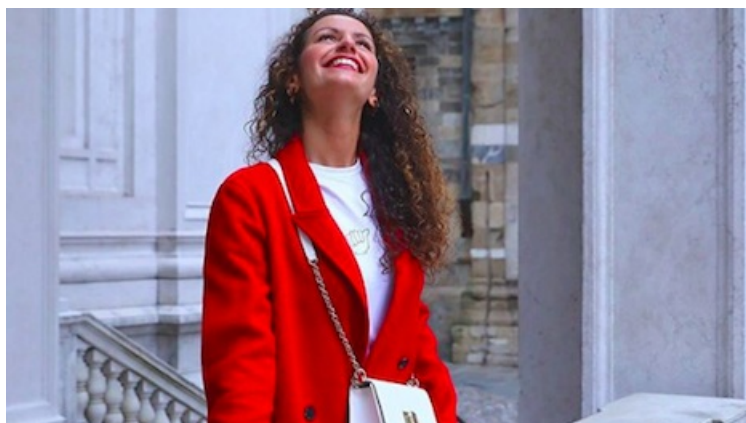


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Furla sponsored content campaign turns lens towards role models

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*Freeda x Furla profiles Ilaria Galbusera. Image credit: Furla*

By SARAH JONES

Italian accessories label Furla is working with women's media brand Freeda to capture the stories of inspirational women.

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So far, Freeda x Furla has profiled a deaf professional volleyball player and a woman working to make the fashion business more inclusive. Furla has recently invested heavily in digital marketing, seeking to engage its audience through social media and influencers.

"Freeda is one of the fastest growing media companies today, and the fact that it's inspired by Frida Kahlo adds to the appeal of female empowerment and equality," said Romey Louangvilay, communications director at **ELMNTL**, New York.

"Furla has long been associated with women's handbags, and by partnering with Freeda, the brand is positioning itself with a fast growing media company that is focused on equality," he said. "It's a good brand association for Furla since consumers today really care how their money is spent where the money goes once you buy a product.

"This collaboration communicates that Furla is about equality and empowering women. They are featuring strong women in various industries and sharing their personal stories, further personifying the type of customer they want shopping for Furla."

Mr. Louangvilay is not affiliated with Furla, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Furla** was reached for comment.

### Sponsored storytelling

Freeda is an Italian media startup that centers on creating social media-friendly content for women. Currently, the brand operates in Italy, Spain and South America.

For Furla, Freeda is shining a light on women who have interesting stories and professions.

One of the women profiled, Giulia Bartoccioni, is CEO/founder of inclusive fashion agency Iulia Barton, which

aims to involve women with disabilities and victims of abuse in the modeling business. Ms. Bartoccioni's desire to increase representation in fashion stems from her own family.

When the entrepreneur was young, she watched her brother have an accident that put him in a wheelchair. In the profile video, Ms. Bartoccioni is shown with her brother out and about.

### *Freeda x Furla*

Freeda has also profiled professional volleyball player Ilaria Galbusera, whose team won the championship for Italy's hearing-impaired Sports Federation.

When the athlete was seven months old, her family discovered that she had congenital deafness. An unexpected bell toll shocked the rest of her family, but Ms. Galbusera was calm, leading them to realize that she could not hear.

The film follows Ms. Galbusera as she trains with her team, explaining bits of her life to viewers through speech accompanied by sign language.

During the profile, the athlete visits the music therapist she has seen for much of her life. As the two reminisce, home video footage of a much younger Ms. Galbusera is shown.

An earlier short in the series follows professional sprinter Raphaela Lukudo around Modena, Italy. Along with finding her at the track, the video paints a picture of her broader lifestyle.

The profiles are running on both Freeda's and Furla's social media channels, expanding the potential audience for the shorts.

### Influencer initiatives

Digital marketing is a main focus for Furla. The brand has boosted its follower counts on Instagram and WeChat by 64 percent compared to 2017 ([see story](#)).

This sponsored content campaign is the latest evolution in Furla's "The Furla Society" concept. This theme originally debuted for the cruise 2018 advertising effort, which the brand said was its first digitally-driven marketing push ([see story](#)).

Italian fashion label Furla also took a digital-first strategy for its fall/winter 2018 campaign by casting a handful of influencers as the spokesmodels for the season.

In this incarnation of its "The Furla Society" campaign concept, the social media personalities were invited by the branded club to join an event at a lavish Italian hotel. Through its use of influencers, Furla aimed to make the campaign more accessible to consumers ([see story](#)).

"[This concept] connects the influencers in a 'family' and makes them feel part of a bigger community," Mr. Louangvilay said. "When brands work with influencers individually, influencers rarely see the other people who are part of the campaign and they create content in silos.

"By creating a community, #TheFurlaSociety, influencers can see who else is part of the campaign and feel part of the same family," he said. "We've done something similar for our clients where we called it the Chang Squad. It works well and fosters community amongst the influencers and brand."