



IKEA: BAG THE PLASTIC BAG

Communicating Environmental Leadership

CLIENT: IKEA

CHALLENGE: Americans throw away approximately 100 billion disposable polyethylene plastic bags each year, and less than one percent are recycled. In the United States, IKEA and its customers use 70 million plastic shopping bags annually. Hung on a clothesline, this many bags could stretch from New York to Los Angeles – 5 times.

INSIGHT: Communicate the environmental commitment, vision and leadership of IKEA in the U.S. and globally by reducing plastic bag use by its U.S. customers at least 50%, from 70 million to 35 million plastic bags in the first year. Complement this drastic industry initiative with an aggressive environmental communications campaign while avoiding media accusations of 'green washing'.

BRAND EXPERIENCE: In March 2007, IKEA became the first major U.S. retailer to discontinue the distribution of free plastic bags at checkout in all its U.S. stores. Customers are now charged \$.05 per plastic bag with 100% of all proceeds donated to American Forests. To further encourage customers to "bag the plastic bags," IKEA slashed the price of its big blue reusable shopping bags from \$.99 to \$.59.

SUCCESS:

- Strategic media outreach efforts generated more than 281 million positive media impressions, including coverage in *Time*, three features in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN Headline News, Good Morning America, Associated Press, Fox News, *Washington Post*, *The Dallas Morning News*, The Tonight Show, Late Night with Conan O'Brien, key influential "green" blogs and more.
- Partnerships with environmental NGOs and KOLs validated the campaign and helped position IKEA as an environmental leader that instituted bold initiatives to change customer behavior
- Program efforts succeeded in changing IKEA customer behavior at checkout by decreasing disposable plastic bag use in U.S. IKEA stores by 92% in program year one
- Campaign raised more than \$300,000 from plastic bag sales for American Forests in year one
- Sales of reusable IKEA blue bags have been re-forecast for 2008 from 300,000 to 3.4 million
- Conditioning local markets and message-training sales managers achieved in-store goal of generating support for the "Bag the Plastic Bag" campaign



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