



Ingvar Kamprad and IKEA through the years

The story of Ingvar Kamprad is closely linked to the story of IKEA, the trading firm he founded at the age of 17. Ingvar Kamprad was driven by a strong entrepreneurship, but also by a passion for design and a strong human interest.

Ingvar's approach to life and to business was influenced by the development of the 20th century Sweden and Småland, its social development and its scarce resources.

1926 Ingvar is born in Älmhult, Sweden. At the age of five Ingvar Kamprad starts selling matches to his nearby neighbours. He expands to flower seeds, greeting cards, Christmas tree decorations, and later pencils and pens.

1943 Ingvar graduates from junior secondary school and he uses the money his father gives him as reward for Ingvar to establish his own business. The name IKEA is formed from his initials and the first letters of Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd – the farm and the parish where Ingvar grew up and that was the home for the business for the first 10 years. IKEA originally sells pens, wallets, picture frames, table runners, watches, jewellery and nylon stockings.

1945 Ingvar's business outgrows his ability to make individual sales calls, so he begins advertising in local newspapers and operating a makeshift mail-order service. The local milk van delivers the products to the nearby train station.

1948 Furniture, produced by local manufacturers is introduced into the IKEA range. Customer response is positive and the line expands.

1951 The first IKEA catalogue is issued. This creates an opportunity for Ingvar to sell furniture on a larger scale.

1958 Ingvar opens the first IKEA store in Älmhult, Sweden. It is the largest furniture display in Scandinavia at the time.

1959 The 100th co-worker joins IKEA.

1960 The first IKEA restaurant opens in the IKEA store in Älmhult, Sweden. "Empty stomachs make no sofa sales", Ingvar says.

1961 Ingvar starts purchasing from Poland with an order for 69 000 wooden chairs.

1963 Ingvar marries Margaretha Stennert. Together they will have three sons, Peter, Jonas and Mathias. 10 years later the family emigrate from Sweden to Denmark.

1976 Ingvar writes "The Testament of a Furniture Dealer", describing the IKEA vision and business idea. The document has a strong influence on the development and vitality of the IKEA Concept, the IKEA culture and its values.

1978 The Kamprad family settles down in Switzerland.

1982 Ingvar Kamprad decides to donate the IKEA furniture operations, the IKEA Group, to a Dutch charitable foundation as part of creating an ownership structure that secures independence and long-term thinking. And as IKEA expands into new markets, Ingvar



concludes that a franchise system would offer the best growth strategy. It would keep a grip on the IKEA concept and at the same time encourage a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Inter IKEA Systems Holding B.V., ultimately owned by a foundation in Lichtenstein, was established in the 80s established as the franchisor to safeguard and develop the IKEA Concept.

1986 Ingvar retires from Group Management to become chairman of the parent company INGKA Holding B.V.

1986 Ingvar creates the foundation Fru Berta Kamprad in loving memory of his mother. He thereby formalizes the fundraising for cancer research that he started already in the 60s. The foundation provides funds for cancer research at Lund University Hospital in Lund, Sweden.

1988 Ikano became an independent group of companies. Ikano develops, owns and manages companies in the areas of finance, insurance, real estate and retail.

1998 Ingvar retires from the post as chairman of the board of INGKA Holding B.V. 72 years is the maximum age, according to Dutch legislation for board of directors' assignment. Ingvar becomes an active Senior Advisor to the board.

2002 The Ingvar Kamprad design centrum in Lund, Sweden is inaugurated by the Faculty of Engineering LTH. It is built with funds donated by Stichting IKEA Foundation and becomes a first joint home to the Institution of Design and the School of Industrial Design.

2003 The Kamprad House for cancer research, with new technology for oncology, is inaugurated at the University Hospital in Lund, Sweden. The house is sponsored by the Berta Kamprad foundation and the University of Lund.

2006 The IKEA store in Haparanda opens and becomes the most international IKEA store in the world, placed on the border of Sweden and Finland with a customer base also in Norway and parts of Russia. Ingvar very early saw the potential in the area and played as senior advisor an important part in the decision to build the store.

2006 Ingvar grants one million Swedish kronor a year for ten years for the development of the Barents region – the land along the coast of the Barents Sea. The funds enable young people to stay and develop in the area.

2009 The philanthropic work through IKEA Foundation was extended following extensive negotiation to change the statutes of the Ingka Holding Foundation to allow higher donations. The board decided on an annual donation of € 100 million.

2011 Kamprad Family Foundation is established. Its purpose is to support, stimulate and reward education and scientific research to promote entrepreneurship, the environment, competence, health and social progress, in Sweden.

2011 Margaretha Kamprad passes away.

2012 A new IKEA store opens in Älmhult replacing the world's first IKEA store and Ingvar was there to welcome the first customers.

2014 Ingvar moves back home to Sweden after having lived abroad for almost 40 years.



2016 IKEA Museum opened in Älmhult in the very first IKEA store from 1958. IKEA Museum share the story of IKEA and Ingvar, the entrepreneur from Småland, with visitors from all over the world.

2017 SilviaBo (a home for people with dementia and their partners) is inaugurated, a project where Ingvar and different parts of IKEA have been deeply involved.