



Entrepreneurial Students

Interview with Emna Everard, a Solvay alumnus who created 'Kazidomi' an e-shop specialized in healthy food products.



About Emna Everard

Emna is a young woman graduated from the [Solvay Brussels School](#). She launched the webshop [Kazidomi](#) one year ago. Kazidomi is a community of members who have access to the best healthy and organic foods and products up to 50% off.

Interview

HOW WAS KAZIDOMI CREATED?

It all started when I was 18. I decided to go to the [Solvay Brussels School](#) with the conviction that one day, I will be launching my own business. I wanted to create something, innovate, and drive change around me, I always felt that working in a traditional company was not for me. At the end of my master degree, I had to write a thesis and instead of writing a research paper, I took this as an opportunity to start working on my own project.

Born and raised in a doctors' family, I have always been passionate about nutrition and health. The first idea was to launch an e-commerce that would sell healthy food products for people with specific diets (gluten free, lactose free, etc.) and to work with health experts to select every product.

As most entrepreneurs experience it, the initial idea is far from enough to achieve success. You need to meet your customers' needs and I was not. Our market was too niche, and customers wanted something more attractive. We decided to pivot, and enlarge our focus beyond intolerances and allergies to tap into the wider healthy food market.

Obviously, on the healthy food market, there is cut-throat competition and companies need a strong differentiation factor. Ours would be simple and focus on the biggest customer pain-point: the price of healthy food is simply too high. We decided to help people save money on every healthy product they would buy. We implemented an annual membership program that gives access to 20 to 50% discount on all the products.

About one year later, Kazidomi is an e-commerce of healthy and affordable products that counts more than 1200 SKU's of food, cosmetics, supplements and home products.

WHAT DOES THE NAME "KAZIDOMI" MEAN?

The name Kazidomi is inspired from Latin "*quasi domi*", which means "like home". This embodies customer-centric values that we share and is a reminder that our customers must feel comfortable shopping on the website. We personalize offerings as much as we can, we have a live chat where we answer our customers' questions, we have a strong community of members, and high interactions rates on social media and through our newsletters.

HOW DO YOU SEE KAZIDOMI IN 10 YEARS?

I want to empower millions of people to consume healthier foods. Today, many people buy products harmful for their health because they are not well-informed or because they can't afford to pay for high quality products. Kazidomi is on a mission to solve those problems by providing products selected by health experts while saving hundreds of euros every year. We are convinced we can grow to become a strong European player in the healthy food market within the next few years.

HOW DID "SOLVAY ENTREPRENEUR" HELP YOU IN BUILDING YOUR CAREER?

I remember the first time I entered the orange offices of [Solvay Entrepreneur](#), I had a meeting with Olivier Witmeur, Solvay Entrepreneurs' director. "Pitch me" he told me. One hour later, I was registered for a 2-months training in "*E-commerce and E-marketing*", had a wonderful dedicated coach with experience in e-commerce and an access granted to the student co-working space called "[The Startlab](#)". At that point, I knew that the time for reading entrepreneurial books and trying to write a fancy business plan was over, it started to be real. Today, I have a growing business, my own office and my own employees but continue to benefit from their precious advice. They nurtured my project with me and gave me guidance during the first steps, but today, they are more laid-back, leave us the space we need to try things out, while always being available for giving us strategic advice when we need it.

IS THE MYTH THAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS IN YOUR GENES TRUE?

Even if I think entrepreneurship can be, and should be taught, there is a risk-aversion factor that is very personal. I suspect that most entrepreneurs self-select on that main criteria. However, anyone who wants to serve a customer and who is ready to work hard can start a business, I don't think I have a special gene that makes me more capable than anyone else.

More Information

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DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW THAT ONE DAY YOU WILL BE CEO OF YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

I always wanted to try to live an entrepreneurial experience and did my best to reach this goal but of course you never really know until it happens.

IS THE WORLD OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP READY FOR WOMEN?

The world is changing and is more open to women today than it was in the past. I think it's women who should be ready for entrepreneurship because entrepreneurship is ready for them. I talked to many women who have good ideas but are afraid to fail. I think women in general need to be more confident. We need to break the stereotypes.

Being a woman was not a problem at all for me, on the contrary it was even many times an advantage. Every time I participated in entrepreneurs' events, or I gave a conference, I was shocked by how few female entrepreneurs there were, but I am optimistic, and I am seeing more and more female role-models and other great initiatives to support women in their entrepreneurial ventures.

ARE UNIVERSITIES CONTRIBUTING TO ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP? AND WHAT ABOUT THE SBS-EM?

There are no doubts that European universities took more time than universities from the US, but the gap is narrowing really fast, things have started to move. In Belgium for instance, there is now a status for student entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship courses start earlier in the education path, incubators are created in universities and inspiring entrepreneurs are invited to share their experience. During my second year of Master at SBS-EM, I took a specialization in entrepreneurship, people were sitting on the ground because of the lack of seats. A few years ago, that same room was almost empty.

WHAT IS A VERY BAD DAY, FOR YOU, AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

I may have bad moments, but I don't have bad days, I am an optimistic person. I try to learn from my own mistakes and find solutions to the problems I face.

WHAT IS A VERY GOOD DAY, FOR YOU, AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

In entrepreneurship, every day is different and comes with its good news. Entrepreneurs are passionate people, I love my job and I think every step in our growth process that we achieve makes me happier. I am excited to see my company grow, create jobs and serve my customers. It feels great when someone new is joining your team or you get great feedback either from your customers or from fellow entrepreneurs, appreciation for hard work is always nice.

FINALLY, WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN WHO WANT TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR?

Dare. If you never try you will neither succeed nor fail. The doors of entrepreneurship are open, women need to start now building their own success stories. They should not underestimate the support they can receive; the world needs more female entrepreneurs and the people are ready to make it happen if women are willing to try.