



BAY DAR & CO.: WHEN BUILDING SUPPLY BECOMES A BUSINESS STRATEGY

This case study is part of a series examining partnerships under the [Vocational Skills Development Programme \(VSDP\)](#) that show early signs of sustainable and scalable change through market-based approaches. VSDP is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented in Myanmar by Swisscontact. The programme has been running since 2014 and is currently in its third phase (April 2023 – March 2027), which aims to improve livelihood opportunities and resilience for women and men in selected regions.

Within this broader objective, the textiles component focuses on strengthening the competitiveness of MSMEs and small-scale producers by improving skills, product quality, and market linkages. The aim is to support a more resilient and market-oriented sector, where better-skilled producers can access higher-value markets and generate more stable income opportunities.

In Myanmar's textiles sector, the opportunity is clear – but so is the gap. Demand for locally made, high-quality products has increased in recent years, driven both by growing domestic interest and constraints on imports. At the same time, international markets continue to value handmade, ethically produced goods with a

strong story of origin. Yet, across much of the sector, producers struggle to consistently meet these expectations, largely due to uneven product quality.

The case of [Baydar & Co.](#) illustrates how businesses can respond to this gap in practice. Bay Dar & Co. operates a model that links design, production, and market access, working with a network of MSMEs and producers to supply higher-quality, market-oriented goods. Since 2024, VSDP has partnered with Bay Dar & Co. to strengthen this approach by supporting how it builds and works with its supply base. This has helped the company improve consistency and respond to growing demand, while also creating income and employment opportunities across its network.

FROM MARKET IDEA TO PRODUCTION REALITY

Bay Dar & Co's model is closely tied to the background of its founder, who comes from a human resources and workforce development background. Through her various professional experiences, she repeatedly encountered the same issue: people had talent and potential, but lacked access to structured, practical training that could translate into consistent, market-ready output.

A DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS MODEL IN A VOLATILE MARKET

How Bay Dar & Co. structures its production is closely linked to how it generates revenue. Rather than relying on a single product or market segment, the company has developed multiple revenue streams, allowing it to operate across different customer groups and manage risk in a volatile environment.

Corporate gifting has become the company's largest segment, accounting for 60 percent of revenue generated in 2025. In Myanmar, gift-giving is common around major festive periods such as Thingyan (the Myanmar New Year water festival), Thadingyut (Festival of Lights), and Tazaungdaing, as well as during corporate milestones, and Bay Dar & Co. has positioned itself strongly in this market. It produces customized products such as coasters, table runners, bags, placemats, shawls, and other items tailored to a client's colors, logo, or branding. The company appears to have been an early mover in this niche, particularly in offering locally made, design-led alternatives for banks, telecom firms, insurance companies, and other large buyers. Revenue generated from corporate gifts doubled between 2022 and 2025, reaching around MMK 915 million in 2025. Repeat orders suggest that this is not a one-off opportunity but an area of continued growth.



Alongside this, Bay Dar & Co. continues to sell its own branded products. It has also expanded into white-label production, designing and manufacturing product lines sold under other local brands. This allows businesses wanting to enter the higher-end textile or craft market to outsource design and production quality to Bay Dar & Co., while giving Bay Dar & Co. another source of revenue and a stronger role as a manufacturing partner, not only a retail brand.

More recently, the company has introduced a commission-based model, selling selected products from other producers through its showroom and website, often working with trained artisans who show strong potential. Bay Dar & Co. reviews samples, selects products that meet its standards, and sells them through its own channels, taking a commission of around 20 percent. This creates a pathway to market for emerging producers who would otherwise struggle to reach these customers, while ensuring the model remains commercially viable for the business.

Diversification is also visible in what Bay Dar & Co. produces. While textiles remain central, the company has deliberately expanded into home décor and other higher-margin product categories. This reflects both demand and economics: textile margins can be relatively limited, while distinctive handmade home décor products are increasingly sought after by both domestic and international buyers. This shift is already visible in the company's sales mix, with pottery and related product categories increasing from 36 percent of total sales in 2022 to 49 percent in 2025.



ADAPTING HOW IT REACHES THE MARKET

Bay Dar & Co.'s sales channels have also changed over time. Historically, the company relied heavily on Facebook Marketplace alongside its physical showroom and walk-in customers. For a period, this worked well as a relatively low-cost and accessible way to reach buyers and build retail visibility. However, when VPN restrictions began in Myanmar in mid-2024, that model became far less reliable. The company lost consistent access to customers through Facebook and was forced to adjust quickly. It attempted to shift customers toward its website, but traction remained limited and the website did not emerge as a strong alternative.

Instead, Bay Dar & Co. increasingly turned to other forms of social media, especially TikTok. Short videos showcasing products, explaining where their origin, and highlighting the story behind them proved far more effective.



TikTok has now become the company's most important retail channel, with more than 75,000 likes. It also plays a key role in promoting corporate gifting. Ahead of seasonal celebrations, Bay Dar & Co. uses social media to showcase available products, which in turn drives clients to the showroom to review items and place larger orders.

Bay Dar & Co. has also invested in upgrading its showroom toward the end of 2025, reinforcing its role not just as a retail outlet, but as a space where corporate clients can view products, discuss customization, and place larger orders.

More broadly, this reflects how the business operates. Bay Dar & Co. has continuously adapted how it reaches customers as it grows, refining different channels rather than relying on a single approach, while also responding to changing market conditions. This combination has supported sales growth and helped expand its customer base.

STRENGTHENING THE SUPPLY BASE TO SUPPORT GROWTH

As outlined above, Bay Dar & Co.'s model depends on a distributed network of producers and workshops. In practice, the business can only perform as well as this network allows. Rather than relying on what is already available in the market, the company has taken an active role in developing this supply base.

Bay Dar & Co. had already begun investing in building this supply base prior to the partnership with VSDP, but it was still evolving and more ad hoc. The role of VSDP has been to strengthen and scale it, making it more structured and easier to manage as the business grows.

Since 2024, VSDP has supported Bay Dar & Co. in refining and expanding this model, starting with a six-month pilot phase focused on structuring and scaling its capacity-building approach. This included product design and production management training, covering areas such as design principles, product development, quality control, and production processes, reaching 229 participants (94 percent women). In parallel, technical support for weavers focused on improving productivity and quality through practical work on loom setup, fiber management, and production techniques, reaching 128 participants (89 percent women).



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Early results showed that while participants gained new skills, many struggled to apply them consistently once back in their own environments. This highlighted a key limitation in earlier approaches, where training alone was not sufficient to translate into consistent production outcomes. This led to a second phase which placed greater emphasis on follow-up support and full-cycle production under supervision. Participants worked directly with raw materials and completed the entire production process, helping bridge the gap between training and market requirements. By March 2026, this phase had reached 195 participants in product design and production and 146 in weaver technical support.

The partnership also extended beyond producer-level support. VSDP provided technical assistance to help Bay Dar & Co. strengthen its internal systems, including

preparation for ISO 9001 and Fairtrade certification, as well as ERP system implementation and database development. These investments build on Bay Dar & Co.'s existing model and strengthen the systems required to manage production more effectively and position the company for more demanding markets.



From a business perspective, this way of building and managing its supply base serves several functions:

- **First, it helps build a more reliable supply base.** Bay Dar & Co. operates in a context where skilled and consistent producers are not readily available at the scale required. By investing in capacity building, the company is able to develop a pool of producers it can draw on, particularly during peak periods such as large corporate orders.
- **Second, it acts as a pipeline for recruitment and supplier selection.** Bay Dar & Co. trains more producers than it ultimately retains, using this process to identify those who can meet its standards. The strongest participants are integrated into its supplier network, and some are hired directly. Around 50 percent of the workforce in the production workshop and weaving factory are former participants, indicating that this pipeline directly feeds into the business.
- **Third, it improves consistency across a distributed production system.** Bay Dar & Co.'s products are positioned as handmade and locally produced, but

buyers, particularly corporate clients, still expect a high degree of uniformity. Achieving this balance requires alignment on processes, quality standards, and finishing, which can only be achieved through sustained engagement rather than one-off training.

Over time, these capabilities have also begun to generate additional value. Bay Dar & Co. has received increasing interest from other businesses seeking technical advice and support, suggesting that elements of this model could be partially commercialized. However, this remains secondary to its core objective: ensuring that its own supply chain can meet the demands of a growing and increasingly demanding market.

GROWTH IN A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT

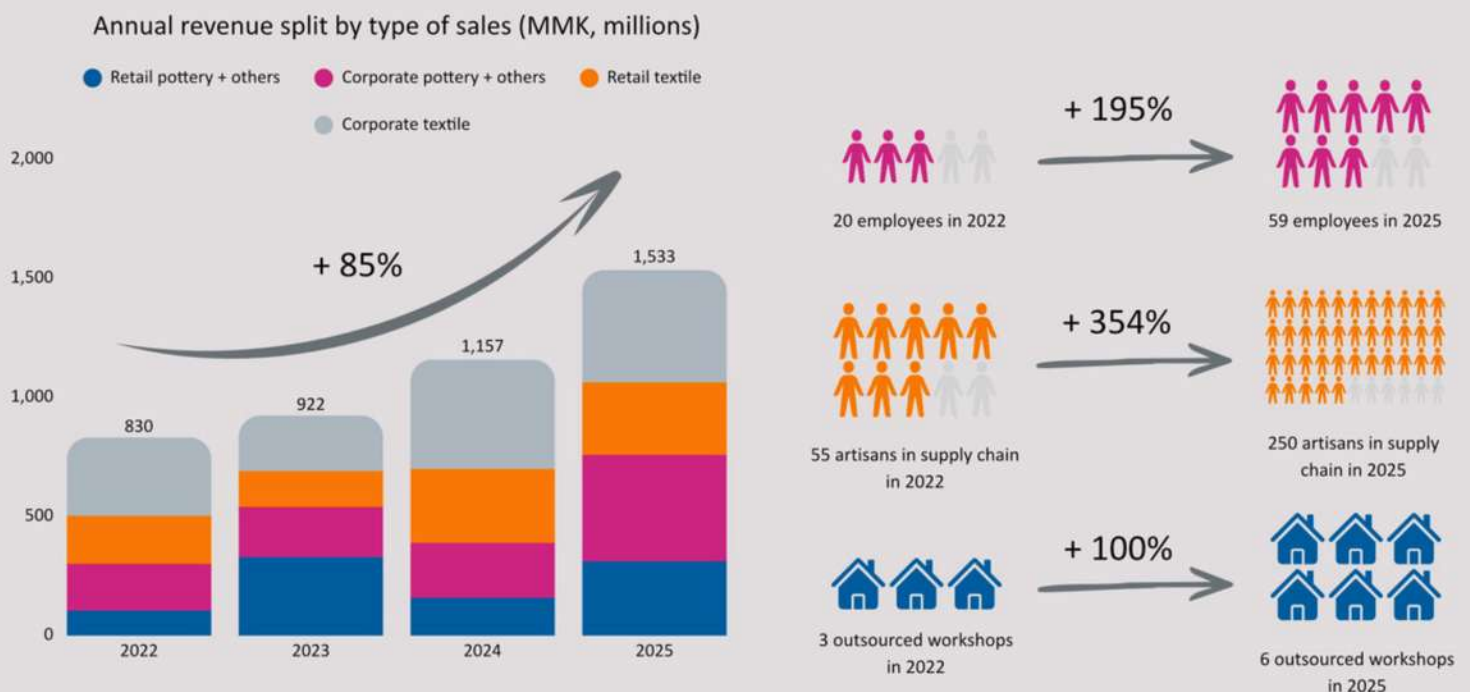
Bay Dar & Co.'s commercial growth is clear. Revenue increased by 85% in the span of three years, from MMK 830 million in 2022 to nearly MMK 1,533 million in 2025. Its workforce (including part-time and full-time staff) grew from 20 employees in 2022 to 33 in 2024 and 59 in 2025. The number of outsourced workshops it works with increased from 3 to 6 over the same period, while the number of artisans in its supply network rose from 55 in 2022 to around 250 in 2025 and close to 400 by March 2026. Toward the end of 2025, Bay Dar & Co.

also secured corporate gift orders with six clients in the banking, insurance, and energy sectors totaling nearly 15,000 pieces. These are all signs of a business that is scaling its production base alongside demand.

At the same time, the business faces substantial strain.

Corporate clients are commercially attractive, but they also have power. They can impose demanding terms, give very little notice, and expect large orders to be completed quickly. Payment structures are also difficult. Bay Dar & Co. often receives only around 30 percent upfront from corporate clients but must cover a much larger share of production costs in advance, including payments to suppliers and producers who themselves have limited cash flow. This creates ongoing pressure on working capital.

Logistics are another challenge. Bay Dar & Co. sources from and trains across multiple regions, including Southern Shan, Mandalay, and Mon. Transport takes time and money, and access to some areas is difficult, particularly in the current political context and following disruptions such as the earthquake of March 2024. These issues affect both production and training delivery. Growth therefore has to be understood not just as a story of rising sales, but of a company trying to expand in an environment where the operating conditions remain extremely difficult.



LOOKING AHEAD

Based on its trajectory over the past few years, Bay Dar & Co. appears well positioned to continue growing. The business has expanded its revenue, product range, and production network while operating in a highly constrained environment. It has also shown a consistent ability to adapt, whether by shifting sales channels, adjusting its production model, or responding to changes in demand.

A key factor behind this is how the company invests. Much of its growth has been self-financed, including the expansion of its product range, participation in international trade fairs and events, and the upgrading of its showroom. These investments are not

contemporary design, targets corporate clients, and has diversified into products and materials beyond textiles. This allows it to access higher-value demand, particularly through corporate gifting and, increasingly, international markets.

Sustaining this growth will depend on the company's ability to maintain a reliable production base. As Bay Dar & Co. expands, the need for consistent quality and dependable suppliers will only increase. For this reason, the company is committed to continue investing in building and managing its supply base. This may evolve in form – potentially becoming more targeted and selective, and even offered as a paid service – but the underlying approach is unlikely to change.



opportunistic, they reflect a clear direction. The company is actively positioning itself to move further into higher-value markets, including exports. As mentioned earlier, early engagement with international buyers has already led to concrete interest, including participation in Heimtextil in Frankfurt in January 2026, a confirmed commercial agreement linked to the Honorary Consulate of Myanmar in Turin, and interest from buyers in France and Greece who have requested proposals.

Bay Dar & Co. also operates in a competitive environment, but has developed a clear positioning. Rather than focusing on a single product category or traditional design niche as do many of its competitors, it combines traditional techniques with more

Taken together, these elements strongly suggest that the model is not dependent on external support to continue. While partnerships such as VSDP have helped accelerate and structure parts of the approach, the core drivers, which include market demand, internal investment, and a clear business strategy, are already in place.

WHAT THIS CASE ILLUSTRATES

Bay Dar & Co.'s experience highlights a dynamic that is particularly relevant in the traditional crafts sector. Where production is spread across many small producers and quality is difficult to standardize, businesses that want to serve higher-value markets may need to take a more active role in developing their supply base.

In this case, capacity building is part of how the business operates, allowing it to produce reliably and take on more demanding orders that would otherwise not be feasible.

At the same time, this type of model can generate broader benefits. By working with a wide network of producers and artisans, most of whom are women, it creates income and employment opportunities that extend beyond the company itself. It also contributes to the continued use and adaptation of traditional techniques and locally sourced materials, which are central to the product offer. In this sense, the model combines commercial performance with social and environmental value.

This does not mean that the approach is universally applicable. Not all sectors require this level of engagement with the supply base. But in cases where supply constraints are a binding limitation, and where product differentiation is linked to craftsmanship and origin, the model demonstrates that investing in capacity can be commercially rational.

There are also early signs of broader change. Producers working with Bay Dar & Co. are increasingly producing to specification and market requirements, rather than selling independently through informal channels. At the same time, the company's approach suggests that this type of supply development can be driven by businesses themselves. While still at an early stage, these shifts point toward changes in how production and market access may be organized over time.

More broadly, the case shows that business models of this kind can generate multiple forms of value at once. They can support firm growth, create income opportunities across a wider network, and contribute to more responsible and locally rooted production systems. What makes this possible is not training in itself, but the way it is embedded within a functioning and growing business.

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