



## Personal profile IKEA of Sweden

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**Jutta Viheriä, Communication Manager for Range and Design at IKEA of Sweden**

### MY BACKGROUND

I was born in Turku, Finland, in 1957 and joined IKEA in 1983. I'm passionate about aesthetics and home furnishings. I'm an organiser – a “structure police”! My background is in retail, mainly in interior design, visual merchandising and communications in stores. Recently, I've focused on strategic product and range development at IKEA of Sweden.

### WHAT I DO AT IKEA

I'm Project Manager for IKEA Knowledge Books where I sponsor and initiate book projects connected to IKEA priorities. I'm also a Creative Leader and Project Manager for IKEA Collections. I'm responsible for the development of collections from the first idea to the final product.

### WHAT INSPIRES ME

IKEA is a place of constant change, which gives me a lot of energy and keeps me inspired. Sometimes it's scary, and sometimes it just gives me energy to try out new things. I have to get everything in order and structured before I can see new opportunities and let inspiration flow in. I'm curious about people who are visionary, dedicated and extremely professional in their specific areas – from creatives to engineers and administrators.

### MY THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRATIC DESIGN

Working with the Swedish designer Ingegerd Råman is the highlight of my working experience and especially in implementing the Democratic Design\* principles. Ingegerd is a mentor and great source of inspiration. She's got the five dimensions of Democratic Design in her backbone! And for her it's always obvious how to implement them

### A FAVOURITE IKEA PROJECT

The NIPPRIG collection. It all started with immense frustration and unanswered needs from the IKEA Nature Fibre category (sales going down and suppliers suffering). We tried to improve things with training, supplier visits and meetings – but nothing worked. I started a project with natural fibres and suppliers in Vietnam. With two great colleagues – designer Nike Karlsson and range strategist Mats Nilsson – I travelled to the suppliers to check out their capabilities. We worked together for two weeks in extreme heat, and thanks to our suppliers, inspiration just kept coming. Back at IKEA, no one seemed to really believe in it, but it became a big success with our customers and our suppliers. A great project and a tremendous learning experience.

### WHY I LOVE WORKING AT IKEA

All the people! My friends and colleagues, and that special IKEA warmth and inclusiveness. Every day I meet new people and make new friends.

### HOW IKEA CAN STAY INNOVATIVE

Exploring, being open-minded and not being afraid of mistakes. Curiosity for new things, for new mind-sets and for new living conditions.

### MY BIGGEST MISTAKE

I was convinced that developing a foldable metal shelf for our GORM wooden shelving would make a big difference. It would have cost more than an entire section of GORM, and it was very ugly. I drove that project without listening to anyone, until my dear colleagues told me that I was driving the technical and commercial teams crazy.

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