EAE

Love and Hate at IKEA

Activity One - Pre reading

Find opposites for all of the following words – you can use the dictionnary.

Love	
Downturn	
Reduce	
Brave	
Problem	
Goodwill	
Manageable	
To slow down	
Rich	
Sunshine	
Bottom	
Rise	
Good	

Even	
Up	
Rise	
Behind	
Fear	
Cheap	
Grow	
Private	
Sharp	
Open	
Bleak	

Activity Two – Reading Activity.

Paying attention to your intonation read the article. (Think about emphatic and constrastive stress particularly.)

IKEA fears impact of economic downturn

By James Hall, The Telegraph Group Limited, London 2008

IKEA is what UK marketing executives refer to as a Marmite brand: people either love it or hate it. The Swedish flat-pack furniture retailer thrills thousands of customers every week with its cheap, functional, design-led furniture and quirky advertising.

But it frustrates, too - tailbacks and tantrums are too often the order of the day at its 17 blue-and-yellow UK stores.

The man behind the chain, Anders Dahlvig is quick to agree that Britons have a mixed relationship with the brand.

"The love part is the range and the prices. The hate part sometimes is the congestion," says the president of IKEA Group.

Ah yes, the congestion. Any shopper who has braved Croydon or Brent Cross at the weekend will know what he is talking about. There is often gridlock in the car parks, with heaving crowds in the store. "It is predominantly a weekend problem. If you come five out of seven days it will be quiet," insists Dahlvig. However, given that 40 per cent of IKEA's sales are made at the weekend, it is still an issue that needs addressing.

Having too many customers is a problem many retailers would kill for. And traffic issues aside, IKEA has been riding high of late.

The privately-owned retailer had sales of 20 billion euros (Â£10 billion) from 231 stores in 24 countries last year. Around 522 million people worldwide shopped in an IKEA store in 2007 and 450 million visited the company's website. It also sold 2 billion meatballs and enough hot-dogs to feed the Russian army. Put in this context, a spot of localised congestion is probably manageable.

Dahlvig clearly found UK customers a challenge, although he is diplomatic in his analysis of our shopping manner. "The UK customer is a demanding customer. English people are very literate - they are very good at airing and explaining their problems," he says.
Although total sales at IKEA grew by 14 per cent last year, Dahlvig is well aware that the consumer environment and housing market are slowing sharply. In fact, for a retailer, he is surprisingly frank in his rather bleak prognosis.

A lot of do-it-yourself and furniture retailers argue - rather unconvincingly - that in times of a housing downturn people actually spend more on their homes. The argument is that the consumer's thought process is along the lines of "If I can't move house, then I'll spend more on my existing home." Nonsense, says Dahlvig. "Oh they spend less," he says. "The overall consumption is always down, especially when the housing market is down. So figures are down for us." Doesn't this worry him? After all, people sprucing up their new homes represent IKEA's bread and butter.

"It is not a concern, as that is the nature of business. You have good times and bad. After sunshine comes rain. We have to accommodate that," he says.

Like-for-like sales in the UK are currently "slightly down", while sales in the US are "about even" with last year.

He thinks it will be a while before the downturn ends. "It is difficult to predict but I am sure it will be one more year, maybe more. We haven't seen the bottom yet. The worry is that we will see unemployment rise, which we haven't yet," he says.

Activity Three – Comprehension questions.

1. Acording to the article what do people love about IKEA and what do people hate about IKEA ?

2. What does Dahlvig say about congestion ?

3. What percentage of sales is made at the weekend in IKEA UK ?

4. How many meatballs were sold in 2007 ?

5. How did the author emphasise how many hot dogs were sold ?

6. What does Dahlvig say about English customers ?

7. What does he say happens to sales when the housing market is down.

8. What does he predict about the economic downturn ?

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Activity Four – Don’t say what you mean – Talking in opposites game.

Ask eachother the following questions, you have to answer in opposites – say the opposite of the truth or the opposite of what you think or mean to say. Try to be emphatic about what you are saying by using adjectives and even being explicit !

- Do you like IKEA furniture ?
- Do you get on well with your boss.
- Do you like your English lessons ?
- Do you like your English teacher ?
- Do you enjoy eating meatballs ?
- Do you love your boyfriend/husband/wife/girlfriend ?
- Do you enjoy spending time with your in-laws ?
- Do you like working the late shift at work ?
- Do you enjoy sunbathing on the beach whilst being served cocktails and grapes by an attractive waitor/waitress wearing nothing but a skimpy bathing suit ?

Activity Five – Find the opposites to these words from the song then fill the gaps. .

Lonely
Anybody
Wrong

Lose
Start
Tired

I need
I worry

The Strokes - Between love & hate

…….. her as she …….. her eyes;
You don't make me sorry. Now I know
That you never …….. - Listen.

…….. about that high school dance
…….. about the finals
Yes I know
You're feeling lonely
Oh lonely, so lonely.

Never …….. anybody, I never needed anybody
I never needed anybody, I never needed nobody
Don't worry about it, honey
I never needed anybody
I never needed anybody, it won't change now.

Am I ……..?
Don't sing along with me.
I said I was fine,
It's just the second time
We lost the war

She'd be in the ……..
I would start the fire
…….. days are gone
But you know I can't give up - Give up.

P.S. if i may ask why
When will they get tired
We've …….. up
All night tryin' - Tryin'.

Never needed anybody, I never needed nobody
I never needed anybody, I never needed anybody
Don't worry about it, ……..
I never needed anybody
I never needed anybody, it won't change now.

Am I wrong?
Don't sing along with me.
I said I was fine.
The …….. time
We lost the war