



Sustainability on a silver platter

Lack, Billy, Köttbullar, the pencils, those handy blue bags... Ikea, indeed! But also sustainability, beautiful, inspiring initiatives and goals. Weren't they the ones who helped us get LED bulbs on a massive scale? Who made us stop and think that the vegetable version of the balls is not only just as tasty, but also has a 4% ecological footprint compared to the traditional ball?

Ikea breathes sustainability. And I had the privilege of being immersed in this by Alberic Pater, Business Development Manager Ikea Netherlands.

The dent in the packet of butter

You don't have to be a handyman to put together that Billy bookcase. You don't have to be a green rascal to be sustainable either. Ikea offers sustainability on a silver platter: bite-sized, accessible and affordable.

"Solar panels on all branches, vegetable balls: all very nice. But that doesn't really make the impact that Ikea wants to make. We will only make a dent in the world if we are circular. If not, we'll just keep messing around in the margins", says Alberic enthusiastically. The tone is set. Sustainability is clearly not a buzzword for Ikea.

Worldwide, Ikea wants to be fully circular by 2030. This means that all products must be designed from the outset so that they can be reused, repaired, resold and recycled with as little waste as possible. Ikea products as raw materials for the future. A very ambitious goal. **"Becoming circular means going much further than our own activities within Ikea and our supply chain. We work together with suppliers, governments, customers to achieve this. I am optimistic about the future. We know that through collaborations, curiosity and entrepreneurship, we can achieve wonderful things. Just think of the cooperation we entered into with you, Renewi."**

True. RetourMatras is a big step forward in the circular economy. If you consider that in the Netherlands alone, 1.5 million mattresses end up in landfill every year and were burnt until recently, it is immediately clear that an impact is being made here.

"As the largest seller of mattresses in the Netherlands, we could no longer bear to watch this happen, and together with our partners Renewi and Retourmatras, we took responsibility. Ingka Investments, Ikea's investment arm, made it possible for Retourmatras to be scaled up considerably.

A third factory was recently opened, with a fourth soon to follow, bringing the total recycling capacity of discarded mattresses in the Netherlands to the magical '1 million' mark. As a shareholder, we also want to support growth in other countries and scale up Retourmatras' capacity. So copy and paste this inspiring sustainability story!" Laughs Alberic.

The easiest and most natural choice

Ikea is more aware than anyone else of the role it can play in promoting circular and sustainable consumption. Through its size, scale, creativity, innovation and knowledge, it can help make a difference.

That proverbial dent in the butter is indeed being made by becoming 100 per cent circular. Return mattresses are a textbook example of recycling. But Ikea also undertakes other sustainable initiatives that fit into the circular picture. Reuse, for example. At the end of last year, they introduced a furniture exchange service where old Ikea furniture can be returned. Whoever hands it in receives a credit card, and the item is sold second-hand in the bargain corner. Reuse, in other words.

Repair too, I wonder aloud. "Still too little, in my opinion," says Alberic. "The cost of repair is often even more expensive than a new product. Moreover, it requires different skills from our employees. However, I can already proudly report that in 2022 we will start offering spare parts. Suppose a leg of your sofa breaks. Then you buy a new leg, and you can repair your sofa yourself. We also sell covers for some sofas. Tired of the colour of the sofa? A new cover will give your furniture a longer life!"

"Sustainable living should be the easiest and most natural choice. We want to make it easy for the customer to make the right sustainable choice. By making this choice as easy, accessible, attractive and cheap as possible. Ikea takes the masses by the hand, guides and inspires them to sustainability," concludes Alberic.

On a silver platter, in other words.



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- Alberic Pater, Ikea

