

Ikea 

Google says: Scandinavian modern style furniture and accessories

Ikea.co.uk says: Affordable solutions for modern living

In the British market

It's a step up from Argos with the style aspirational element


www.argos.co.uk

and a step down from Habitat with its affordability and function focus.

www.habitat.net

Our target audience are middle-income earners in large urban areas of the ages 25 – 40.

They could be a 25 year old graphic designer or a 35 year old bank manager with two young children.

 What bonds them is a small to medium disposable income to make their small to medium spaces stylish, and because they don't have cash to burn those purchases need to be functional.

Key Brand attractions: Function, affordability, convenience and style.

A note on Style

The Scandinavian character whispers of pine trees and kookiness.

Ikea's style is clean and simple with varying touches of quirkiness.



How does it work?

Ikea have a user-friendly website from which you can view products and prices from shelving to candle sticks. It's customer service section offering a store locator, tips and ideas for organising and decorating and even a virtual style guide.

You can also order a colour photographic catalogue depicting all the products from the website to flip through at your leisure.


So you choose your items from the website or catalogue and go and pick them up from the warehouse, in some countries they even deliver.

The warehouses are laid out in a simple functional style with a bit of appropriate quirkiness, like a big clear plastic tank filled with bold solid coloured balls for kids to play in.

The last TV ads I saw showed brightly coloured scenes of cartoon people in surreal cartoon situations. Which I guess is promoting the kooky Scandinavian bit.

Currently all brand communications are all very Ikea. And Ikea has everything our target market needs for modern living.

But

 Is the fact that Ikea caters for all your modern living needs with its Ikea style make Ikea a bit dominating?

If you bought completely into the Ikea life what does that say about you?


Is everyone meant to slot into catalogue sections?

Or be a crazy caricature?

Is Ikea a little de-personalising?



Like everyone else, I had become a
slave to the IKEA nesting instinct.
I would flip through catalogs and
wonder, "What kind of dining set
defines me as a person?"

 Remember Fight Club. The best-selling book by Chuck Palahniuk and then a hit movie with Brad Pitt and Edward Norton. In Fight Club Ikea is the symbol of evil for our target market.

"You're young. You have a fairly well paid job. You have Swedish furniture, artistic coffee tables and a fridge full of condiments. Yet you feel emotionally and spiritually empty."

- Plot Summary, Fight Club the movie.

One of the big fears of our urban dwelling audience is de-personalisation.

It is the dark side of modern urban living.

One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.

- Preludes. TS Eliot.

So how can Ikea stay away from the dark side?



Ikea needs to celebrate the idea that

Function is subservient to experience and style to the individual.

The brand strategy needs to communicate the importance of the individual's personal experience in modern living and that Ikea is here to humbly assist it.



So what are some recommendations?

The nature of an urban environment means our audience could have any number of backgrounds and interests. That's the exciting thing about the city.

That's the exciting thing about modern life, you can be anything you want to be.

Ikea's products sit comfortably within the consumer's individual experience and style as well as their space.

TV and print advertising communicating quirky yet personal emotional living experiences. A product is there but the focus isn't on it.

Such as....

The intimacy of a tent in an empty livingroom, boxes scattered waiting to be unpacked. A 30 something couple are bedded down in the tent with a small warm light making shadow puppets and talking vague lover talk.

A perfectly organised crammed tiny fun-box bedroom. Eclectic gadgets and clothes clash beautifully. The young creative is late again. He falls from his raised bed into his studio space, throws on his clothes on from the handy rack, grabs his laptop and puts the printouts into his portfolio, exiting in record time.

Ambient executions that encourage diversity and the individual's experience.

Sponsor an exhibition and award for new product designers.

The theme evokes the brand philosophy. Sell the best designs through Ikea.

Sponsor urban designers to make public spaces more personal. Take photographs and release a book.

Give people fans on the tube in summer.

Put a warm coloured light in the bustop billboards in winter.

To sum up

Sometimes a brand's voice can be so strong that the consumer's identity becomes secondary.

For modern living our target market wants function, convenience, simplicity and style but they want that to aid their individual experience not define it.

That is Ikea's brand relationship with the audience and its challenge.

