

FURNISHING SOCIAL MEDIA: IKEA STYLE



PURPOSE

In 1943, 17-year-old Ingvar Kamprad created his own business with the money his father had given him after successfully finishing his studies. He began selling items such as wallets, picture frames, table runners, watches, and even nylon stockings. Kamprad called this new store IKEA. His idea behind IKEA was a business that met needs with reasonably low costs. Just five short years later Kamprad introduced furniture to IKEA, perhaps one of his smartest ideas for his business. IKEA is now most commonly known for its wide range of affordable, self-assembly furniture. In 1958 the first IKEA store opened in Sweden, making it the largest furniture exposition in Scandinavia. Today, IKEA is a nationwide franchise with stores in 37 different countries. By monitoring the online conversations about IKEA a common theme seems to be reappearing, and it's a positive one. IKEA has been a popular franchise around the world for decades, and now it is rapidly-growing here in the United States. IKEA has a huge following in the U.S., and people get very excited about visiting the store. It attracts a wide range of people because of the variety of products at a comforting low price. With the deteriorating state of the economy today, IKEA chose the perfect time to expand overseas.

METHODOLOGY

Our group monitored IKEA's prominence in social media by searching for blogs, comments, groups and other forms of entries about IKEA. We went directly on social media web sites to conduct our research. We searched on Flickr, Technorati, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, IceRocket, Addictomatic and Yahoo messages, and we found that many people were talking about IKEA. We started looking at the sources on September 19th and continued until Sept. 21, 2009.

We determined source credibility by either the ranking of the source, the number of comments or posts on the source, or the number of hits or people visiting the source. We also searched the blogs or web sites in quantcast.com to see the demographics and estimated reach.

RESULTS

IKEA receives a lot of buzz in blogs, online newsrooms and on message boards because the company specifically markets their products to be affordable, easy-to-use and versatile. The results from our social media monitoring showed that people like IKEA and use the store to style their living spaces as well as their events, such as weddings, and for projects. Regarding the economy, we found that people support IKEA because their prices are cheap. While many blogged about having issues with self-assembly of the furniture and prices in shipping (which can sometimes be costly depending on the part of the world they are shipping to, obviously), they agreed that the overall quality and prices of the products made up for it. In college dorm spaces, bedrooms, and even kitchens, people are finding ways to decorate according to their style preferences and at affordable prices. We found this on blog sites that people had to open up room for advice on which products and textiles to use in projects. IKEA is a world-wide company that started in Sweden and with such large stores being built, many jobs have become available. We found that people want IKEA in states that don't have the store and also countries, like South Africa. Aside from having low prices and high quality products, IKEA also promotes the green movement for environmental sustainability- yet another reason to gain such positive feedback from its supporters. Bloggers often commented on the uses of solar power in IKEA stores as well as their recycling initiatives used in their food- courts.

While there were some negative discussions about the hassle of self- assembly and shipping costs, our results returned positive buzz on the IKEA Corporation. People all over the world appreciate their attempts to help the economy by producing quality products at affordable prices and maintaining environmental efforts to go green. We determined that people want IKEA and are excited about what the company has to offer.

CONCLUSION

IKEA has proven to be as popular on social media sites as it is in everyday conversation between people. With an IKEA store opening up in the Tampa Bay area within the last six months, it has been obvious to people in our area that IKEA is a source of attraction. It is clear after research that people literally all over the world get very excited about IKEA as well as people in our area. Some people travel for semi-long distances just to visit IKEA. To cover the bad press on IKEA, perhaps they could improve the self assembly of the furniture as well as customer support in areas of shipping. Overall, the attention on blogs and social media sites is positive and only a small fraction is negative.

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING DATA TABLE

Source	Source Credibility	Date/Time	Feedback
SirKnightLurk On Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Allen Tam Location: Ontario, Canada Bio: <i>Illustrator, animator, writer, musician, motorhead, martial artist and sometimes chef.</i> 31 following, 14 followers, 188 tweets 	Sept. 21, 2009 7:38 p.m.	Discusses how he removed the backseat out of his vehicle so he could go to IKEA and be able to fit everything he bought into his car. "stripped the backseat out of my car so I could do an ikea run."
Mental_floss on Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Mental Floss Location: Birmingham/Brooklyn/Cleveland Bio: <i>Where knowledge junkies get their fix</i> 321 following, 24,059 followers, 1309 tweets 	July 23, 2009 5:21 p.m.	Expresses a random and interesting piece of information about IKEA. "An estimated 10% of living Europeans were conceived on an Ikea-produced bed."
ikeafans on Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Ikeafans Location: Virginia Bio: <i>IKEAFANS.com - Personalizing the IKEA Experience Since 2005 - IKEA forums, blogs, articles, galleries. We're not IKEA - we are IKEA FANS!</i> 1,070 following, 1,948 followers, 1,754 tweets 	Sept. 19, 2009 10:50 a.m.	Lets people know about a special offer that IKEA is having about a food item. "IKEA Swedish Meatball Plate Practically Free This Weekend http://bit.ly/3QJfeh ."
Ddmanalo on Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Dianna Manalo Location: Toronto, Canada Bio: <i>"I'm Dianna. Sophmore year. I love basketball, shopping and my family. More than anything, I love my God. My life is an anthem to his name."</i> 76 following, 36 followers, 205 tweets 	Sept. 21, 2009 8:12 p.m.	An IKEA customer and fan boasts about her trip to IKEA and how she had to return to reality, but now she has new bed sheets and a pillow she purchases from IKEA. "just came back from the land of awesomeness (Ikea) and now I'm back in reality.. with a bar of chocolate.. and a new pillow.. and bed sheets."
Krstyclrlls on Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Kristy Corliss Location: Los Angeles, California Bio: <i>"Earning her BFA in Photography. Living in Los Angeles,</i> 	Sept. 21, 2009 7:54 p.m.	An IKEA customer complains because a table she purchased from IKEA breaks every day. "Our Ikea table falls apart every single day."

Source	Source Credibility	Date/Time	Feedback
	<p><i>but Massachusetts will always be home.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 103 following, 158 followers, 821 tweets 		
IKEA Lovers Group on Fickr.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,889 members • 11,661 picture items in the group pool • 67 posts in the discussion board 	Sept. 19, 2009 1:30 p.m.	Discusses photography in IKEA, ideas on what to make with IKEA textiles and how much of each members' homes is decorated with items from IKEA.
IKEA In My Home Group on Fickr.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,607 members • 4,417 picture items in the group pool • 8 posts in the discussion board 	Sept. 19, 2009 1:30 p.m.	Discusses IKEA Kitchen items and which items are the oldest/most durable.
Technorati theikeablog.com from Technorati	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,631 results for IKEA • 1,149 blog results for IKEA • Rank: 1,603,173 	Sept. 21, 2009 8:55 p.m.	Blog subscribers review certain products and brands. People ask about specific furniture pieces (like whether it was a good purchase and also what about the product disappointed them.)
ikeahacker.blogspot.com from Technorati	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rank: 8,730 • According to quantcast.com, it reaches approximately 8,621 U.S. people monthly and is visited most by middle aged, well-educated females. 	Sept. 21, 2009 9:10 p.m.	The author asks for “ikea hacks” which are ideas of how to use or to decorate their different products. People can share their innovative ideas on how to create even extravagant items like wedding centerpieces out of inexpensive IKEA products.
Bing from Addictomatic http://www.independent.ie/business/personal-finance/investments/student-accounts-a-new-beginning-1892657.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addictomatic searches live sites on the web for the latest news, blog posts, videos and images. Created by Crowd Favorite. 	Sept. 21, 2009 5:30 p.m.	People are talking about the ways that they used IKEA to style their college dorm rooms and save money at the same time.
Addicto Top Blogs- Yelp http://www.yelp.com/biz/ikea-emeryville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yelp was started in 2004 to help readers post blogs about businesses they like or didn't like. More than 25 million people have visited for reviews. 	Sept. 20, 2009 8 p.m.	Although some people think that furniture from IKEA is a hassle to put together, the styles and prices can't be beat. People also like that IKEA offers dining and play areas for children. Mostly they love the prices.
Official IKEA fan page on Facebook http://www.facebook.com/ho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17, 333 fans of the Official IKEA page 	Sept, 21, 2009 12:05 p.m.	Business Week for brands listed IKEA as #28 from #35 last year; “Home goods giant is flourishing as recession-scarred consumers

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me.php?#/IKEAUSA?ref=ts			continue to snap up its stylish-yet-affordable designs"...
Luci Branyan blogger on Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Location: Conshohocken, PA</i> • <i>78 friends</i> 	Sept. 19, 2009 10:39 a.m.	This blogger was not a fan of IKEA reporting problems building the furniture, high shipping costs and bad experiences with customer service and not receiving timely feedback.
Ruby Fidler on Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stanford Alum '84</i> • <i>Hewlett-Packard employee</i> • <i>58 friends</i> 	Sept. 21, 2009 2:21 p.m.	Expresses appreciation for prices at IKEA; went for a big shopping trip to furnish her son's apartment at UC Davis; "wouldn't have gone anywhere else..."
myspace.com-blogs.myspace.com/61163439	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>79 comments</i> • <i>14 kudos</i> 	Aug. 13, 2008 1:52 a.m.	The topic of Susan's blog "How to shop at Ikea." She asks for people with experience to give her information about the products, whether or not they like them and how to shop at IKEA. Bloggers talk about their favorite products, the price range and the assembly of the products.
messages.yahoo.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yahoo messages is ranked #2 in the US</i> 	Aug. 23, 2009 11:41 a.m.	Bloggers talk about whether or not it is a good idea for a number of Israelis to boycott IKEA because of an article suggesting that Israeli soldiers "harvested" the organs of Palestinians. The majority of the bloggers involved expressed the same concern that it would hurt Israel more than IKEA because IKEA employs a number of Iranians. A lot of people are confused by the boycott and do not see a connection. People are really supporting IKEA in this blog.
messages.yahoo.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yahoo messages is ranked #2 in the US.</i> 	June 3, 2009 2:27 p.m.	This blog discusses IKEA making changes in their company to be more environmental friendly. They discuss that IKEA is applying solar in the Florida stores to save money and energy. The bloggers discuss that IKEA is concerned about the environment and that they are not just doing it to be "trendy." They also talk about how IKEA began recycling before many other companies.

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messages.yahoo.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yahoo messages is ranked #2 in the US.</i> 	July 11, 2009	<p>This blogger began talking about how IKEA is just as bad as Wal-Mart and discusses the negative impact of cheap stores that focus more on quantity rather than quality. Bloggers then responded to her defending IKEA. They described their satisfaction with the products they have purchased and do not agree with comparing the quality of IKEA products to be similar to Wal-Mart. The majority of the bloggers have seen little problems with their IKEA products, besides the self-assembly part. Besides that, the bloggers agree that you cannot beat the price they pay and the quality they get for the products.</p>
Lindalouwho22 blog on Myspace		Aug. 21, 2009 11:49 p.m.	<p>This blog discusses the goods and bads with shopping at IKEA. They express that the actual shopping experience is a little overwhelming because of the size of the store, and the self-assembly is not a piece of cake. However the price, variety of products and overall quality make it worth it to shop at IKEA.</p>