



2007 Silver Effie Winner

IKEA “Everyday Fabulous”

Category: **Household Furnishings & Appliances**

Lead Agency: **Deutsch Inc.**

Contributing Agency: **n’Vision**

Client: **IKEA North America**

Strategic Challenge

IKEA Gives the ICFE the Finger

They were coming. With their \$5000 lamps, Swarovski crystal-encrusted installations, and space-age designs you might only find in a museum, they were coming to New York City. And IKEA – the most egalitarian of all furnishing stores – needed to take a stand against them.

“They” were the exhibitors of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, an annual event that attracts the most high-end furniture designers around the world to show off their wares to potential distributors, the press, and the few lucky consumers who are invited to come see furniture that would likely never be seen in a real home, much less sat, spilled, or jumped on. This year the week of the fair was also designated Design Week by Mayor Bloomberg and multiple events around the city were being planned to celebrate the best of contemporary design. For IKEA, the week represented the very things the company has built a billion dollar global business challenging – furniture that is nice to look at, but affordable to a very few and usable for no one. So IKEA decided they wanted to tell the world there is a different way, a better way, of designing furniture - one that marries good form, function, and price.

However, true to their frugal roots, IKEA needed to find a way to spread the gospel of the brand with a very limited budget. They believed the best way to challenge the ICFE was to create their own exhibit. Their goal was to bring their unique design philosophy to life in a way no one had seen before and inspire people to think differently about their homes and IKEA furnishings. But while the well-known ICFE was being held in the 1.5 million square foot Jacob Javits Center, IKEA only had a 10,000 square foot, old warehouse space on a low trafficked street to showcase the best of their

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range.

The communications challenge was to create buzz about IKEA's exhibit and the brand overall. IKEA specifically needed to do this in New York because of declining brand perceptions in the market and the need to build positive equity given the opening of a new store in Brooklyn soon.

Our specific objectives were to raise awareness, increase relevance, and enhance perception of IKEA, its products and its philosophy in NYC during Design Week.

The Big Idea

"Let's Take it Outside"

With a small capacity in the exhibit space, and an even smaller budget, we couldn't afford to target consumers on a large scale. We needed to go after a more contained core group, but one with a loud voice who could amplify our message and share it with the masses. We decided to leverage the press. They were the perfect opportunity because they were already attuned to Design Week and the ICFF, they would be looking for stories outside the norm, and they could broadcast IKEA's message to millions of consumers in a credible way. Plus it would be cheap!

But we went one step further from the press. In keeping with IKEA's democratic heritage, we decided to also go after the most democratic press vehicle today – bloggers. Numerous influential blogs exist around home furnishings and design, and we knew if we could get some positive buzz on a well-read blog like apartmenttherapy.com, it would give IKEA much-needed legitimacy in the design world.

With the target audience nailed, we needed to come up with the right message. Especially since we were also targeting bloggers, the standard press release wouldn't do. We needed to catch their attention, surprise them, and give them something really juicy about IKEA to write about. A statement that challenged the ICFF and what it stood for, while promoting IKEA's philosophy of a "better everyday life for the many." So we asked ourselves, "What would make the many New Yorkers have a better everyday life?"

We started thinking about all the hassles we face as New Yorkers, the daily life things that are irksome, but that we just deal with because we have to. Things like having to touch germy subway poles. Or freezing due to the sub-zero air-conditioning in a theater in the middle of the summer. Or having no place to sit while waiting for the bus. And we realized that IKEA could help New Yorkers by using small improvements in design to make a big difference in their everyday lives. If the ICFF was about high-end furniture that is never used, IKEA would be about design that is useful on an everyday basis. If the ICFF was an exclusive event open to a select few, our message would be open to everyone. And if the ICFF was in a museum-type environment, our furnishings would be showcased in the most real of environments - the streets of New York.

Bringing the Idea to Life

Every New Yorker Gets a Piece

Tapping into the unique lives of New Yorkers and aiming to ease some of the hassles they encounter each day, we created "mini-makeovers" using IKEA furniture throughout Manhattan. We created more than 670 different experiences/mini-makeovers during this 5-day, citywide guerrilla-marketing

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event, all with the intent of showing the world how “good design can make the everyday a little better.”

Examples of our makeovers include:

- transforming a barren bus stop into a comfortable living room, giving commuters a comfortable place to
- await the next bus pillows at the bottom of slides in the park providing a softer landing for kids
- oven mitts on the #6 train for subway commuters with aversions to dirty railings
- pens in bank lobbies to replace the missing "pen on a string" for more convenient ATM transactions
- pillows of all shapes and sizes on park benches to encourage people to take a load off
- blankets in air-conditioned theaters for those in summertime dress
- hammocks between trees to catch a quick nap
- water bowls for thirsty dogs
- picnic baskets and blankets on the lawn of a park to inspire people on a Saturday afternoon
- real plates and place settings on tables outside of a hot dog vendor to enjoy a nice meal

We even offered comfortable couches called “sofa taxis” to transport key members of the press from the ICFF to the IKEA exhibit.

In addition, we created several email blasts to the press and a website they could visit for more IKEA everyday fabulousness. The website continued the theme of making the everyday a little bit better with changing daily tips such as how to how to fold a t-shirt with only one hand or how to make hot dog animals. It also showed off our makeovers around the city, promoted IKEA furniture as good solutions for every home, and encouraged people to visit the exhibit.

Using IKEA’s own products as the media vehicle, we proved that good design and a little creativity can make every day more fabulous.

Results

Worthy of Page Six

Through press coverage via television, print, and blogs, we reached an audience of more than six million consumers – increasing awareness of IKEA for practically zero media spend. Key press vehicles that covered the effort included Fox News and apartmenttherapy.com, a prominent home decorating blog with an average of 28,000 visits a day. This coverage extended beyond New York City, with press as far as Idaho and Oklahoma picking up the story (where IKEA doesn’t even have stores), and even international reach in London and Germany. Many more consumers were reached virally (e.g., forwarding photos from community sites like Flickr where we found numerous photos of Our efforts).

Interactive efforts paid off as well. The email garnered a 6% click-thru rate, four times higher than the industry average of 1.5%. Additionally, the website received 57,000 visitors in less than a week, despite limited advertising of the URL.

Finally, the quality of the coverage itself was successful. The press mentions captured the essence of our key message (that IKEA’s designs can make everyday life better), and included detailed descriptions of our installations and visuals.

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They also helped raise awareness that IKEA is soon opening in Brooklyn. But most importantly, the campaign improved brand perceptions, making the brand relevant and lovable again to New Yorkers by making their everyday lives just a little easier. Some examples of the media and blog quotes include:

"They wanted to challenge people to break the rules, create their own space, and not try to live up to the glossy, high-end designs you see in magazines... I have to say, I'm in LOVE once again with IKEA."

"[IKEA] is outfitting some of the city's bus shelters with modern yet sensible furnishings."

"If you are fortunate enough to live in NYC, there's a chance you experienced Everyday Fabulous hosted by IKEA.. The outcome of each installation brought comfort and whimsy to otherwise distressed urban standards."

"Their stylists took on parks, turned hotdog stands into outdoor cafes, bus stops into living rooms and strung hammocks on street corners, bringing smiles to jaded New Yorkers and ICFF visitors."

*"To many, New York City is a rough and tough town where only the strong survive. Just don't tell the people at IKEA. The furniture giant is hoping to soften that image. New Yorkers were pleasantly surprised to find furniture and pillows at subways and bus stops all around the city. IKEA is looking to make a big splash in the Big Apple with a new superstore opening in Brooklyn next year."
"Reaction to the program bordered on ecstatic..."*

"These are awesome. We could use some cheering up like this more often."

"Waiting for the bus is never much fun, especially when the weather is nasty. Although if IKEA designed the bus stops, as they did with these, I might change my mind."

Sources: Agency Research, Valassis, Emarketer, Clickz

Budget: Under \$500 thousand

Campaign Reach: Local

Media Channels: PR, Interactive/Online, Guerilla

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