

BRAND STORIES



roccamore



At Plytix, we were inspired by the story behind [Roccamore](#), thanks for sharing your story with us, and we can't wait to see what the future brings for you guys!



Image credit: Roccamore

The story

Owner and Founder of unique footwear brand Roccamore, Frederikke Antonie Schmidt, never set out to be an entrepreneur.

Before Roccamore's existence began, Frederikke spent a lot of time travelling as part of her role as a footwear designer, before eventually moving back to Denmark.

Footwear, especially aesthetically pleasing footwear, does not generally comply with typical Danish values, where normally price is the highest contributing factor towards a purchase decision. It can be added too that that staple wardrobe of a Dane, comprises of simple, comfortable clothing, with emphasis on quality fabric - so maybe time for something a bit different, right? That's what Frederikke thought!

The exploratory design phase of the shoe started off in Spain, but it was finally in Italy, a country renowned for its quality shoe production, where the first Roccamore shoe was created. When Frederikke approached an orthopaedic shoe maker with her vision, he thought the idea was crazy, but nevertheless, began helping with the first draft of shoe. Instead of test marketing them,

she began wearing the shoes herself, seeing what worked, and what needed to be altered. Working with the shoemaker, and through an intensive trial and improvement process, they finally developed a product that was as beautiful as it was comfortable, without squeezing toes, blistering heels, or any of the typical 'high-heel problems' that can occur. Speaking on behalf of high-heel wearing females, that's pretty much the dream.

The secret to these shoes? They've got sole. A unique insole in fact, and one that shapes your foot to allow you to walk as anatomically correct as possible. They've even been tested by the Hvidovre Hospital of Denmark, and have been found 44% more comfortable than a regular high-heel shoe.

Crowdfunding

Getting the company off the ground in monetary terms was the next challenge. Back in 2014, crowdfunding was kicking off in the United States, but not so much in Europe, and then there was the question as to whether selling a rather specialist fashion product, such as a high-heel, would be a success. With

huge amounts of support firstly from friends, family, and then other pledges, Roccamore raised 335,050 DKK (around \$51,391) of funding on Kickstarter, including many pre-orders of the heels themselves. This project also meant changing history, as it was the first ever female-founded project in Denmark .



Image credit: Roccamore

A not-so-conventional Design process

Once the company had 'kick-started', the design process began, and as it should for any business, communicating with existing and potential clients was key. Once styles, colors, and patterns etc had been worked out, the designs were then developed, and then presented to the users, who were able to vote for the pair they wanted to see get made. This interactive process increases the value of the heel for the client in the sense that they had direct involvement in it's creation, and it's actually something they chose - they didn't have to settle for a shoe that does the job, but isn't perfect.

The next step in building Roccamore was production of the shoes. After some passionate negotiation, a deal was secured with a prestigious, family-run Italian shoemaker - who also happens to produce work for Valentino Red. The shoes are made from fabrics and materials left over from other fashion brands, like Prada for example. This sustainable fashion concept not only reduces waste created when producing fashion items, but also adds an 'exclusivity' element to the shoes. That is to say that pieces are very much limited editions. There is no continual production in place, and



Image credit: Roccamore

the pieces aren't seasonal. Sometimes there may be only 92 pairs of a certain shoe made, and once they're gone, they're gone!

From a purely monetary perspective, this process also works to the businesses advantage, as they're not wasting time, materials, and money on creating

[Woman at events are spotting each other and saying, “Hey, you got the green ones, I loved those – check out my red ones!”]

shoes, only to spend even more on leftover inventory. But that's not why Roccamore chooses to only create exclusive, and numbered collections. “It's about educating our customers at the same time - people need to learn that there's not an unlimited amount of stuff in the world”. Roccamore shoes mean that you don't need a million different pairs of shoes, what you need are a selected number of really good shoes.

And it's really helping people understand the value, and appreciate the products they're buying. Woman are recognizing each other at events and saying,



Image credit: Roccamore

"Hey, you got the green ones, I loved those - check out my red ones!". Some are even auctioning off the limited edition shoes, as those that missed out are still desperate to get their hands of them.

The highlights - overcoming hurdles

The main highlights for Roccamore have been tripling the revenue, increasing brand awareness, and generally becoming a more successful company, especially as a start-up in today's online market - and all in 2018!

For Frederikke, a less tangible, but equally important highlight, has been overcoming the existing pressures and doubts of today's society of going into business. Not only as a lone pro-

fessional, but also as a woman.

She also touched on a personal victory of when she was able to prove to those, who earlier on in Roccamore's journey, had doubted her ideas and capabilities, that she was indeed, very capable. "Don't let anyone tell you what you can't do...", she said, "...too often these days people are looking to bring each other down - but why aren't we trying to make everyone feel better, and helping them to be successful instead!"

The challenges - disrupting online delivery services

One of the biggest challenges Frederikke and the team have faced since launching the online business, is how

delivery and shipping services can damage the brand image. With very few competing companies in this industry, it means that shipping costs can be very expensive. Lack of competition oftentimes means that these services can make mistakes, cause delays, or worse, simply not show up - without really having to suffer the consequences. The customers are going to look to the brand who they originally made the purchase with, not the delivery company, to place blame.

But Roccamore have decided to do something about it with their, want something done well, do it yourself attitude, and are completely disrupting the way their customers receive products:

New Roccamore delivery processes

Option 1

- Customer purchases product online
- Then chooses a slot between 6-9pm- when they're actually home (no more 'sorry we missed you' leaflets', which not only are annoying and inconvenient, but are also not environmentally friendly)
- A person will come on a bicycle at your allotted time to deliver the shoes
- If the customer is not satisfied with the shoes, then within 24 hours, someone will come and exchange/ pick them up - free of charge!



Image credit: Roccamore



Image credit: Roccamore

Option 2

- Customer loves several pairs of shoes and can't decide, so selects three pairs for delivery, but only pays for one
- Delivery person arrives with three pairs, within 24 hours (again at chosen time slot)
- Client has half an hour to try on shoes with different outfits/looks to decide which pair to keep, and then returns the other two to the delivery person
- Client is 100% happy with their decision, so no returns concerns.

These new delivery options were being trialled in December 2018, with the official launch to take place in 2019, in Copenhagen, Denmark - other cities to follow. Think Glovo with superpowers, but for high-heels.

The Future

Currently Roccamore is only selling products on their website, however they have one showroom in Copenhagen, Denmark which allows people to come and try on the different models, see what they like, and then they can go home and order online.

Although there is currently only one showroom open permanently, there are pop-up tours that take place three to four times a year, where over 500 shoes go and visit 5 cities, in 5 days.

These showrooms and tours eliminate doubts that still exist when online shopping, like not being able to 'try-before-you-buy', plus you don't even need to worry about shipping/returns rate, because you already know the size and model that fits you.

Many ecommerce business started offline, and then adopted to selling products through different ecommerce channels. However, Roccamore has started the other way around, and is hoping to develop this 'online product with an offline experience' concept into major cities including Denmark, Norway and Sweden, with the aim of also expanding to the USA.



Image credit: Roccamore

No sales, just loyal clients!

At the heart of every Roccamore business decision, are the loyal customers. From the participating in the design process, to receiving their new pair of shoes - those customers who are happy to pay for the value of an interactive, and very personal experience. Which is exactly why there are no sales at Roccamore; it's important that clients are loyal to the brand, and discounting products does not create brand loyalty. Not only does this align perfectly with what the brand stands for, but it is also a very fair strategy - nobody wants to feel cheated because they paid full price, when others don't have to - it would be unjust to those loyal clients who are dedicated to the Roccamore brand.

The same applies to the concept of selling products on different e-commerce platforms and marketplaces. Selling products through resellers can often mean losing control of the information displayed, especially the

price. Again, this can mean sending the wrong message to loyal customers, and creating disappointment, as well as negative feedback.

However, something Frederikke would consider doing in the future is some collaborative work, or special collections. One industry where this would work really well would be airlines. Frederikke had previously approached major airlines to provide the perfect footwear for female cabin crew members, and now the brand is more established, some airlines would be looking to work with Roccamore to provide elegant, and practical footwear for their employees.





In December 2018, Frederikke won best female founder of the year.

What's incredible to add to this story is that Frederikke was no business alumni. She didn't study entrepreneurship, nor was it her goal to create this successful business. What she did was focus on something important to her, learn little pieces as she went, and eventually carrying on that passion forwards - it just so happened to make for a really friggin' cool business idea. That's not to say it wasn't challenging!

“It’s all about people pleasing – if not, we’re doing it wrong!”

In terms of learning how to run a business - that wasn't intentional either. She never thought she'd have the 'guts' to do it, especially as it was such a personal project for her. But the more she did, the more she learned, until she decided to fully commit to the idea of launching Roccamore. But her biggest message to anyone in business, or looking to start their own business venture, is to think about the customers, "It's all about people pleasing - if not, we're doing it wrong!"



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