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Executive Summary

IKEA is well-known for being open about its vision and mission including innovations, and manufacturing process, and for producing simple, high-quality furniture at affordable prices. The company is also renowned for maintaining a good relationship with customers, employees, and suppliers as well or we can say that all of its stakeholders. As previously stated, it is a brand that is concerned with a lot more than profits. This particular study will discuss Customer satisfaction, relationship management with customers and other stakeholders, and maintaining a good brand image with help of Keller's model. In the end, there are some recommendations also given for IKEA for its future growth.

Part 1: Introduction

Global service activity and management of supply chains define the efficient exploitation and operation of a company's major divisions such as marketing, finance, technology, and human resources. Managers face numerous challenges in dealing with the dynamic environment in this era of competition in business service operations. It is difficult to communicate across departments and effectively manage the distribution channel (Roslan, 2022). They must make sure that all data is consolidated and accessible to all departments. Each day, support management teams offer feedback and up - to - date while working to develop a self-sustaining system to improve organizational performance. Most importantly, it is critical to support teams by catching and reporting on workplace metrics. Designing, associating, and handling the processes and resources required to meet consumer demands is part of service operations management.

This study will look at IKEA's customer satisfaction, supply chain systems, communication, and relationships with stakeholders.

Company background

IKEA is a Sweden-based furniture and home decor brand working in more than 50 countries in the world (Marsh et al. 2022). IKEA offers people all over the world quality, affordability, comfort, and innovative design that now operates in over 50 countries. They sell a wide range of luxurious home decorations, furniture, and household equipment at reasonable prices. IKEA operates on a

global scale, and some of its products are accessible everywhere, while others are only available in certain locations. IKEA is a difficult brand to understand. It acts as a shop for every one for the domestic purposes (Hafez, 2022). It's also frequently brought up in the media. It is occasionally done because of cultural insensitivity. Other times, it's the result of a single faulty item injuring or even killing a customer. IKEA has many innovative items that can be used in a variety of ways while also saving space and money. The main goal is to provide something unique to its customers while staying within its budget and also maintaining a good relationship with customers and other stakeholders.

Mission and Vision Statement of IKEA

IKEA's mission is to provide an extensive range of very well-made innovative home-based decor items and equipment with a better-quality standard, which is eco-friendly products offered at products at a reasonable price so that the maximum number of households can afford them. ***“To make a better everyday life for many people.”*** This is the vision statement of IKEA; it means making many people's everyday lives something better. As per the study of Chichilanov (2022), This vision extends beyond the realm of home furnishings. IKEA wants to make a difference in the world, from the societies where they supply the IKEA's manufactured items make customers live more sustainably at home. IKEA believe they are contributing to positive social change.

Integrated Marketing Communications

IMC is the process of integrating a company's marketing components such as organizational communication, social media platforms, viewership analytics, corporate communications basics, and marketing into a consistent brand image across various media platforms. It enables public and private organizations and businesses to provide engaging and smooth consumer engagement for a service or product while also optimizing a firm's image and contribution. Experts with a frame of reference in IMC could work in fields such as social advertising media, development of digital, investigative journalism, market research, management consulting, public affairs, quasi and administration, leisure, TV and radio, and other related fields (Spinoglio, 2020).



Figure1: Integrated Marketing Communication
(Source: njmnmims. medium, 2018)

IKEA Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy

Marketing communication apparatuses are cast-off to endorse a business's goods and services. A wide range of Marcom tools is available to brands, including email campaigns, trade shows, workshops, advertising, newsletters, and, more recently, social media. In the age of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, social networking has become both a new opportunity and a difficult challenge. In less than a decade, terms like viral, buzz, memes, and form factor have decided to enter the marketing communication dictionary (UYSAL, 2022). On the one side, brands now have a channel to reach out to clients directly, but on the other, they risk becoming lost in the sound of omnipresent advertising. The ultimate objective of using tools for marketing communication is, of course, to increase sales. A mutually beneficial partnership between a supplier and a client requires brand awareness, a strong identity, and an emotional connection, which Marcom can provide.

Effective Promotion Strategy Adopted by IKEA

According to Shuwaler et al. (2019), The. The IKEA group offers a diversity of advantages such as month-to-month item discounts, 90-day match prices assure, deep discounts on specific products at IKEA restaurant chains, household subscriptions, Discount coupons, free stuff, and family vacations. as well as a customer loyalty program. Seasonal price reductions or sales on significant occasions and dates such as Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Back to School promotions.

Innovative Promotion: Operating Service and Communication Management by IKEA

Improved service operations strategy has transitioned from a segregated to a centralized solution model. Operation management is essential because it improves an organization's performance while manufacturing goods to meet customer demands. According to Solanki, (2021), IKEA uses a centralized solution model that focuses on the company lowering production costs by implementing this approach. Manufacturing costs have been kept to a minimum thanks to effective operations management. As shown in the following image 1, this company's operations management decisions include purchasing raw materials like wood, staffing, and training employees, designing the location and layout of the furniture warehouse, retail outlet, sales & marketing and the channel of distribution at the end most important step take place that is reporting and analytics so that future decision of business can be taken.



Figure 2: service operations management solutions (Dynamics Square, 2022)

IKEA has implemented this operating model to focus on lower down the cost of production while meeting the requirements of customers, effective distribution, performance, and environmental impact. The company emphasizes a centralized model for supply chain operations, quality management, cost management as well as communication management as key parts of its operation (Tran et al. 2019). The centralized model is also known as the GAP service model. Describes the furthestmost widespread communication issues that can originate a gap between clients' service expectations and the customer support they actually obtain.

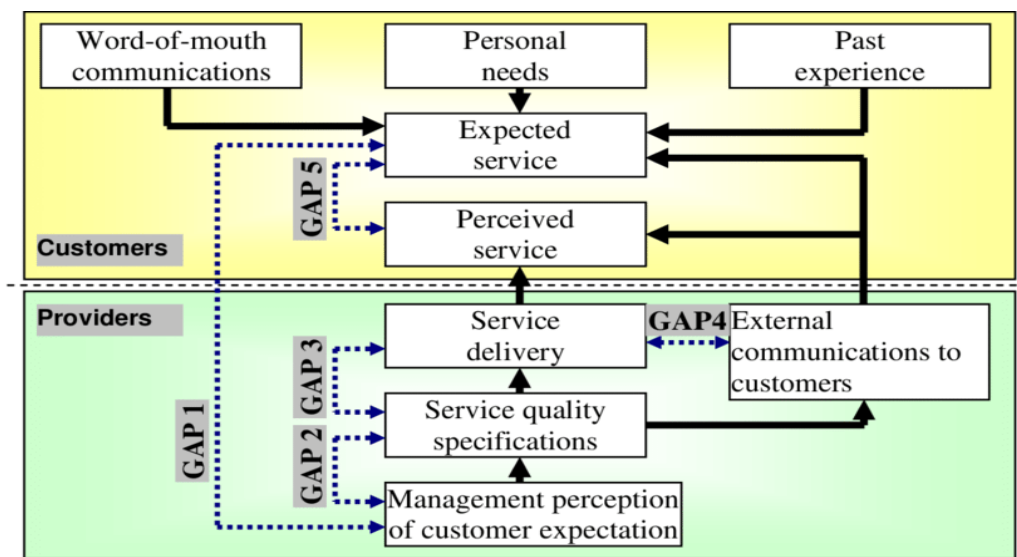


Figure 3: The GAPS Model- Different Aspects of Service Operations Management

(Research Gate, 2010)

The model also contributes to executives' better thought of their clientele in order to meet their requirements. The centralized model is a kind of self-service model which assist the organization to provide innovative products with standard quality and durability at a reasonable cost. The majority of IKEA's products are made from recyclable and sustainable materials.

Keller's Consumer-Brand Equity Model of IKEA

Salience

IKEA is clearly known as a furniture company. IKEA is a Swedish company that has been in business since 1943 and has been the largest furniture retailer worldwide since 2008. Currently operating in over 50 countries worldwide (Rodrigues and Brando, 2021). IKEA is also renowned for its diverse product offering. "Whatever look you favour, there is something for everyone," says IKEA.

Imagery

The Scandinavian style of IKEA can be discovered not only in their own current blue-yellow logo but also in their furniture. Scandinavian models are praised for their clean lines, sustainable development, innovative designs, and simplicity, and they are also available to customers all over the world at reasonable prices. IKEA mainly targets cost clients, all household sizes ranging from small to large, and newly settled families with or without children (Pang et al. 2022). The IKEA Household idea has also prospered in projecting a homely image. IKEA is known not only as a place where people can buy furniture but also as a place where people can get ideas for the design of their residences by having to look at the conceptual placement of the furniture in the Retail stores.

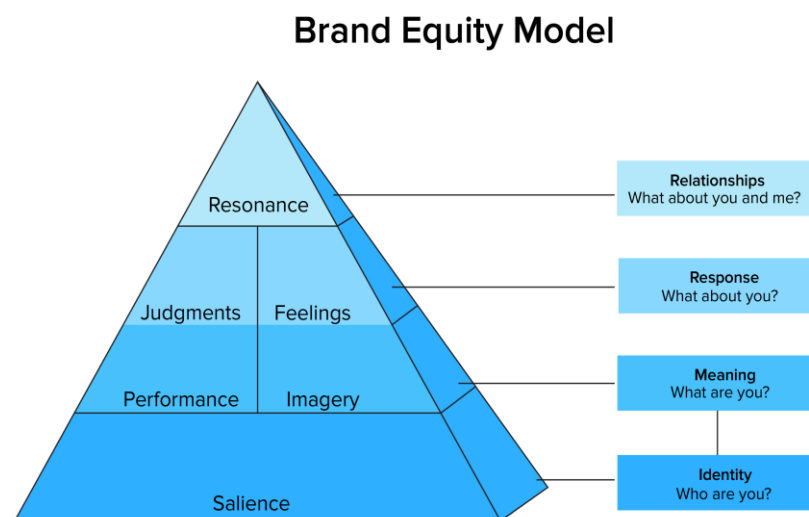


Figure 4: Keller's Consumer-Brand Equity Model

(Source: App Inventiv, 2021)

Performance

IKEA is a market leader in the home furnishings retail industry. Customers choose it as the first brand that did come to mind when thinking of home decor. "Affordable remedies for effectively living" IKEA products are designed to be functional while remaining affordable. Because of its low cost, IKEA decor is an interesting short house remedy for consumers, but it doesn't have a long product life. IKEA offers lifetime assurance on its products in this regard. It is difficult to correlate IKEA to DIY (do-it-yourself), which is the market's low-cost warrior's breathing concept strategy. As per the study of Pina and Dias (2021), "Our view is to provide well-constructed, feasible household items at market prices so smallest than other performers so that everyone who can be able to purchase them". A typical IKEA store includes 9,500 items of various sizes, shapes, and designs.

Judgment

IKEA is a trustworthy brand that offers an appropriate solution at reasonable prices. Price-sensitive products perform worse in terms of quality, which is an unavoidable correlation. Despite the purchase price, IKEA customers are conscious of the product performance and obtain gratification from acquiring a "Good Bargain" (Haumer et al. 2020). One of IKEA's greatest PODs is placing all of the advantages of functionalities, availability, and Swedish styling into a plain. Because of the benefits of flat-packing, this item is an excellent choice for consumers. IKEA's flat-pack design makes it simple for customers to transport using normal transport facilities (domestic use, vehicle, public transport). IKEA's customer service had developed a positive relationship with its customers, inspiring the "IKEA Family" (IKEA staff) to treat the customers as household, likely to result in the firm's family-friendly brand image.

	CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY PYRAMID
Salience	Furniture Retailer
Imagery	Scandinavian, Price-conscious, Family friendly, Versatility, Innovative & Inspirational
Performance	Furniture leader, Low prices Function and diverse designs, DIY Short term home solutions, Lifetime guarantee
Feelings	Welcoming layout, Fun, IKEA Effect (DIY Self-respect) Socially accepted Familiar environment (security)
Judgment	"Good Deal" happiness, Low quality, Not durable Convenient flat-pack Good customer service
Resonance	Rapid purchase (cheap) Price- & distance-sensitive loyalty – low attachment IKEA Hackers & online fan community Strong engagement

Figure 5: Brand Equity Model of IKEA

(Source: Mujikea.WordPress, 2014)

Feelings

IKEA stores are located strategically places Customers can have access to multiple products and feel at ease due to the friendly customer-centric atmosphere. IKEA has a large product line and also offers an in-store cafe that helps customers to spend more time in the store. It fulfils all of its customer's needs and encourages families to spend more time shopping. Shopping becomes "FUN". customers end up spending hours wandering around this huge furniture playground.

The "IKEA Effect" stems from DIY (Do it yourself) expertise it allows customers to assemble something from scratch every time offering a satisfactory feeling of achievement (El Dameh and Ghadeer, 2019). According to the study, this even creates value for the valuation of an object. IKEA has positive social approval; clients will receive positive feedback from others while shopping for IKEA product lines because of their high availability. IKEA's distinct store layout is

standardized around the world. The method and product used provide customers with a safe encounter with the brand.

Resonance

IKEA is a possible future Lovemaker with higher customer respect but low loyalty, as per our Lovemaker analysis. IKEA has low brand loyalty, which may be contributed to its cost tactic, as even minimal price changes can drive away a sizable target segment. Price and distance determine IKEA customer loyalty. Customers are more inclined to choose other brands when they have other lesser products and more budgets available. Rising fuel costs may substantially reduce motivation to visit IKEA stores because they are primarily situated outside of cities (Akyüz, 2019). IKEA has a vibrant community and a Strong consumer base and positive experiences.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Model

The advantage of analysing a brand using this framework is that it accurately depicts customer perception of a brand. It creates an ideal individuality for the business and its products, which customers have evaluated using their own criteria. IKEA is known for its affordable and innovative products and this model helps to make them stronger (Ishaq and Maria, 2020). However, there are some drawbacks to this model. A clear representation causes companies to incur additional costs in maintaining this brand equity and modifying it further. This also limits the other opportunities that could have been pursued with the extra funds. The model also lacks some crucial components.

Part 2

Customer journey: Understanding Customer Expectations and Managing Customer Relationships

The customer journey concept illustrates the entire process by which consumers engage with a specific brand, product, or service. It can include both indirect and direct interaction, ranging from learning about products to after-sales service and beyond. Before purchasing a product, every customer comes into contact with different phases or marketing touchpoints. And these are helpful to understand customers and maintain a good relationship with them. IKEA's value proposition is transparent and easily summarised. IKEA offers reasonably priced, cost-effective, modern, and long-lasting furniture (Mahira and Saputri, 2020). IKEA has gained customer loyalty by focusing on trying to reach and inspire its consumer segments in various locations. IKEA stores are situated all over the world, which has increased their international visibility.

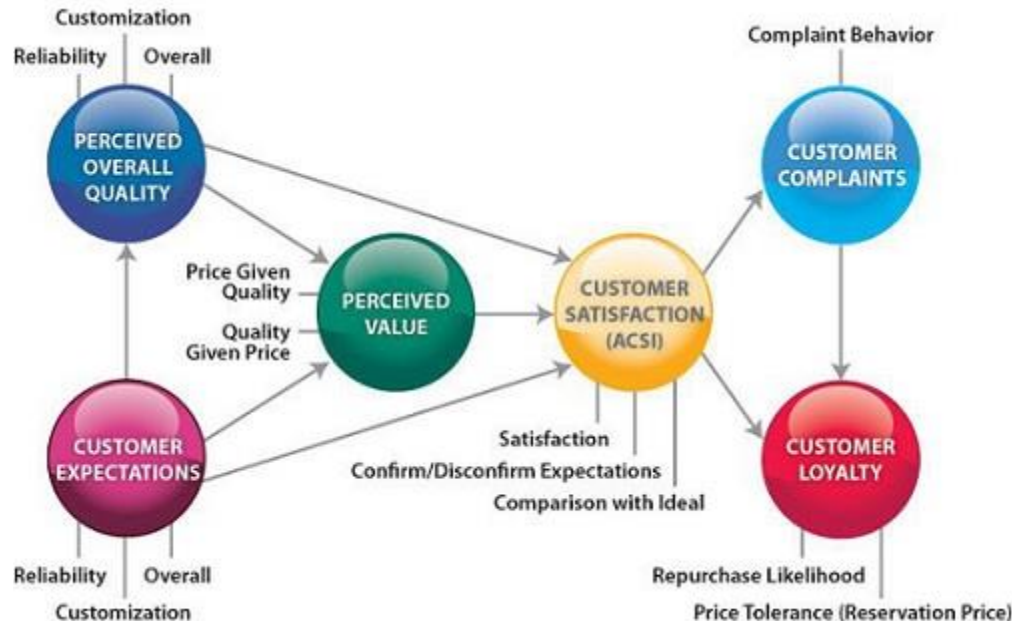


Figure 6: Consumer Behaviour and Perception.

(Source: Tutorials Point, 2022)

IKEA invites customers to provide feedback on its products, suggestions, and suggestions, and clients can directly communicate with IKEA. As shown in figure 3, they can understand the expectation of customers. As per the expectation they want the offers customized products, which increases the satisfaction of the customers, and after repetition of this process, customers become loyal. This overall process helps IKEA to become a well-known global brand.

Managing Supply Chain Operations and Relationships with Supplier

According to Garcia (2021), Suppliers are critical to the company because people assist in keeping the current recession going. The advantage of maintaining consistent supplier and client connections is a continuous supply of products and services, as well as a timely and accurate response to queries.



Figure 7: Supplier Relationships Management

(Source: AIMS UK, 2022)

As visible in the above picture 4, Supplier Relationships Management (SRM), is an ongoing process. Which consider many phases like costing, benchmarking, process reengineering,

customer value research, flow charting, and most important statistical analysis for future analysis and better performance with good relationship practices. Same with IKEA chooses a supplier who has a good track record with other customers.

Customer's Journey Map by IKEA

For tracking customer IKEA follow some steps like Creating awareness, deliberation, increasing purchase, retaining previous customers, and getting new at last doing advocate for them as shown in figure 8.

Awareness

IKEA improve the shopping experience and lives of its customers. It offers a complete user experience by having a food stand inside the shopping plaza, which is frequented by both children and adults (Tronvoll et al. 2019). The shops are strategically situated all over the world to improve accessibility and reach consumers.

Consideration

According to Vangeel (2022), IKEA furniture is designed to be built, and consumers spend time implementing the product and trying to gain a feeling of achievement for building the product, regardless of how little effort was required.

Purchase

A purchase is the third stage of the customer journey. According to Chen(2022), IKEA has indeed been successful in increasing customer purchases by providing virtual service to customers both online and in-store.

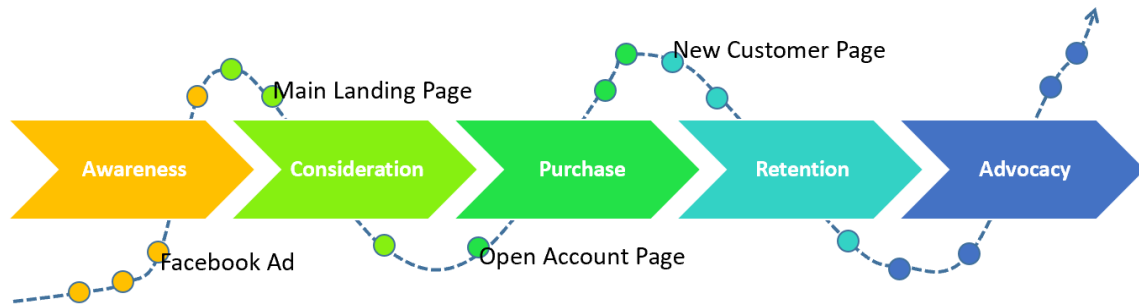


Figure 8: Customer Journey Map

(Source: Net Mind, 2020)

Retention

IKEA doesn't really believe in conventional customer service, but rather in creating a one-of-a-kind experience for customers that they will remember long after purchasing. IKEA is indeed encouraging the post-sales service that consumers require after purchasing a product and while arranging or installing it (Hallberg and Rundqvist, 2022). IKEA's experience with its customers increases and retains customers, builds brand loyalty, fosters a positive perception of the company, and, especially over the past but not least, gives the company a competitive advantage over competitors.

Advocacy

IKEA's customer support team's primary goal is to deliver an outstanding experience for customers. Clients are also commended for timely payments. According to Mishra et al. (2019), in order to keep and attract new customers, IKEA has been effective in revamping the user experience and providing distinctive and overall improved customer service.

Discussion of Customer Touchpoints

Pre-Purchase

According to Rudkowski et al. (2020), Many touch points have an impact on the customer journey at all stages. Pre-purchase touchpoints include social media, online advertising, online marketing content, corporate events, conversations with company representatives, and more. According to

IKEA's Annual Financial Report 2022, the company is doing exceptionally well. For the fiscal year 2020-21, their net income has been 710 million euros. Even after efforts to boost its online presence.

Purchase

As per the research of Jaakkola and Terho (2021), The website, customer support team, and physical stores are among the most critical customer multitouch gestures in terms of purchase. This response is critical during the Purchase phase because the buying is directly related to these factors. According to Statista's 2022 report, the IKEA size of the market was only 12.32 million euros in 2018, but it's steadily increasing and is expected to be about 18 million by 2025, as shown in the following figure number 9 which attracts new customers with a reliable impression of the company.

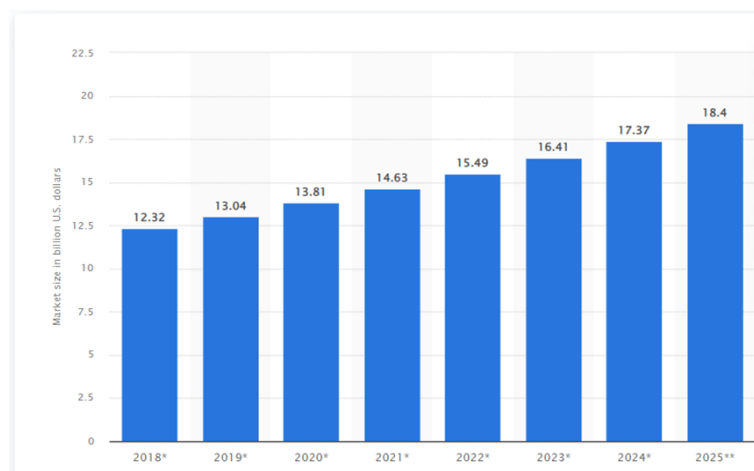


Figure 9: Global Market size of the IKEA

(Source: Statista, 2022)

Post Purchase

Email, innovative loyalty programs, customer feedback, and other post-purchase touchpoints are examples of post-purchase activity adopted by IKEA. Besides these IKEA not only focuses on customers even their environmental sustainability actions, CSR activities are noteworthy (Chylinski and Heller, 2022). IKEA's fundamental value system entails that IKEA thinks in

individuals and the asset of association, which helps to foster strong bonds among employees and donates to the business's development.

Discussion of what touchpoints are affected and what touchpoints are not affected with reason

IKEA also has some loopholes which arise as a touchpoint that are not affecting customers (Gasparin et al. 2022). After COVID-19 The number of first-time buyers in the housing market has decreased significantly. IKEA is unable to reach the local market and at the local level, more competitors are entering the low-cost household and furniture markets. IKEA's company believes in discovering more efficient ways to complete tasks. This has resulted in a distinct culture that motivates staff to take on challenges and allows people to improve the lives of so many. It will sense of accountability in the employees, allowing them to excel as a team and launch the going-to-lead supplier as their own. This practice will help the organization grow slowly but steadily.

Strengths and weaknesses of the IKEA

Strength of the IKEA

IKEA distinguishes itself from competitors by having a global presence and a large product catalogue. IKEA generates a global image and guarantees the same quality everywhere, attracting customers. The core concept of IKEA's corporate is to offer an extensive variability of very well, functional goods at reasonable amounts. To maintain sustainability, IKEA uses nearly 75% recycled items in its production process (Kulcsar, 2020). IKEA's view is to regular performance relationships with its vendors and customers while also achieving economies of scale as the company grows.

Weaknesses of the IKEA

Besides having that much strength, there are also some weaknesses of IKEA are as, Significant disparity in consumer perception of relative cost value, especially in low-income countries where such a large proportion of customers are middle-income. In 2022, the business is impacted by

rising demand for inexpensive and environmentally friendly products as well as an economic slowdown (Han, 2023). They also have some theft from homegrown brands or local competitors.

Total Engagement Model and its application to the IKEA

This model relies on establishing a product brand through the combined experience of four different elements. They are a unique selling point, organizational culture, brand image, and customer experience as well as sustainability and social accountability. All of these conversations contribute to the creation of a strong brand image for the product or company where the customer is involved throughout the process (Jessen et al. 2020). IKEA's newly launched product Sofa Cum Bed creates a value proposition and provides high-quality products while maintaining the famous image of home furniture and decor within the UK. It exemplifies IKEA's integrity, consistency, and creativity, which has preserved the brand's pride, strength, and forwardness.



Figure 10: Total Engagement Model
(Source: Research Gate, 2020)

IKEA wants to maintain a healthy relationship with all of its stakeholders including customers, government, design & innovation of their products, technological advancement, engagement and training activity for employees, time-to-time analysis, and evaluation, managing organizational culture, and performance and satisfaction of employees and suppliers as well. IKEA communicates to its clients through its employees, is one of openness and caring. The publicity of diversity and inclusion and respect has aided in the development of positive core values, allowing customers to

have a positive experience when buying products from IKEA (Mogili and Natarajan, 2021). IKEA promotes its brand through both traditional and modern means, including personal selling, social media especially on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, influencers & sponsorship, digital marketing, and television, Print Media as well. This helps to connect potential and existing customers with IKEA and create additional value for its newly launched product Sofa Cum Bed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be concluded that IKEA has an excellent market image with innovative products, satisfactory services to customers, efficient channel of inventory and operations management, sustainability, and accountability for society, and the most attractive one is to provide advanced items at affordable prices. IKEA plays an important role in achieving an organization's management strategies.

IKEA has successfully implemented Keller's brand image model for efficient business operations, enabling the firm to keep low production costs, good quality, and attractiveness. The main key to accomplishing customer loyalty and preference is the ease of access, reliability, and effective product quality, and the company's ability to comprehend and influence corporate culture, which has contributed to the company's increased profitability. This study also included all of IKEA's critical operational functions, such as capacity planning, continuous improvement, and operations management.

Still, there is a huge scope for IKEA in the upcoming future. On the basis of the above discussion, it can be suggested to the company that they can expand their business in developing countries in Asia and the African continent. IKEA should also try to reach the local market and expand its market size (Yang and Shao, 2019). Additionally, IKEA can expand its online business not only with the help of an E-commerce site but even with its own websites too because IKEA has lot many competitive advantages so that they can beat its competitors easily and reach the vertex of the furniture market not only in the UK even in the worldwide market.

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