

Flatpack

What is the secret behind the appeal of the world's largest home-furnishing retailer? We head to the heart of Ikea in Sweden to find out. If one can trust statistics, Malaysians simply adore Ikea, the Swedish home-furnishing tycoon. In 2011, 5.7 million visitors thronged Ikea Malaysia in Mutiara Damansara, Selangor, making it the fourth most visited Ikea store in the world. Quite impressive, seeing as there are 337 Ikea stores in 40 countries (including 40 operated by external franchisees). What is it about this self-styled provider of "democratic design" - stylish furnishing at affordable prices? Founded in 1943, Ikea's motto is simple: "To create a better everyday life for the many people." The company offers a mind-boggling array of 9,500 products that have to meet the following criteria: they have to be attractive, functional, adhere to strict environmental and social criteria, fit into flat packages, and be simple to assemble. And Ikea is repeatedly listed in Forbes magazine's "Top 100 Companies To Work For."

How does Ikea nail it?

The heart of Ikea is in the small, lovely town of Älmhult in Småland province, a three-hour train ride from Stockholm. Dotted with lush forests, tranquil lakes and bucolic farms, the town of 18,500 inhabitants is famous for being the birthplace of two world-famous men: Ingvar Kamprad, founder of Ikea, and botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the "father of taxonomy" whose system of classifying organisms is still used by scientists today. Älmhult is where you can see the modus operandi of Ikea. Here product ideas are conceived, material sourced, production volumes secured, and products manufactured, communicated and sold. And you can't be in Älmhult without checking into the Vårdshuset Ikea Hotel & Restaurant. Opened in 1964, the hotel has 151 rooms fully furnished with - what else! - Ikea furniture and lighting. Since it is a budget hotel, the rooms are basic but functional with the essentials like hot shower, television and a work desk. Our first stop was Ikea's corporate culture centre known as Ikea Tillsammans (tillsammans means "together" in Swedish), where Ikea employees from around the world arrive to be trained, for meetings, and to learn more about the Ikea culture and concept on location. At Ikea Tillsammans only guests like journalists and Ikea employees are allowed to explore the interactive exhibition. But the Ikea museum, which hosts Through The Ages exhibition space, within the same building, is open to public and a good starting point to learn about the company's history.

Adapted from www.thestar.com

Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

- 1) the attractiveness of sth: _____
- 2) to establish sth: _____
- 3) to put sth together: _____
- 4) to put sth into a category: _____
- 5) to create sth: _____
- 6) to get to a place: _____
- 7) to look around closely: _____
- 8) as part of: _____
- 9) well known all over the world: _____
- 10) many times: _____
- 11) high requirements: _____
- 12) a person who lives somewhere: _____

Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:

1.	home	criteria
2.	an external	production volumes
3.	affordable	hotel
4.	to meet	furnishing
5.	to source	into a hotel
6.	to secure	culture
7.	to check	prices
8.	a budget	materials
9.	corporate	space
10.	exhibition	franchisee

Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:

1) uwielbiać coś	7) przedmioty pierwszej potrzeby
2) samozwańczy	by
3) oszałamiający	8) na miejscu
4) być zgodnym z ...	9) punkt wyjścia
5) upstrzony	10)mieścić się gdzieś
6) sposób funkcjonowania	11)społeczny
	12)wybór / asortyment

Grammar corner...

In the text you've seen multi-word phrases like: mind-boggling, world-famous, three-hour ride. They're meant to help you avoid longer phrases like: that boggles the mind, that is famous all over the world, a ride that lasts three hours. They're called compound adjectives (because they're made of several words). Usually we use hyphens (-) to spell them, especially when they're made of words that normally are different parts of speech (e.g. nouns and verbs).

Ex. 4 Say it in a shorter way.

1. an office that is furnished well =>
2. a place that is well known =>
3. a country that has a dense population =>
4. a working day that lasts eight hours =>
5. a report that is 300 pages long =>
6. a building that is powered by solar energy =>
7. an area that is free from smoke =>
8. a change that has been made at the last minute =>
9. a perspective that is planned for a long term =>
10. an economy that is based on services =>

GLOSSARY	
an appeal of sth	atrakcyjność czegoś
an external franchisee	zewnętrzny franczyzobiorca
affordable prices	przystępne ceny
to meet criteria	spełniać kryteria
to source materials	poszukiwać dostawców materiałów
to secure promotion volumes	zapewnić wolumen produkcji
to check into a hotel	wmeldować się do hotelu
a budget hotel	tani hotel
corporate culture	kultura korporacyjna
exhibition space	przestrzeń wystawowa
to adore sth	uwielbiać coś
self-styled	samozwańczy
mind-boggling	oszałamiający
to adhere to sth	być zgodnym z czymś
dotted with	upstrzony
modus operandi	sposób funkcjonowania
essentials	przedmioty pierwszej potrzeby
on location	na miejscu
a starting point	punkt wyjścia
to fit into sth	mieścić się w czymś
social	społeczny
an array	wybór / asortyment
lush	bujny
tranquil	spokojny
bucolic	sielankowy
densely-populated	gęsto zaludniony
to found sth	założyć coś

to assemble sth	składać coś
to classify sth	sklasyfikować coś
to conceive sth	stworzyć coś
to arrive	przybyć
to explore sth	zwiedzać coś
within	w obrębie
world-famous	słynny na całym świecie
repeatedly	wiele razy
strict criteria	wyśrubowane kryteria
an inhabitant	mieszkaniec
home furnishing	urządzenie domu

ANSWER KEY:

Ex. 1

- 1) the appeal of sth
- 2) to found sth
- 3) to assemble sth
- 4) to classify sth
- 5) to conceive sth
- 6) to arrive
- 7) to explore sth
- 8) within
- 9) world-famous
- 10)repeatedly
- 11)strict criteria
- 12)an inhabitant

Ex. 2

- 1) home furnishing
- 2) an external franchisee
- 3) affordable prices
- 4) to meet criteria
- 5) to source materials
- 6) to secure production volumes
- 7) to check into a hotel
- 8) a budget hotel
- 9) corporate culture
- 10)exhibition space

Ex. 3

- 1) to adore sth
- 2) self-styled
- 3) mind-boggling
- 4) to adhere to sth
- 5) dotted with
- 6) modus operandi
- 7) essentials
- 8) on location
- 9) a starting point
- 10) to fit into sth
- 11) social
- 12) an array

Ex. 4

- 1) a well-furnished office
- 2) a well-known place
- 3) a densely-populated country
- 4) an eight-hour working day
- 5) a 300-page report
- 6) a solar-powered building
- 7) a smoke-free area
- 8) last-minute changes
- 9) a long-term perspective
- 10) a service-based economy