

# IKEA® tone of voice

LONG VERSION

“Our values and personality bring an emotional richness to the IKEA Brand and are reflected in our tone of voice.”

**THE IKEA BRAND DIRECTION**



# What is tone of voice?

Tone of voice is how we communicate, and part of our personality.

Our tone of voice is manifested in every contact and situation with people inside and outside IKEA. In advertising, public relations, corporate communication, exhibitions, product range, learning material, yes even in a simple email or a greeting in a store.

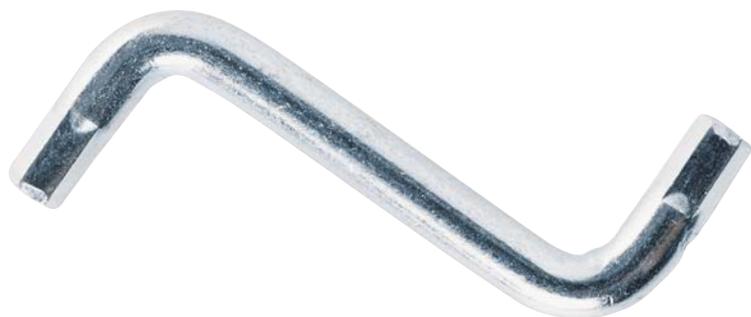
You could also say that it's how we come across. Verbally, visually, in writing and maybe even body language. Are we inspiring? Clear? Truthful? Open? Proud? It's all the little nuances in a day that add up to how we and our customers feel about the IKEA Brand.

Everything we do communicates. Even the things we don't say or do, and that's why this appendix to the Brand Direction is so important.

Today, we're almost 200,000 co-workers who speak 35 languages and work together with thousands of suppliers to serve 17 million customers every week. But no matter how much we grow, we don't want our voice to get lost in translation or become corporate or bureaucratic. We want the IKEA Brand to be a strong, optimistic and trusted voice in the world.

The purpose of this document is for all of us to have a few guiding principles in how to achieve that. Specifically, there are nine (9) IKEA personality characteristics which are the foundation for this document.

All nine of them have a clear connection to our values and our identity, but their most important role is to show the way how we express ourselves and connect us all to an IKEA tone of voice that is uniquely ours!



The iconic IKEA allen key. A simple tool to assemble IKEA furniture now found in millions of homes around the world.

## IKEA® is a different brand

We like to do things differently at IKEA. It's in our DNA and part of our creativity. The world around us has even come to expect us to have a different take on things. We love that, but we do it for a reason.

First, it helps us to come up with better ideas. By challenging issues from surprising angles we see things in new ways.

Second, we do things differently because we want to. We have always been free thinkers, happy rebels, always challenging the status quo.

Our history is full of glorious moments and our future will be even brighter if we keep on doing things differently.



Advertising campaign for IKEA Saudi Arabia illustrating the affordability of IKEA products.

**LACK**

TV bench,  
black

**SR 59**

It's that affordable.



## IKEA® is a playful brand

When we're at our best, the IKEA Brand is joyful and straightforward. And our communication is friendly and witty.

These have been important parts of building our brand, especially when it's spiced up with a good sense of humour and we're not taking ourselves too seriously. On the inside, we're happy and playful and we like to leave people with a smile.



Thinking outside the box allowed IKEA designers to put products inside a box for easy transportation.

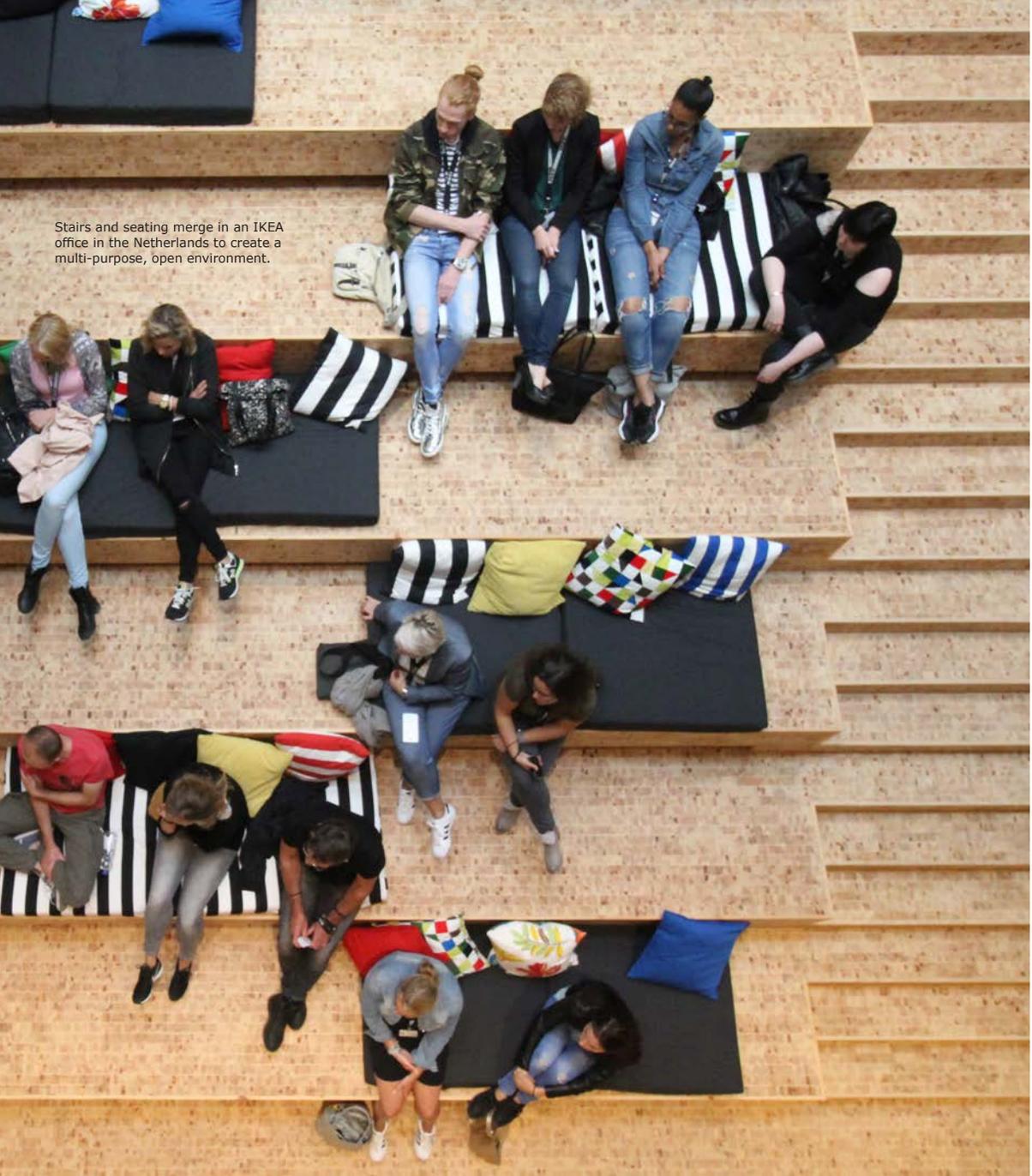
## IKEA® is a common-sense brand

Common sense is about being simple and clear. But it's also about being down-to-earth and not complicating things. Yes, it's that simple.

Common sense is a wonderful thing to add in our everyday life when we communicate. People love common sense. Especially when things are complex or unclear.

This doesn't mean it's less smart or fun. Quite the opposite. A simple and clear message beats an unclear and complicated one every day of the week!

Are we clear?



Stairs and seating merge in an IKEA office in the Netherlands to create a multi-purpose, open environment.

## IKEA® is a visual brand

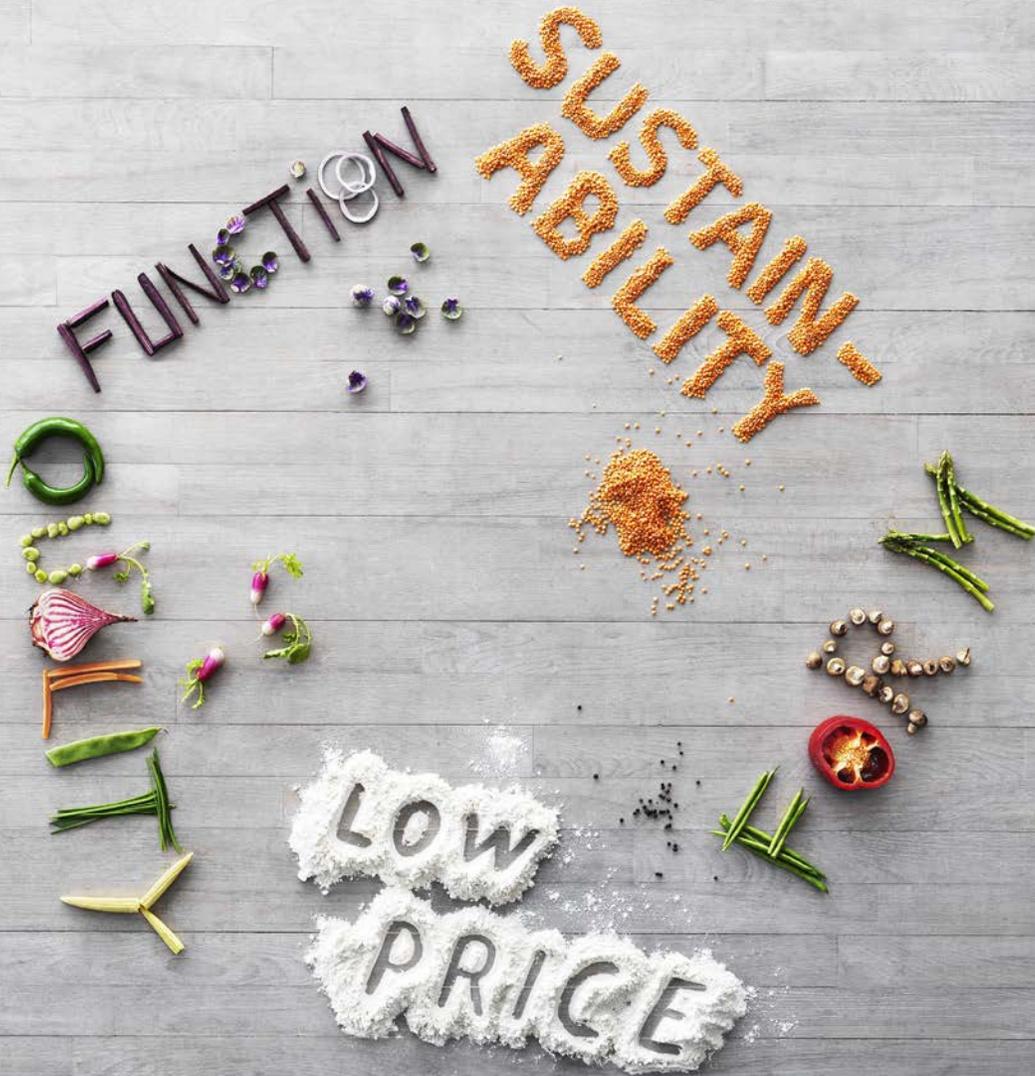
Being visual is not only about pictures, shapes or images. It's about meaningful and smart solutions done in the simplest way possible.

Great ideas are simple, and simple ideas are visual.

However, it takes courage to be visual. Why? Because you have to be single-minded and focused to create the things that stand out.

In a cluttered world, IKEA likes to stand out. This goes for everything we do. From how we design our products to how we speak and write.

Yes, words are visual too.



The five dimensions of Democratic Design that guide the creation of every IKEA product.

## IKEA® is a truthful brand

The best way to earn trust is to be truthful.

It's not always easy, but why should it? Sometimes this means standing up for something, even if it seems unpopular. Or keeping ourselves from exaggerating or sugar-coating reality. Other times it may mean that we have to talk about mistakes that we've made. That's OK too.

We're not afraid of failure or having to admit that everything didn't go according to plan. It's part of being a doer and taking risks.

The important thing is what we learn from it to make things better.



Creating the SVÄRTAN collection together with Indian art students and craftsmen on the factory floor.

## IKEA® is a curious brand

We are curious about people and their lives. We want to know everything.

The good stuff, the frustrating stuff, the weird stuff.

By listening closely to people, we not only fuel our own inspiration. We also force ourselves to go further and find answers beyond statistics and facts. Why is it like this? Is there a better way? What can we improve?

Ultimately, it's about being genuinely curious about what is going on in people's lives and how we with IKEA creativity solve everyday problems. From factory floor co-operation with our suppliers to the way we co-create with our customers. Curiosity is the simplest, and sometimes the most accurate form of research.



A SUNNERSTA mini-kitchen offers all the function of a full-sized kitchen at an affordable price.

## IKEA® is a humble brand

IKEA wasn't built for the rich.

We've always sided with the many people, to create a better everyday life.

We know that this is an ambitious commitment, especially since most people have limited financial resources. But we love a challenge. It requires us to be better listeners, better collaborators and always be prepared to change. All in order to come up with useful, affordable and beautiful solutions, built for all kinds of different living.

What can be more humbling than that?



## IKEA® is a proud brand

Yes, we're proud. But it's an un-selfish and friendly kind of pride. The kind that is better expressed in actions than in words.

We know that we have resources and scale to do good things, and doing our part in the world is important at IKEA. It can be the smallest everyday thing or an initiative with global impact. Both matter, it's a mindset of trying to use our influence for good.

We're proud to be open and sharing, allowing knowledge, inspiration and ideas to travel freely. Not only between our co-workers but also between us and our customers, partners and suppliers.

We're not always right, but we're always trying to do the right thing. That is something to be truly proud about.

A "can-do" attitude is the hallmark of every co-worker.



## IKEA® is an optimistic brand

Most things in life are not yet done. This spirit lives in everything we do and is infectious.

Our mind is always optimistic. Every day is a new day to do something great. This positive mindset is important at IKEA because problems are only problems because no one can see a solution, and IKEA is about solutions.

Yay, it's Monday!

# IKEA® tone of voice

SHORT VERSION

“Our values and personality bring an emotional richness to the IKEA Brand and are reflected in our tone of voice.”

**THE IKEA BRAND DIRECTION**





An innovative wedge dowel design does away with the need for screws, brackets and tools.

# Be different

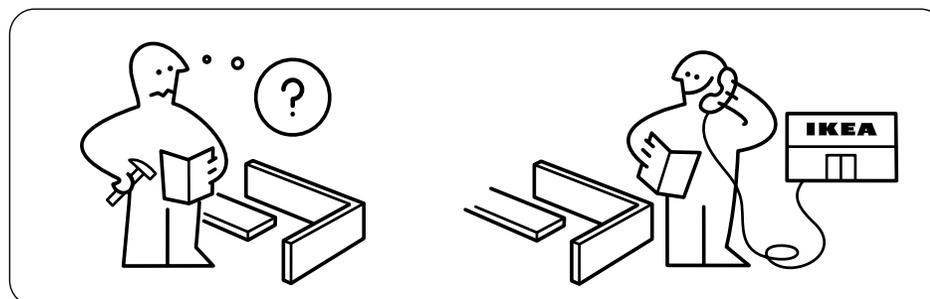
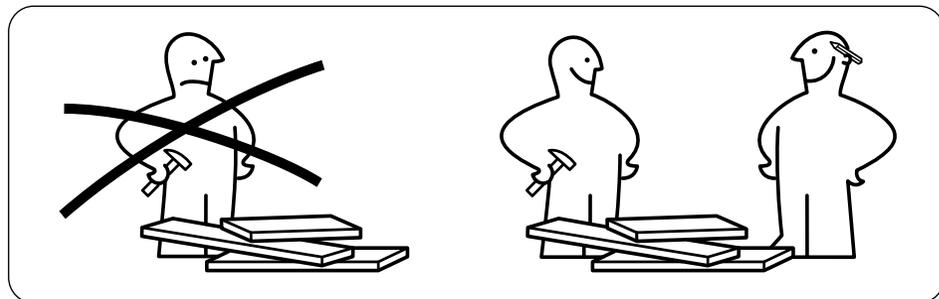
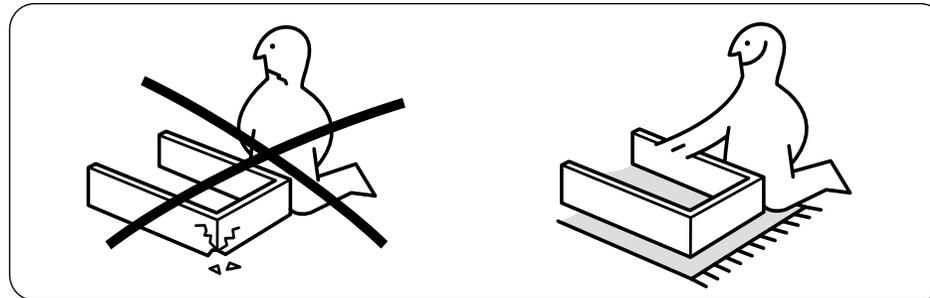
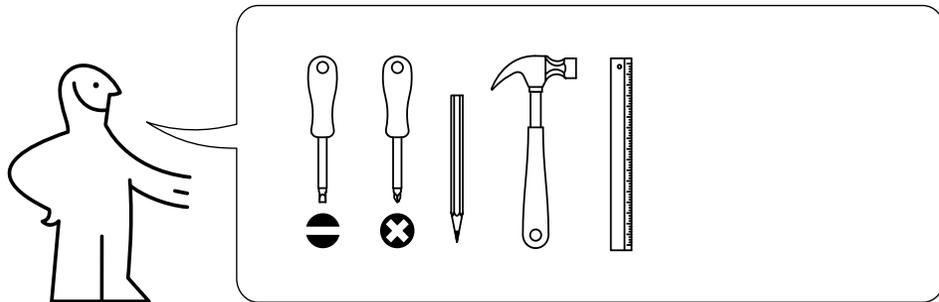
We try to do things differently because it helps us create new ideas. It makes us who we are. We respect the risks but never fear them.

A man in a black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans is lying on his back on a large, fluffy white rug. The rug is shaped like a long, curved cushion. To the left of the rug is a yellow plastic chair with a wooden seat. In the background, there is a wall with white tiles and a stainless steel sink. To the right, there are several potted plants and a blue folding chair.

The best ideas come when you're not afraid to try and fall flat on your face. And then smile about it.

# Be playful

We have a warm and friendly sense of humour spiced up with a healthy self-distance. We're happy, playful and try to leave people with a smile.



The same IKEA assembly instructions are used in almost 50 countries.

# Be clear

We want everything we say or do to be clear for everyone. Let's make common sense our common language.

Every IKEA image tells a story about the product and the people who use it in their daily lives.



# Be visual

A simple visual expression is a shortcut to people's emotions. It makes us stand out from the crowd and shows what IKEA is all about.



In 2013, tiny traces of horsemeat were discovered in IKEA meatballs. Millions of them were immediately withdrawn from European stores and extra precautionary measures taken to prevent a repetition.

# Be truthful

The best way to earn trust is to be truthful. To stand up for what we believe in and be open about mistakes so we can learn and improve.

This IKEA kitchen solution was designed together with children after listening to what they wanted.



# Be curious

We search for the insights that are hidden beyond statistics and facts. That's the best way to find creative solutions to everyday problems.

Moving into a first home is a time for celebration. IKEA can help to furnish it in any style and on any budget.



# Be humble

Most people have limited financial resources. Let's meet them with humbleness and surprise them with big ideas designed for small budgets.



Empowering people costs little  
but can generate a better life  
for individuals and families  
through many generations.

# Be proud

We try to make a difference in the world  
and take the responsibility that comes  
with it. Show people that we are proud  
of our vision and our products.



A great place to work is the start for incredible things to happen.

# Be optimistic

Our mind is always optimistic. Every day is a new day to do something great. Yay, it's Monday!