



Strengthening the IKEA culture

To establish its values and concepts in stores around the world, IKEA uses learning tools developed together with Celemi.

Background — the IKEA Concept Program

The IKEA concept has evolved over more than 50 years and the result today is a strong, tried and tested concept, which is being enhanced and further developed every day all over the world. The work relationship between IKEA and Celemi dates back to 1995 when Inter IKEA Systems B.V. had identified a need for people within the company to gain a better and deeper insight about the IKEA concept. This was to be achieved through a hands-on experience rather than just informing people or letting them study manuals and books.

Together with Celemi, a five-day communication and engagement program was designed to help clarify and maintain the IKEA concept globally. To date, many hundreds of IKEA managers have been through the program, which is still being run.

“The way we do things around here – and why”



PHOTO: IKEA

“Maintaining a strong IKEA culture is one of the most crucial factors behind the continued success of the IKEA concept.”

—Ingvar Kamprad, IKEA Founder

A program on culture — the IKEA Way

After the success of the IKEA concept program, the next big challenge was to further strengthen the IKEA culture. To increase competitiveness while expanding through opening up new stores and recruiting a lot of people, it is of great importance to continuously enhance the capabilities of co-workers and put the IKEA culture in focus. “We need to maintain as well as develop our culture,” says Anders Dahlvig, IKEA Group President and CEO at the time of the IKEA Way development.

“We had a dream of making a program where we could work with our values as the most important part,” says Mats Agmén, MD of Concept Control, Inter IKEA Systems B.V.. So, Inter IKEA Systems B.V. once again teamed up with Celemi to create a new program, with the main purpose of increasing the understanding and alignment of the IKEA Way of doing things, defined as “The way we do things around here – and why”.

A discovery tour

To create the desire and capability to uphold and develop the IKEA Way, it is important to make the values come to life in a concrete way for the participants. The program has been designed as a discovery tour of IKEA, using three different complementing perspectives of the business: the concept, the culture, and the structure.

The five-day program consists of several components in a variety of media and formats. In the program seminars, participants are divided into teams, and are presented with challenging situations that call for action. This provokes intense discussions leading to shared insights, giving participants a ‘gut-feel’ understanding of how the values apply in practice.

The materials create a bird’s-eye view of global IKEA activities. Participants explore the critical success factors of the whole concept, they practice the ability to identify and tackle difficult situations. All in all, they learn what the IKEA Way means in practice in terms of daily actions and decisions.

“The program has had a great impact on our corporate culture.”

— Mats Agmén, MD of Concept Control, Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

Successful launch and continued cooperation

Since its launch in 2003, thousands of people have been through the IKEA Way program – translated into 18 languages. It has been very well-received and much appreciated among the participants.

The immediate target group of the program is top managers from all parts of IKEA worldwide (retail, purchasing, supplying, etc). “But the target group is really everyone within the IKEA world,” says Mats Agmén. Following the training sessions, IKEA managers bring back the program tools to run seminars with their own co-workers.



PHOTO: IKEA

About IKEA

IKEA is a leading global home furnishing company with more than 139 000 co-workers in retail stores and purchasing centers in 38 countries/territories around the globe.



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