success. However, over a span of approximately 2 years, BKK management came to the realisation that the data amassed over time bore inaccuracies and inconsistencies. This stemmed from farmers' reluctance to share information, indicating a lack of trust in BKK during the company's initial phase. Recognizing this challenge, it became evident that BKK needed to enhance awareness of its services among farmers and foster trust within the farming community. Moreover, with the pivotal role BKK played in the agricultural sector of Pakistan, ensuring transparency and accountability became paramount. As the organization embarked on its mission to revolutionize agricultural practices through technology and innovation, stakeholders, including farmers, investors, and partners, sought assurance of ethical conduct and responsible management.

- **Operational Complexity:**

As BKK grew from its humble beginnings with a small team operating from a modest apartment, the organization faced increasing operational complexity. With the expansion of its team, services, and customer base, BKK encountered challenges in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and strategic planning.

- **Accurate Weather Forecasts:**

Another critical challenge encountered by BKK was its reliance on third-party weather predictions for providing forecasts. The company's dependence on these forecasts often resulted in inaccuracies, leading to adverse impact on farmers' trust in BKK's services. Such instances highlighted the need for BKK to address the reliability of its weather forecasting services to regain and maintain the trust of farmers, hence an independent sister concern (WeatherWalay) was established.

- **Strategic Decision Making:**

BKK recognized the importance of strategic decision-making in navigating the complexities of the agricultural industry and achieving its mission. With diverse stakeholders and evolving market dynamics, the organization needed a strong steering mechanism to help keep its strategy on track while evaluating opportunities, and mitigating risks.

BKK's business model is designed to empower farmers primarily through the following avenues:

- **Advisory Services:**

BKK provides expert, personalized advisory services to farmers through a subscription-based model. This allows farmers to receive tailored guidance and support, addressing their unique agricultural challenges and optimizing their productivity.

- **Fulfilment Services:**

BKK's agricultural centres offer a wide range of farming products that cater to the specific needs of farmers. This enables farmers to have access to the necessary high-quality inputs and equipment that align closely with their farming needs. With a profound understanding of customer requirements, this division delivers targeted agricultural products directly to the farmers' farm-gates.



BKK's growth trajectory is deeply rooted in their focus on understanding farmers' needs and embracing the necessity for ongoing organizational evolution. By consistently adopting a customer centric strategy and embracing a culture of continuous improvement, BKK achieved remarkable growth, reaching a wider base of farmers, and significantly enhancing agricultural productivity.



1M+
Monthly active users



500M+
Advisory Via SMS/month



10M+
Inbound advisory minutes/month



20M+
Outbound advisory minutes/month



3.5M+
Minutes of advisory via call center 1200-1500 unique farmers/day



4.9M+
Views on YouTube
117K subscribers, 300 videos
15M minutes of watch time



500+
Daily active users on WhatsApp



200M
PKR lent to 2.2K farmers



3M+
Minutes of android app engagement 260K+ app users

50K+

Increase in platform base/month in 2021-22

9.2M+

Direct Subscribers



BKK Big Picture Strategy

Faced with the challenges encountered by rural farmers, BKK initiated a strategy to address their information needs through a multifaceted approach, utilizing technology, knowledge, and innovative solutions, guided by a clearly defined vision and mission:

VISION



To empower the lives of farmers and bridge the gap in the Agri value chain



MISSION

To provide farmers with the tools they need to increase yields, reduce waste, and enhance sustainability, all while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety. Our mission is to turn every farmer from BeKhabar to Bakhabar - from uninformed to empowered

BKK's commitment to empowering farmers began with a clear vision. This vision, acting as a compass, has been guiding their efforts towards empowering and supporting the agricultural community, as the CEO stated:

“ We've always had a crystal-clear vision – what we want to achieve, who we are and the impact we aim to make. **”**

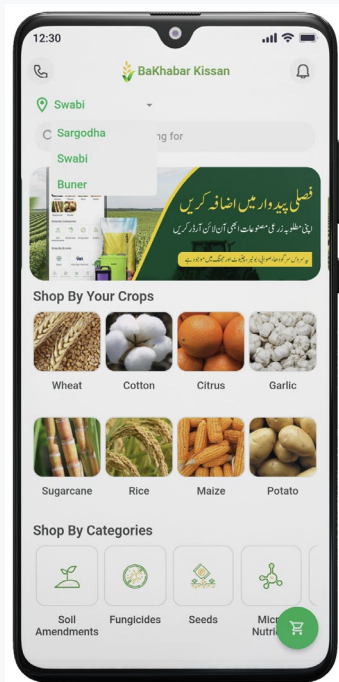
Khizer Alam Khan, CEO

The mission of Bakhabar Kissan cascaded down to the following strategies and initiatives so far:

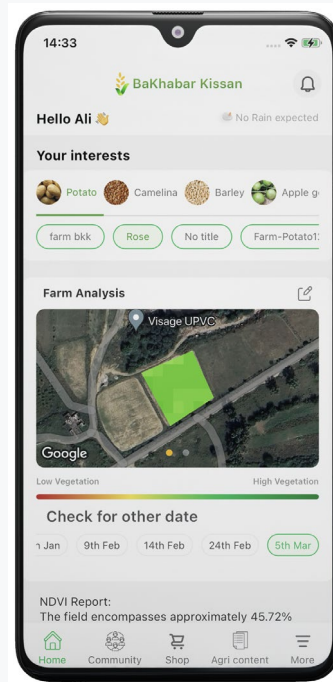
- **Mobile Applications for Real-Time Information and required inputs:**

BKK developed user-friendly mobile applications that provided farmers with access to real-time information on weather forecasts, market prices, agricultural best practices, and personalized recommendations of inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds. By delivering crucial information directly to farmers' smartphones, BKK empowered them to make informed decisions and optimize their farming practices. Moreover, the application provides a platform for purchasing the required inputs to farmers, to fulfil their farming needs.

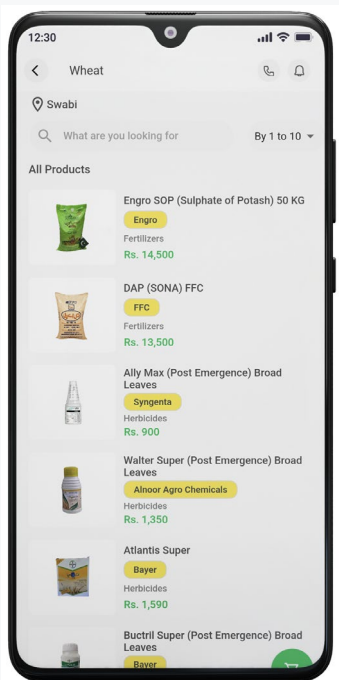




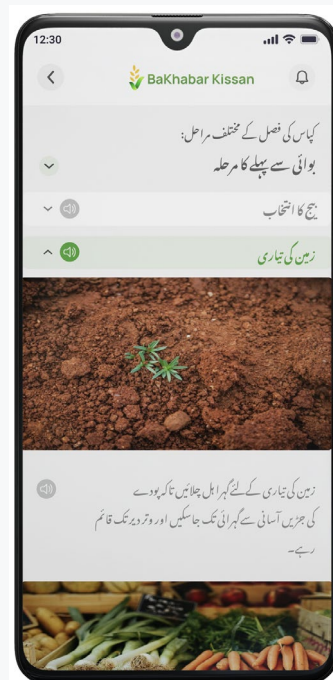
BKK's mobile application partners with national and multinational manufacturers to give farmers access to crop inputs at the most reasonable prices.



BKK mobile application gives farmers quick insights along with advisory with respect to their crop and farm.



BKK's mobile application displays the products in multiple categories allowing relevancy to crop, product types and brands.



BKK's mobile application empowers farmers by providing most essential information on the homepage.



• **Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations:**

BKK explored opportunities for strategic partnerships and collaborations to expand its reach and impact in the agricultural sector. By collaborating with telecommunication companies, BKK offered subscription based tailored advisory services through SMS to farmers. Moreover, by engaging organizations working in digital and agri-tech domains, BKK fostered synergies that enhanced information dissemination, access to resources, and knowledge exchange among farmers.

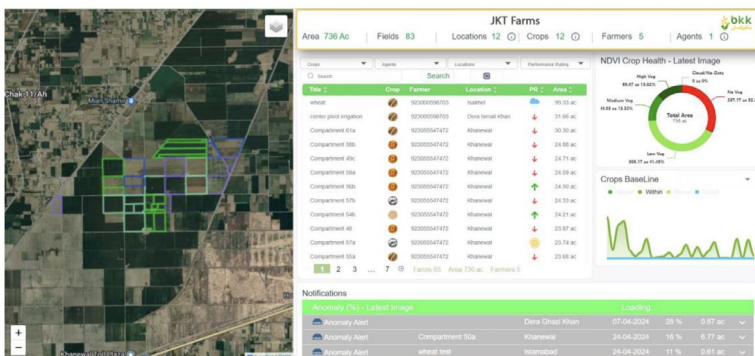
• **Online Platforms for Knowledge Sharing:**

BKK’s website along with its strong presence across renowned online platforms including YouTube, Facebook and Instagram serve as a centralized hubs for agricultural resources, training modules, and interactive forums. These platforms facilitate knowledge sharing among farmers, experts, and stakeholders, enabling farmers to access comprehensive information, connect with peers, and enhance their understanding of modern agricultural techniques.

• **Remote Agriculture Advisory Services:**

BKK has been providing remote agriculture advisory services to farmers, leveraging Internet of Things (IoT) and technology such as Geographic Information System (GIS). Through these innovative solutions, BKK offers personalized guidance on crop management, pest control, and sustainable farming practices. By providing data-driven insights, BKK focuses on empowering farmers to implement precision farming practices, optimize resource allocation, and improve productivity sustainably.

In addition to its direct support to farmers, BKK’s Geographic Information System (GIS) portal extends its reach to the business-to-business (B2B) sector, offering valuable insights and data-driven solutions to agricultural partners and stakeholders. Through this platform, partners can access a wealth of agricultural data, enabling them to make informed decisions, streamline operations, and enhance efficiency across the supply chain.



Corporate Farm’s monitoring Overview

Corporate Farm’s monitoring Overview





- **Training Modules and Capacity Building:**

BKK developed and delivered training modules in various regions, focusing on the usage of agricultural and weather advisory tools. These capacity-building initiatives equipped farmers with the necessary skills to interpret agricultural information, utilize technological tools effectively, and make informed decisions to improve their farming practices.

- **Fulfilment (Agri Centres):**

BKK established its fulfilment arm in 2021, offering on ground advisory along with a wide range of agricultural products such as crop protection products, fertilizers, seeds, machinery etc. to farmers. By leveraging deep understanding of the customer needs, this arm offers targeted agricultural products to farmers to their farm gates, aligning with their unique requirements. This data-driven approach ensures that the farmers receive the right products & tools to optimize their operations and maximize crop yields.

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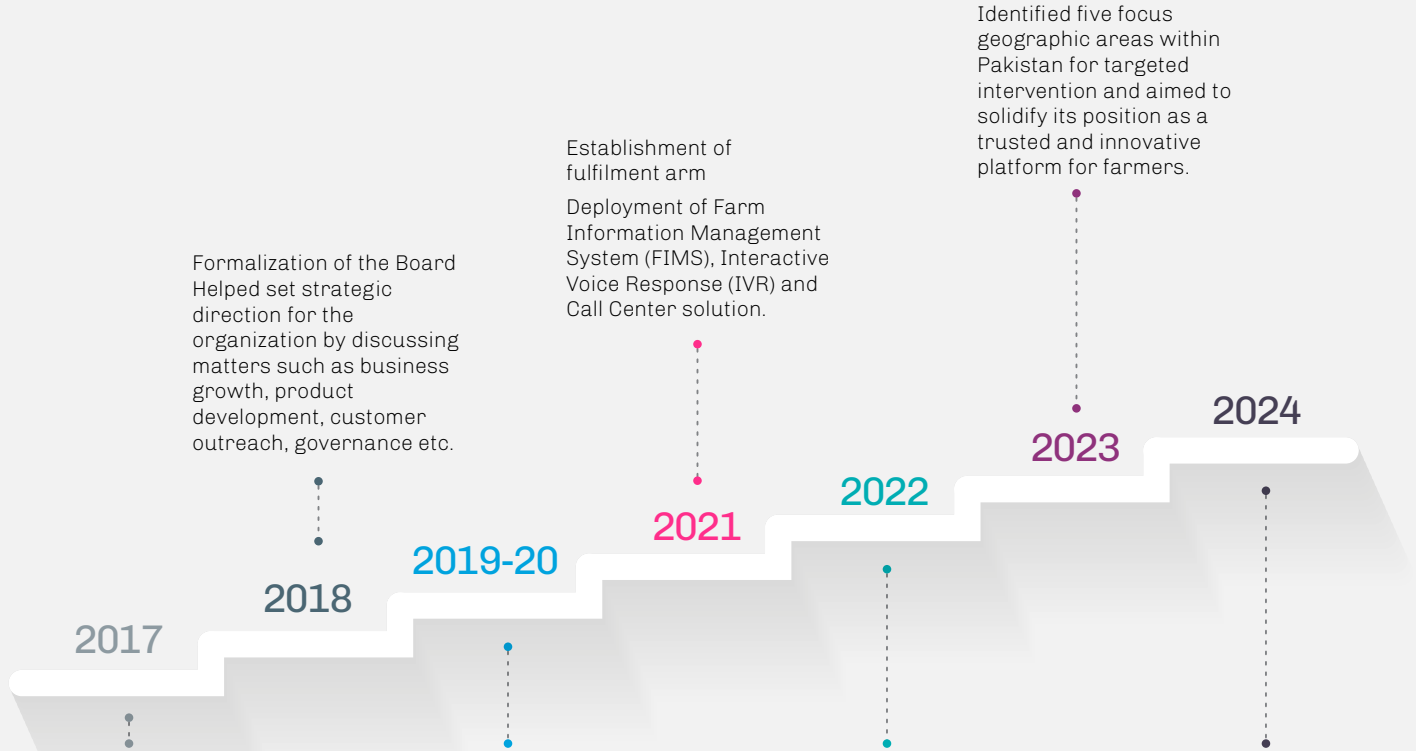


The diagram below summarises some of the key growth and corporate governance milestones in BKK's journey:

Identified five focus geographic areas within Pakistan for targeted intervention and aimed to solidify its position as a trusted and innovative platform for farmers.

Establishment of fulfilment arm
Deployment of Farm Information Management System (FIMS), Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Call Center solution.

Formalization of the Board
Helped set strategic direction for the organization by discussing matters such as business growth, product development, customer outreach, governance etc.



Khizer Khan along with his uncle Ibrar Khan established Bakhbar Kissan with an aim to bridge the information gap in the market by offering advisory services related to crop management, farming practices, weather etc. to farmers.

- Data strategy revisited and data reconstructed due to inconsistencies and inaccuracies in data collected.
- Building own weather stations through sister company "Weather Walay" to mitigate the risk of providing inaccurate weather forecasts.
- Developed mobile application that provided real-time information to farmers
- Extensive trainings provided to staff for client handling, and accurate data collection.
- Onboarding an experienced HR resource and formalization of HR function.
- Formalization of HR policies & procedures.

Deployment of Geographic Information System (GIS) Partner portal for remote farm monitoring using remote sensing.

Streamlined communication & collaboration and started to use Office 365 for email and collaboration, MS planner for project planning & monitoring and SharePoint for data management system.

Working towards digital penetration in the five focus areas identified, aiming to deeply profile every farmer operating within them.



2. ADOPTION OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES TO OVERCOME BUSINESS CHALLENGES

2.1 Revisiting Data Strategy

BKK realised that the data it had collected over initial two years bore inaccuracies and inconsistencies, owing to hesitancy amongst farmers to share their information with a company that was not well-known at that time.

To address this challenge BKK decided to overhaul its data set during 2019 -2020 and reconstructed it by adopting a multi-pronged strategy:

It launched a widespread grassroots campaign, to disseminate awareness amongst farmers regarding BKK's mission and the services it offered. Among other methods, this was achieved through in-person field visits by trained personnel with specialised skills / knowledge who could demonstrate to the farmers the advantages of availing BKK's services.

Concurrently, to help improve the quality and output of customer interactions, BKK invested in extensive staff training, to enable its team not only to handle clients, but also to ensure accuracy and efficiency in data gathering, management and analysis.

Moreover, recognizing the importance of providing quality services and accurate information to its customers, BKK took on another critical initiative to build its own weather stations. Through its sister company – Weatherwalay, BKK invested a significant sum (around PKR 400 million) to construct a network of 300 weather stations, strategically placed across targeted regions in Pakistan. Not only did this initiative make them the group owning the highest number of weather stations in Pakistan, but it also made BKK the only company in Pakistan pulling real-time weather data from more than 600 weather stations, through its own network combined with data from additional private, government-owned, and donor-funded stations. This enabled BKK, to significantly enhance the quality and value of its advisory services. Delivering accurate and localized weather forecasts which helped farmers plan their farming activities and optimise their yields helped BKK build trust and a stronger bond with the farmers.

By leveraging historical data and advanced technologies, Bakhabar Kissan transformed its service provision approach, offering tailored insights, accurate forecasts, and personalized product recommendations to enhance the agricultural practices of farmers. The strategic investments in data infrastructure not only improved the quality of services provided but also strengthened the organization's credibility and trust among its customer base.

2.2 Governance Support – Board of Directors

The challenge of data collection and evolution of BKK through the early years and later, was anchored in the strong support provided by the formalization of a Board of Directors and Advisors in 2018. The Board offered strategic guidance, oversight, and governance to the organization. Comprised of experienced members with expertise in the technology and agriculture sector from BKK and Neem¹, the board played a crucial role in shaping BKK's growth trajectory and ensuring transparency & accountability within the organization.

¹ Neem is a Pakistani company focused on supporting digital businesses in Pakistan by providing embedded financial services to their underserved customers.



One of the key functions of the Board was to set the strategic direction for BKK by participating in discussions around business growth, customer outreach, product development, and governance practices. Beyond offering strategic guidance, the Board was integrally involved with the company in early stages of growth. Through regular meetings (twice a week) in initial days, the Board fostered a dynamic and engaged environment. These meetings allowed the Board to take stock of progress towards organizational goals, review key performance indicators and offer their guidance to help BKK navigate challenges, identify opportunities for growth, and make informed decisions that aligned with the organization's mission and values.

Moreover, the Board significantly influenced BKK's shift towards sustainable, long-term steady growth, prioritizing profitability, and self sufficiency over rapid expansion. In the early days both the CEO and CTO were involved heavily on the operational side, which impacted the strategic focus and growth of the company. Based on the advice of the board, the CEO realigned his focus more towards strategic matters, aligned with the company's long-term vision.

Furthermore, the Board of Directors played a crucial role in fostering a culture of openness and collaboration within the organization. Recognizing the importance of cross functional alignment, the Board championed the Extended Leadership meeting initiative. Held weekly, this meeting brings together all the departmental heads for a collaborative discussion on action items, outstanding matters, and future plans. This regular exchange of information ensures each function within the organization is aligned on the company's direction and working towards shared goals. The presence of agricultural experts on the advisory board also helped give management in-depth insights and guidance when dealing with challenges particular to the dynamics of the agricultural sector.

2.3 Investing in People & HR Function

As BKK grew, the company faced the challenge of not only attracting talented personnel who shared its vision and vision but also developing and retaining them. In the early years of the business, Khizer himself was actively involved in the HR processes. As the business expanded, the CEO upon Board's recommendation realized that his direct involvement in the HR processes consumed a significant amount of his time in operational matters of the business.

Recognizing the need to focus on broader strategic aspects of the business, BKK formalized an HR function which actively partnered with the business to streamline the HR processes. This was achieved by hiring of an experienced HR specialist who helped BKK in designing and implementing formalised policies & procedures for HR management including talent attraction, recruitment, and retention. The CEO recognized that while operational matters are important, building sustainable success requires a long-term perspective and focus on strategic aspects:

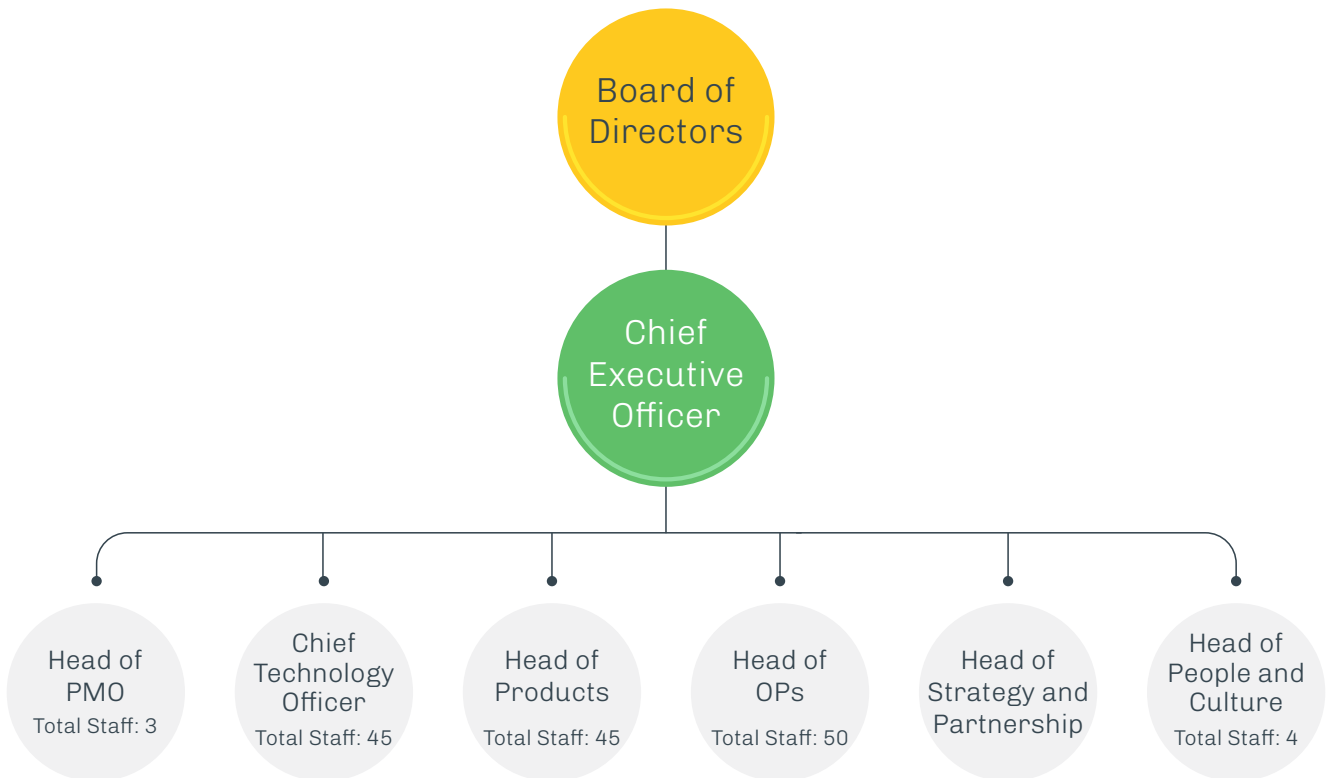
“ For a business to do well, you have to think long term, not just look at short-term gains and profits. ”

Khizer Alam Khan, CEO

People empowerment played a significant role by fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and organizational growth.

One of the key aspects of people empowerment at BKK was the establishment of a flat hierarchy that encouraged open communication and idea-sharing among employees. This approach created a supportive work environment where individuals felt valued, heard, and motivated to actively participate in the decision-making processes and contribute to the organization's success.





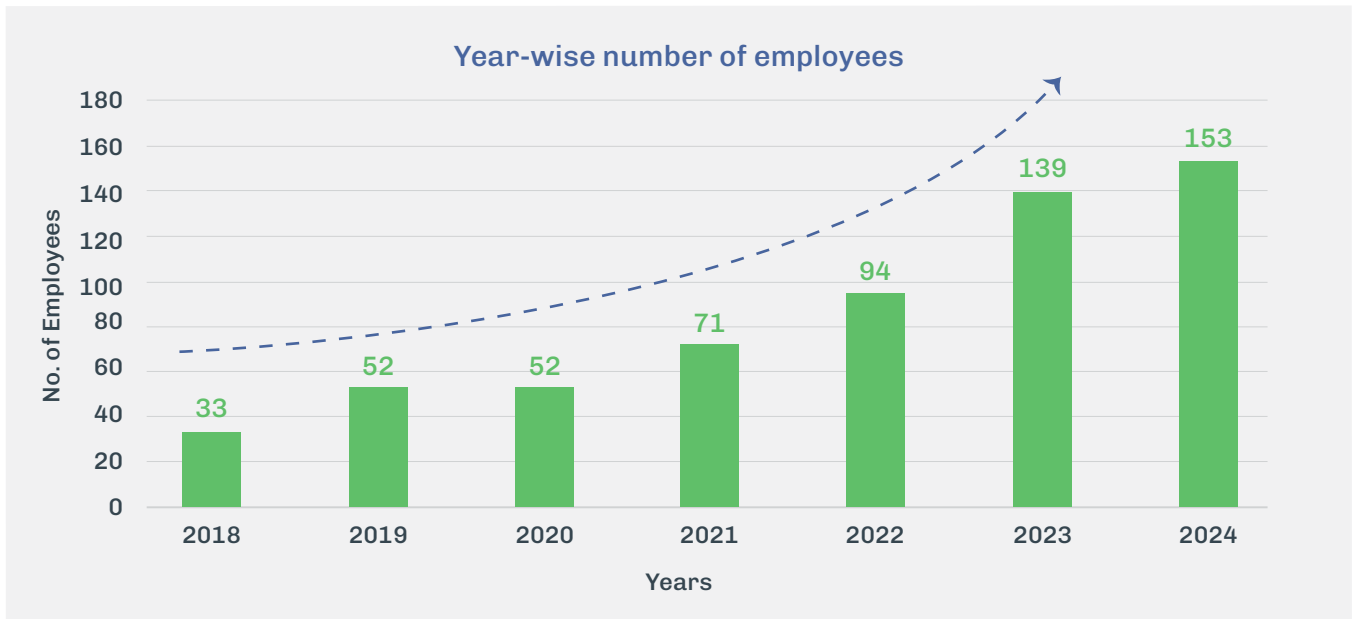
Through its investment in the growth and well-being of its employees, BKK not only enhanced organizational efficiency but also fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among its work force. Furthermore, BKK implemented bi-weekly employee sessions and also put in place periodic performance evaluations to provide feedback, recognition, and opportunities for professional development. By prioritizing employee satisfaction, BKK was able to build a strong team that was dedicated to the organization's vision and mission.

“ Building the right team is the most difficult bit and I am happy to have found it. We do our best to keep them motivated. ”

Khizer Alam Khan, CEO

Adoption of such practices helped BKK to attract talent that fuelled its growth and navigate challenges over the years. The following graph depicts BKK's year-wise staff strength:





2.4 Strategizing Customer Service Excellence

As BKK continued its journey to fulfilling the mission to support farmers in Pakistan by alleviating information challenges and enhancing agricultural practices through innovative customer service strategies. The company's commitment to facilitating farmers and providing accurate forecasts and product recommendations significantly impacted the agricultural sector in Pakistan. This commitment forms the foundation of their customer excellence framework, which is built on the following pillars:

- **Unwavering Support for Farmers:**

Initially, BKK offered its services to farmers free of charge for two years till 2020, demonstrating a dedication to supporting the farming community without financial barriers. This approach allowed farmers to access valuable information and services without concerns about costs, fostering trust and goodwill among the farming population. Post the 2 years, partnering with telecom company, subscription was introduced, but with a proviso that the subscription shouldn't be a barrier. Any customer who had even subscribed once and not renewed, still had access to SMS updates regardless of their current subscription status.

- **Digital Hub for Agricultural Knowledge:**

The introduction of a mobile application by BKK in 2020 served as a digital hub and knowledge platform for farmers in Pakistan. This platform provided dynamic information on various agricultural topics, including weather updates, crop advisory, livestock management, modern farming practices, and disaster management. Farmers could access a wealth of information and resources conveniently through the mobile application, empowering them with knowledge to enhance their agricultural practices.

- **Community Engagement and Awareness Initiatives:**

BKK cultivated a community of 13 million farmers, deeply profiling 820,000 farmers to understand their specific needs and challenges. To create awareness and build trust among farmers, the company conducted various initiatives and engagement programs. These efforts not only educated farmers but also fostered a sense of community and collaboration within the agricultural sector.



- **Enhanced Forecasting Accuracy and Product Recommendations:**

BKK continuously strived to improve the accuracy of forecasts provided to farmers and recommend the right products for their crops. By leveraging advanced technology such as the introduction of GIS Partner platform in 2022, the company ensured that farmers received precise and reliable information to make informed decisions about their agricultural activities, leading to improved crop yields and sustainable farming practices.

2.5 Investing in Technology

One of the key success drivers of BKK's growth was investment in technology, besides some of the aforementioned initiatives such as setting up weather stations, developing mobile application and creating online platforms etc. This investment has empowered the company to achieve significant advancements in the following crucial areas:

- **Improvement in Internal Collaboration and Operational Efficiencies:**

BKK leveraged Microsoft products including Office 365, SharePoint, and MS Planner, to transform how their teams collaborate and to streamline project management. Office 365 streamlined communication and collaboration, SharePoint established a centralized document management system while MS planner facilitated efficient and effective project management. Moreover, in 2023 the entity implemented a Workforce Management System to effectively track on-field staff and monitor orders, leading to resource optimization and enhancements in operational efficiencies. While the implementation of such systems facilitated information sharing and collaboration, BKK implemented strict protocols to limit information sharing due to susceptibility of data breaches. The technology department shoulders the responsibility of managing and selectively sharing data across departments, ensuring adherence to a necessity-based information sharing practices.

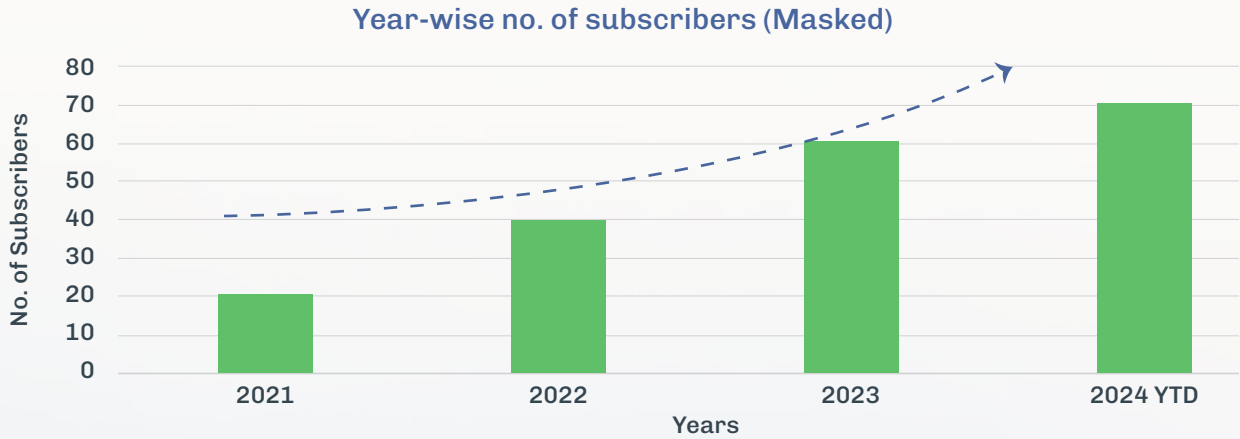
- **Enhancements in Services:**

With the implementation of Farm Information Management System (FIMS) in 2021, BKK was able to provide personalized recommendations and real-time critical information such as vegetation index and moisture index, empowering farmers to make informed decisions and enhance crop yields. Investment in Geographic Information System Partner Portal was another significant investment in technology which enabled BKK to monitor farms remotely, and to assist them in assessing crop health, identify potential issues early on, and to provide targeted assistance to farmers. The GIS portal has the capability to calculate yield estimations, providing an invaluable tool for farmers and agricultural stakeholders alike. This feature harnesses the power of geographic data analysis to forecast potential crop yields based on various factors such as soil quality, climate conditions, and historical data. By incorporating yield estimation into its suite of offerings, BKK's GIS portal allows equipping users with essential insights to make informed decisions regarding crop planning, resource allocation, and market strategies, ultimately fostering more efficient and productive agricultural practices. Furthermore, in 2022, BKK launched an e-commerce solution within their application, offering customers the convenience to seamlessly purchase the farming products they need, through an online platform.



3. IMPACT ON BUSINESS GROWTH:

The gradual adoption of corporate governance practices, such as articulating and disseminating vision and mission statements, establishing a formal Board, recruiting specialized talent, formalizing policies & procedures, implementing robust systems, and fostering transparency with stakeholders, has been instrumental in guiding BKK through challenges and driving sustained business expansion over the years. This is evident by BKK’s significant uptrend in the subscriber base as the graph below depicts:



In tandem with the subscriber base, BKK’s adoption of good governance practice has been instrumental in driving significant revenue growth over the years, as shown in the graph below:





4. BAKHABAR KISSAN – THE FUTURE AHEAD

After navigating challenges and building strong relationships with farmers based on trust and respect, Khizer Khan and the team at BKK in 2023-24, staying true to their mission outlined ambitious future plans and strategic directions to further enhance BKK's impact on Pakistan's agricultural sector. By identifying key focus areas, BKK aims to solidify its position as a trusted and innovative platform for farmers:

- **Digital Penetration in 2024:**

In 2023, BKK strategically identified five focus areas including Swabi, Sargodha, Jhang, Chiniot and Buner for targeted intervention. These areas were carefully selected to optimize resources and maximize impact within the agricultural ecosystem, setting the stage for future growth and development. By 2024, BKK set its sights on digitally penetrating these five focus areas, aiming to deeply profile every farmer operating within them. The management team projected that this comprehensive profiling could be completed by mid-November, enabling BKK to gather valuable insights and tailor its services to meet the specific needs of farmers in these regions effectively.

- **Establishing a Network of Buyers:**

Looking ahead, Bakhbar Kissan envisions establishing a network of buyers of agricultural produce in local and international markets. Their vision involves building trust amongst buyers and enhancing their understanding of BKK's clients' farming practices. This transparency would assure the buyers that BKK's clients are adhering to the best practices. To achieve this BKK is developing a dedicated platform that would serve as a seamless marketplace for buying and selling produce within the agricultural sector. This strategic direction aims to bridge the gap between farmers and buyers, facilitating connections, promoting transparency and efficiency in transactions, through BKK's platform.

- **Partnership with Agri stakeholders such as Financial Institutions, Insurance companies, Input and Output buyers:**

In line with its future ambitions, and focus on core as data company BKK plans to integrate all stakeholders that are of value to farmers i.e. partner with financial, institutions and output institutions to mitigate risk and fetching right price for farmers produce. As a service provider for financial institutions, BKK would facilitate access to much-needed resources for farmers and the corporates that want to facilitate them. This strategic partnership aims to integrate all Agri ecosystem and thus empower farmers, improve access to capital, and support sustainable agricultural practices within the community.



4. ANNEXURE A - MAPPING OF KEY CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ADOPTED BY BKK WITH THE LEADING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

The table below presents key corporate governance practices adopted by BKK mapped with the principles from leading corporate governance frameworks along with the outcomes of implementing each principle:

Corporate Governance Principles	Key initiatives	How it helped PayPro
Pillar: Culture and Commitment to good Governance		
<p>Principle: Vision, mission, and core values of the company are developed and communicated to all stakeholders and updated from time to time</p>	<p>BKK has a vision and mission statement articulated. The entity's vision and mission statements are "To empower the lives of farmers and bridge the gap in the Agri value chain" and "To provide farmers with the tools they need to increase yields, reduce waste, and enhance sustainability, all while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety. Our mission is to turn every farmer from BeKhabar to Bakhbar – from uninformed to empowered" respectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vision and mission have acted as a compass to guide their strategy towards empowering and supporting the agricultural community Having a crystal-clear mission since beginning guided BKK's key strategic initiatives such as development of mobile applications for real-time information, partnerships & collaboration, online knowledge sharing platforms, remote advisory services, training modules and fulfilment centers
<p>Principle: A well-defined organizational structure is in place with clear reporting lines</p>	<p>BKK has a formal organizational structure in place and has a flat hierarchy promoting open communication and encouraging idea- sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A formal organizational structure clearly defined the reporting lines. Flat hierarchy created a support environment where employees felt valued, heard and motivated to actively participate in the decision making process.
<p>Principle: Key policy and procedures are in place and formally documented</p>	<p>With the formalization of HR function, key policies & procedures were documented including policies for HR management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined several business processes particularly HR management and saved CEO's time, allowing him to focus on strategic aspects of the business



Corporate Governance Principles	Key initiatives	How it helped Khaadi
<p>Principle: A system for communicating relevant internal and external information is clearly established. This includes providing clear policies and procedures to employees, ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities, and fostering effective communication channels within the organization</p>	<p>To facilitate collaboration and information sharing within the organization, BKK initiated using SharePoint, which provided a platform for efficient information sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined information sharing mechanism, by leveraging technology, resulting in operational efficiencies
<p>Principle: Training and education is provided to employees about internal control policies and procedures</p>	<p>Amongst other measures utilized to revisit its data strategy, BKK invested in extensive staff training to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge required to build trust and collect accurate data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and education of staff helped the entity to enhance skillset and knowledge of its staff, improving their customer handling skills, resulting in accurate data collection, management and analysis
<p>Principle: Owner/Leader provides entrepreneurial strategic leadership and delegates work to managers/specialists empowering people and mentoring, coaching them to develop human resource</p>	<p>By hiring an experienced HR professional and delegating operational tasks, the CEO pivoted his focus from operational matters related to HR management particularly, to strategic matters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegating tasks allowed the CEO to realign his focus towards the strategic aspects of the business

Pillar: Decision Making and Strategic Oversight

<p>Principle: A collaborative approach to decision making is followed in the form of management committees and external experts (advisors or advisory board) that may meet on a periodic basis to discuss operational and strategic matters</p>	<p>A collaborative approach to decision making is reflected by the Extended Leadership meeting initiative, held weekly, whereby all the departmental heads participate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Leadership meeting brings together all the departmental heads for a collaborative discussion on action items, outstanding matters, and business plans. This regular exchange of information ensures each function within the organization is aligned on the company's direction and working towards common goals
<p>Principle: The role of the Board of Directors is clearly documented</p>	<p>The Board was formalized in 2018, and has been providing strategic guidance, oversight and governance to the entity since then</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was actively involved in the early stages of entity's growth. Through regular meetings, the Board provided strategic direction to the entity and helped it navigate challenges. Influenced BKK's shift towards a sustainable, long term steady growth, prioritizing profitability, and self-sufficiency over rapid expansion. Based on Board's advice, CEO realigned his focus more towards strategic matters. Recognizing the importance of cross functional alignment, the Board championed the Extended Leadership meeting initiative.



Corporate Governance Principles	Key initiatives	How it helped Khaadi
<p>Principle: Active processes are in place for succession planning of ownership, management, and specialized expertise. The HR function is a strategic partner developing effective sourcing and retention strategies, compensation plans, performance management systems and professional development programs</p>	<p>BKK formalized an HR function which actively partnered with the business to streamline the HR processes. An experienced HR management professional was onboarded who helped BKK in designing and implementing formalized policies & procedures for HR management including talent attraction, recruitment, and retention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined the HR processes such as talent attraction, recruitment, and retention Saved significant amount of CEO's time, allowing him to focus on the strategic matters aspects of the business
<p>Principle: The company's strategy, results and long-term goals are reviewed on an annual basis</p>	<p>One of the critical aspects of reviewing the company's long-term strategy was to revisit its data strategy. Upon realization of the inaccuracies and inconsistencies that the collect data by BKK bore, the entity decided to reconstruct its entire data set, and transformed its service provision approach by leveraging historical data and advanced technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformed its service provision approach, offering tailored insights, accurate forecasts and personalized product recommendations Helped not only to improve the quality of services but to strengthen organization's credibility and build a loyal customer base

Pillar: Risk Governance and Control

<p>Principle: An appropriate internal controls system is in place to identify and manage risks to the company's operational, reporting and compliance objectives e.g., authorization controls, segregation of duties, physical controls, monitoring reports etc</p>	<p>Meeting with the Board allowed it to take stock of progress towards organizational goals, review key performance indicators and offer their guidance to help BKK navigate challenges, identify opportunities for growth, and make informed decisions that aligned with the organization's mission and values.</p> <p>Moreover, BKK built its own weather stations to avoid the risk of inaccurate forecasts being provided to the farmers.</p> <p>Furthermore, the implementation of (FIMS) and GIS technology, enabled BKK to mitigate the risk of providing inaccurate real time information and farm-specific information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BKK's progress was monitored by the Board to ensure that the informed decisions were taken aligned the organization's mission and values. Building weather stations through its sister concern allowed BKK to provide accurate weather forecasts to farmers. This helped BKK to build customer trust and loyalty. Investments in FIMS and GIS enabled BKK to provide accurate real-time, farm-specific advisory. This enabled BKK to monitor farms remotely, and to assist them in assessing crop health, identify potential issues early on, and to provide targeted assistance to farmers
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About Karandaaz

Karandaaz Pakistan is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee set up under Section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017. Karandaaz was established in 2014 with seed funding from UK Government's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Karandaaz Pakistan is an impact investment platform that drives sustainable economic growth and strengthens financial and social protection systems for inclusion. Its main area of focus is to address challenges faced by SMEs and unbanked individuals¹ in Pakistan with respect to access to finance to foster economic growth and prosperity for Pakistan.



Karandaaz Capital

This vertical provides wholesale structured credit and equity-linked direct growth capital investments in micro, small and mid-size enterprises that have the potential to contribute to sustainable growth, and employment generation in Pakistan.



Karandaaz Digital

This vertical focuses on expanding the access to digital financial services in Pakistan by working across the ecosystem with all stakeholders in the following work areas: digital public infrastructure, payment systems, policy and regulation, seeding innovation, experimentation and solutions development, and scale and outreach.



Karandaaz Innovation

This vertical provides risk capital and technical assistance to support innovative solutions aimed at financial inclusion and entrepreneurship especially in marginalized sectors. A key component of the work includes providing business development support and growth capital to women led businesses and green ventures to facilitate their expansion and scale up.



Karandaaz Research & Insights

This vertical supports the company's core financial inclusion goal by developing and disseminating evidence-based insights and solutions to influence markets and the financial ecosystem.

For more information, contact us at: info@karandaaz.com.pk



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