



## Rym Dhahri - RYMA PUB

Sidi Bouzid

Rym's digital billboard and advertising agency is inspiring the community of Sidi Bouzid and has already made her a business success story in the region. However, it hasn't been all plain sailing for the 33-year-old.

After obtaining a degree in physical sciences in 2009 in Monastir, Rym didn't want to return to Sidi Bouzid and risk facing unemployment.

"Like many young graduates looking for a job, I started working in a call center in Monastir as a telephone operator," she says.

While working in the call center Rym discovered her passion for communication. "Selling became like a game for me. I simulated commercial sales with friends to improve my negotiation skills and prepare myself for a career in communication," she explains.

Aware of the importance of effective communication and advertising, Rym started to explore options for establishing her own business in this sector.

"I conducted a feasibility study to find out which regions offer the best opportunities for business creation in the advertising sector. Sidi Bouzid proved to be a region with high potential, especially in outdoor advertising. Investors, advertisers, brands are relocating to the region. So I decided to return to Sidi Bouzid," Rym says.

Rym started her entrepreneurial journey by contacting the local business support institutions in Sidi Bouzid: The Business Center, the Espace Entreprendre, the town hall and the APII (The Agency for the Promotion of Industry and Innovation). Her business idea started taking shape.

"My first steps were very positive. I built many new relationships and everyone in my surroundings offered their support. It felt like my innovative project was bringing new energy into the region and people welcomed this," Rym adds.

In February 2017, Rym discovered the Mashrou3i Project organized by UNIDO and funded by USAID, the Italian Cooperation and the HP Foundation. By participating in Mashrou3i's HP LIFE e-Learning program, entrepreneurship training and business coaching, Rym broadened her managerial skills. She also gained support to secure a credit of 143,000 Tunisian Dinars from the BTS (Tunisian Solidarity Bank). With these funds she acquired the very first digital screen for her outdoor display park, which was installed in downtown Sidi Bouzid.

Rym officially launched her business, Ryma Pub, in November 2017. But the opening coincided with a wave of protests in the city and her newly installed display was smashed.

"It cost about 20,000 Tunisian Dinars to get the display fixed. Most young startups would struggle to survive a knock-back like this but thankfully there was a silver lining to the incident," she says. "The story grabbed the attention of Sidi Bouzid. Everyone offered their support, including the media. This generated a lot PR which brought me several new clients who purchased advertising from me."

Today, Rym employs two people. Positive about the future, she plans to expand her display park and business by offering a full package to advertisers, from design to display.