

Can't spot  
the difference?  
Save more  
than money



If you need something new, buy something used

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Kampagnens titel: IKEA CIRKULÄR

Kunde: IKEA Danmark

Produkt: IKEA CIRKULÄR

## 2. År shortlistet/vundet ved CCA

2022, Advertising & Digital Advertising – Events, Silver

## 3. Executive summary

This is the story of how IKEA actively engaged the Danes in the circular transformation of its business. CIRKULÄR is a circular campaign for a circular service – that empowers people to live more sustainable lives at home. The initiative created an actual circular behaviour change, generating a smashing +656% uplift in the amount of used furniture that Danish customers brought back to IKEA, and a massive +28% uptick in sales of used IKEA furniture on Black Friday. All while driving up the key brand metric 'Positive brand impact' by +29%. CIRKULÄR has now been adopted by IKEA in 28 countries.

## 4. Har du tidligere indsendt denne kampagne i Creative Effectiveness/Creative Impact?

No.

## 5. Hvad var målsætningen for kampagnen?

Back in 1976, IKEA's famous founder Ingvar Kamprad wrote his manifesto 'The Testament of a Furniture Dealer'<sup>1</sup>. In its pages he stated that with IKEA, his desire was to serve 'the many people' rather than the few – and that he would do this by selling functional, well-made furniture, rather than 'throw-away products'. According to him, this was because: 'waste of resources is one of the greatest diseases of mankind.'

While the value of sustainability has been a core part of IKEA's Democratic Design and product development philosophy for decades, the brand has suffered from negative associations with mass consumption, because its focus on affordability carries with it an assumption of lower quality. The by-product of these twin associations is that the brand is seen as responsible for high levels of disposal. Indeed, according to IKEA's own data, only 39% of all consumers believe it makes a positive impact on society and the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.inter.ikea.com/en/-/media/InterIKEA/IGI/Financial%20Reports/English The testament of a dealer 2018.pdf](https://www.inter.ikea.com/en/-/media/InterIKEA/IGI/Financial%20Reports/English/The%20testament%20of%20a%20dealer%202018.pdf)

In recent years however, IKEA has committed to a circular transformation of its entire business, in the hope of enabling and inspiring more than 1 billion people around the world to live more sustainable lives at home. Among other things, this transformation requires the creation of new circular services that make it both easier and more relevant for people to recycle and buy used, pre-loved products instead of new. This had already kickstarted a campaign in 2020, in which IKEA let its customers bring back their old furniture.

The launch of IKEA CIRKULÄR – described in this case – closed the circular loop, as a new service enabling circular consumption along two tracks: 1) the brand collects people's used, pre-loved IKEA furniture to be restored; and 2) it re-sells this used, pre-loved IKEA furniture to people, instead of them buying new products.

As IKEA stated in an official press release prior to the launch of IKEA CIRKULÄR:

*"Vores arbejde med grøn omstilling - ved bl.a. at fremme et cirkulært forbrug - er en forudsætning for, at vi kan drive forretning i fremtiden. Når vi i løbet af november lancerer og tester en række nye initiativer, er det med fokus på at inspirere vores kunder og udbrede cirkularitet til de mange mennesker. Det er samtidig en del af vores egen rejse mod at blive en cirkulær, klimapositiv forretning ved udgangen af 2030."*

Hence, the overall business opportunity was to leverage the launch of IKEA CIRKULÄR as an initiative to change the commonly-held association with the IKEA brand of low-quality, 'throw-away products', while changing consumer behaviour in a circular movement – actively engaging them to be part of IKEA's circular business transformation.

As we will outline in this case, the launch of IKEA CIRKULÄR was orchestrated leading up to and around Black Friday. We broke down the initiative into three main measurable objectives:

### **Marketing Objectives**

In 2020, IKEA had begun testing a Buy Back service of used IKEA furniture – with only moderate success, as awareness of this option among Danish consumers was, at 17%,

relatively low. To drive engagement and real behaviour change, we needed to lift awareness of the full CIRKULÄR service, which now also included the resale of pre-loved furniture.

Hence, the marketing objectives were to:

- **increase the overall awareness of CIRKULÄR as a service;**
- **generate earned media to cut through the Black Friday noise.**

### **Brand Objectives**

To support IKEA's circular business transformation, we needed to push the Danes' perception that the brand's affordable furniture doesn't come at the expense of the planet, instead positioning IKEA as an enabler of a more sustainable way of living for the many. This brand objective this led to was to:

- **increase key brand metrics related to IKEA's circular transformation – 'Positive brand impact', 'Brand desire' and 'Value proposition'.**

### **Business Objectives**

People are looking for brands to help them to live more sustainably, which directly relates to the IKEA purpose of enabling people to live more sustainable lives at home. Could we change consumer behaviour so that more people would bring their used, pre-loved IKEA furniture back to us? And would we be able to incite the Danes to buy these pieces, instead of new?

Focusing on circular behaviour change, the campaign essentially needed to drive two business objectives sitting at the core of the IKEA circular business transformation.

- **Increase the amount of used IKEA furniture that people brought back to IKEA – during the three weeks leading up to Black Friday.**
- **Increase the sales performance of used IKEA furniture – on Black Friday and during the two weeks leading up to Black Friday.**

## 6. Beskriv ideen og arbejdet som sådan - og forklar hvilke kanaler, der blev brugt i eksekveringen

While most other retailers lower their prices in the name of boosting consumerism on Black Friday, at IKEA we don't do Black Friday at all. Instead, we launched IKEA CIRKULÄR, inspiring Danes to 'save more than money' on consumerism's darkest day. At the same time, bringing IKEA furniture into the realm of recycling helped to exemplify that IKEA furniture is designed and made to last.

The creative idea:

CIRKULÄR is a circular campaign for a circular service

– that inspires and empowers people to live more sustainable lives at home.

Since CIRKULÄR was a new initiative aiming at changing real behaviour, we needed to be very clear in our communication, and make it easy for people to take part. Hence, the integrated campaign was orchestrated in a few simple steps that were rolled out over the three-week period leading up to and including Black Friday.

### Step 1: Buy Back

We launched the first part of the campaign by running ads without any furniture, for the first time in IKEA history. The ads asked people to sell their old IKEA furniture back to us. The Buy Back part of the campaign ran in the three weeks before Black Friday, when we collected these pre-loved pieces.



## Step 2: Resell

We then restored and advertised this used, pre-loved furniture at discounted prices in the campaign's second part, asking people to save more than money if they couldn't tell the difference between new and old.



## Step 3: Vintage Design Sale

And finally, to amplify the hype, we bought back old IKEA design classics from several secondhand sites and resold them at original prices on Black Friday. The Vintage Design Sale were hosted both physically during events at IKEA warehouses, and digitally on Instagram Live. Here, influencers promoted the sale as a big lottery, moderated by celebrity TV host Mads Steffensen and designer Uffe Buchard.



## An integrated campaign ecosystem

The go-to-market strategy balanced Paid, Owned and Earned platforms.

Earned media was expected to deliver well, due to the nature of IKEA, as a commercial retailer, not communicating bargains on Black Friday – but instead pushing circular and sustainable behaviour. The PR effort matched with the timeline of the campaign, with three different angles: 'Buy Back', 'Resell' and 'Vintage Design Sale', rolled out over a span of three weeks leading up to and including Black Friday.

The channel strategy was primarily digitally driven, to nurture the behaviour change via content on social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), as well as display and YouTube. Print and outdoor were added to ensure broad reach, awareness and top-of-mind. LinkedIn was used for stakeholders such as journalists, politicians and employees, and included a more explanatory film about the new circular service.

IKEA's website served as the main platform for all digital traffic, while in-store POS was an essential part of the awareness and engagement communication. Furthermore, IKEA trailers and Click & Collect trucks were used to deliver the message, while IKEA warehouses became venues for hosting events.

## 7. Hvad var strategien bag det kreative arbejde?

Research<sup>2</sup> shows that while consumers' sustainability intentions are good, they often fail to put them into practice.

### The insight:

**If the sustainable option feels too difficult or expensive, people simply don't do it  
– even though they might want to.**

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<sup>2</sup> Global report from J. Walter Thompson Intelligence. The report also concludes that consumers expect brands to be sustainable: 89% of those surveyed 'care personally' about protecting the planet and 92% said they are trying to live more sustainably, while 83% would always pick the brand that has the better record of sustainability; and 90% agreed that brands/companies have a responsibility to take care of the planet and its people. That while consumers' sustainability intentions are good, they often fail to put them into practice. <https://www.wundermanthompson.com/insight/new-trend-report-the-new-sustainability-regeneration>

This tension is often framed as the intention-action gap. It's deeply human and rooted in behavioural science, because humans are genetically coded to take the path of least resistance.

The insight was key to the creative conception of CIRKULÄR, because it meant we knew we had to make it easy and affordable to nudge the more sustainable choice. And to target the growing sustainability audience – which can find itself stuck between good intentions and actions – because price and convenience often become barriers.

One day each year, it becomes even more difficult to balance good intentions with good behaviour. Black Friday – it's a day when most retailers lower their prices and lure consumers in with irresistible bargains in the name of consumerism. All those great offers on shiny new things make it too easy to buy unnecessary stuff – and almost impossible to align shopping actions with green intentions.

With the CIRKULÄR initiative, we gave people an easy deal that's better for both their wallets and the planet – and we did it on Black Friday.

Hence, strategically, we chose to utilise the year's highest point of consumerism as a timely moment to challenge the consumer mindset, while also grabbing a share of the increasing media coverage usually connected to the day, to create awareness.

Embracing the democratising spirit of the IKEA brand, we wanted to engage people to take an active part of a circular movement. In one truly circular initiative containing two simple tracks: one that made it easy and relevant for people to bring back used IKEA furniture; another for them to buy used IKEA products instead of new.

A supporting insight informing the creative work was that only high-quality furniture is typically considered suitable for recycling, because high-quality supports longevity. Due to the perception that IKEA furniture is lower in quality, it was not typically front-of-mind for consumers thinking about recycling. Connecting IKEA furniture with recycling created an



opportunity to show that it's designed and made to last – and pushed the brand perception in the right direction.

## **8. Hvad var kampagnens umiddelbare kreative impact?**

Through an integrated ecosystem of complementary elements, touchpoints and channels, the CIRKULÄR initiative generated tangible marketing, brand and business results. Breaking down the creative impact of the CIRKULÄR initiative, it delivered exceptionally well against the defined objectives:

### **Marketing Results**

- **30% awareness of the CIRKULÄR service**

Awareness of the CIRKULÄR service reached 30%, a significant jump up from the existing 17% awareness of IKEA's Buy Back service, which had been initiated the previous year.

- **60% of Danes reached through organic PR**

The CIRKULÄR campaign was successful in cutting through the noise on Black Friday and delivered massive positive press coverage in the Danish media (56 articles). This translated into organic PR reach of 3.4 million people, approx. 60% of the Danish population.

### **Brand Results**

- **Significant uptick in key brand metrics**

Supporting the journey of IKEA's circular business transformation, the CIRKULÄR initiative helped boost the brand on key brand metrics.

- Increase in 'Positive brand impact' by +29%
- Increase in 'Brand desire' by +17%
- Increase in 'Value proposition' by +20%

## 9. Hvilken kommerciel effekt/værdi løftede kampagnens kreative impact?

By launching CIRKULÄR, IKEA's ambition was to accelerate the momentum of its circular business – as part of the company's overall strategy. And it did. The awareness and attention generated by the campaign delivered engagement that resulted in real circular behaviour change. Not only did it incite people to bring back more of their used, pre-loved IKEA furniture, but it also motivated them to buy more used, pre-loved furniture instead of new – effectively closing the intention-action gap for consumers wanting to buy and live more sustainably.

### **Business Results**

The initiative delivered on the two important business objectives sitting at the core of the circular business transformation. First, we saw a significant uplift in people's hand-in of used furniture, ready to be resold and find a new home.

- **The amount of used furniture that Danes brought back to IKEA reached an index of 756, which is a +656% uplift from the 2020 effort of the first Buy Back campaign.**

Just as importantly, we saw a significant uptick in used furniture sales performance versus the previous year.

- **Sales of used furniture were up +28% / Index 128 – on Black Friday.**
- **Sales of used furniture were up +4% / Index 104 – during week 47-48 leading up to Black Friday.**

### **Making a global impact**

An additional effect worth mentioning is that the CIRKULÄR campaign was adopted and adapted by IKEA in 28 countries as a sustainable initiative – driving both behavioural change and strengthening the IKEA brand on a global scale. As a result, **more than 155,000 pieces of used IKEA furniture have been brought back** to IKEA warehouses for reselling – and have been saved from landfill. Again, proving that IKEA furniture perceived as lower quality is in fact designed and manufactured for longevity.

## Recap of campaign results

	OBJECTIVES	RESULTS
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the amount of used IKEA furniture that people would bring back to IKEA – during the weeks leading up to Black Friday.</li> <li>• Increase the sales performance of used IKEA furniture – on Black Friday and in the two weeks leading up to it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of used furniture brought back to IKEA reached an <b>index of 756</b>, which is a +656% uplift from the 2020 effort of the first Buy Back campaign.</li> <li>• <b>Sales of used furniture were up +28% (Index 128)</b> – on Black Friday.</li> <li>• <b>Sales of used furniture were up +4% (Index 104)</b> – during weeks 47-48 leading up to Black Friday.</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the overall awareness of CIRKULÄR as a service.</li> <li>• Create earned media to cut through the Black Friday noise and engage Danes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>30% awareness</b> of the CIRKULÄR service, up from the existing 17% awareness of the IKEA Buy Back service, initiated the year prior.</li> <li>• <b>3.4 million Danes reached through organic PR</b> – approx. 60% of the population.</li> </ul>
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase key brand metrics related to IKEA's circular transformation: 'Positive brand impact', 'Brand desire' and 'Value proposition'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in 'Positive brand impact' by <b>+29%</b>.</li> <li>• Increase in 'Brand desire' by <b>+17%</b>.</li> <li>• Increase in 'Value proposition' by <b>+20%</b>.</li> </ul>

### 10. Er der andre faktorer, som kan have haft indflydelse på den kommercielle effekt/værdi eller den forretningsmæssige udvikling?

Fortunately, sustainability has become a mainstream concern for consumers, politicians and brands. According to a survey by DBA, 45% of Danes have become more conscious of buying used instead of new, within the past five years. And many mass consumer categories, such as fashion, are pushing vintage and pre-loved products in order to grow the secondhand

market. Hence, CIRKULÄR is riding the wave of a rapidly growing trend feeding people's motivation and readiness to reuse and recycle.

### **11. Skubbede arbejdet til grænserne for, hvordan kreativitet kan give impact på forretningen?**

IKEA CIRKULÄR is an example of how brands that allow for a bigger creative canvas can accelerate meaningful change that also drives business. At the core of the CIRKULAR initiative is a creative business idea that was brought to life using a broad creative toolbox – from impactful communication, to engaging activation.

But the real difference-maker when looking at the creative impact of CIRKULÄR is *scale*. IKEA is a global company with 460 stores in 62 markets – with more than 775 million visitors every year. Introducing a circular service in one store can travel across the system and accelerate the real-life impact of a simple creative idea.

It's now part of IKEA's plan to expand the CIRKULÄR service further. What started on consumerism's darkest day is now a sustainable initiative in 28 countries, 365 days a year – driving both behavioural change and strengthening the IKEA brand on a global scale.

So, next time you need something new, buy something used.