



Personal profile IKEA of Sweden

“It’s the people and the products, in combination together. You can’t have one without the other.”

James Futcher, Creative Leader at IKEA of Sweden

MY BACKGROUND

I was born in the UK in 1973 and have a Masters in Furniture and Product Design. But I consider myself to be raised in the IKEA store. I started working in 1998 in the store in the Communication and Interior Design department, and with setting up new stores in the UK and USA. But I moved to Sweden to work with product development, which is where I am now.

WHAT I DO AT IKEA

I lead the development of products from start to finish, from creating the brief to developing the products with the designers and development teams – the whole journey to the final product in the stores.

WHAT INSPIRES ME

I’m curious about creating new things in combination with the IKEA vision of creating a better everyday life for the many people. It’s about great design being affordable and reachable for everyone. I get inspiration by working with people from all over the world and by exploring new opportunities and using different materials.

MY THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRATIC DESIGN

When I worked for the Bathrooms business area, we had a project called LEJON where I really learned a lot about the IKEA way of working with Democratic Design*. It was a BTI project (Breath-Taking Item, our lowest price products). It was a great challenge to reach all five dimensions of Democratic Design. But the team and everyone in the entire value chain worked together and did it. That’s IKEA at it’s best! Another memorable Democratic Design project is the IKEA PS 2017 collection. We challenged ourselves to create new products for Millennials – great design, modular, flexible, lightweight and easy to carry, at a low price. We did it by taking the designers to the factory floor and starting there.

WHY I LOVE WORKING AT IKEA

It’s the people and the products, in combination together. You can’t have one without the other.

A FAVOURITE IKEA PROJECT

The IKEA PS 2017 armchair. We used a new technique for IKEA – 3D knitting, like you see on trainers. We made an armchair that doesn’t need sewing or even traditional upholstery. The seating area is knitted and slides onto the frame. It means we can make seating solutions with less foam or none at all. And this armchair is knock down, so it’s easier to transport.

HOW IKEA CAN STAY INNOVATIVE

By working as a team with suppliers, and working with existing techniques and materials as well as coming up with new solutions to solve people’s needs at home.

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

TUVE, a series of traditional style lamps. We worked really hard on them but they didn’t sell. We had tried a modern approach, selling them in flat-packs, with a traditional style and customers just weren’t ready for it.

** The IKEA approach of always considering form, function, quality, sustainability and low price in order to make better everyday products for more people.*