

Pass It On®...

Putting Things Together in a Jumbled World.

Dyslexia makes alphabet soup of letters and numbers, mixing them up on the page and making the simplest reading tasks frustratingly difficult. Ingvar Kamprad developed a workaround that spawned the biggest retail furniture company in the world: IKEA.

Many who are aware that Ingvar Kamprad has dyslexia like to joke that he had a brilliant “idea” for a furniture company and misspelled it “ikea.” The delightful and humble Ingvar would be amused. After all, he accepted the condition as the impetus of his genius — and while the learning challenge wasn’t the reason for the company’s name, it left its mark on millions of bookshelves, sofas and cabinets the world over.

As a boy, Kamprad struggled in school but didn’t lack ambition. He started selling matches at age 5. He would ride his bicycle to nearby Stockholm, buy matches in bulk and peddle them to his neighbors. He expanded to selling fish, Christmas tree decorations, seeds, ballpoint pens and pencils.

At age 17, Kamprad started IKEA at his uncle Ernst’s kitchen table. It was 1943, Europe was at war and distributing goods was difficult. These years provided the basis of his philosophy on frugality and simplicity — form follows function in design, and necessity is the mother of invention.

IKEA embraced these philosophies as a way of doing business. Kamprad pioneered flat packaging to simplify storage and shipping. And his use of diagrams and using names rather than codes to identify pieces made assembly much easier. The system, born out of the complications dyslexia caused, delighted customers.

The cost of shipping was dramatically reduced with the innovative flat packaging design, a savings IKEA passed on to its customers. Smart design, smart packaging, clear instructions, affordability and a clean and functional aesthetic became the company’s hallmarks, leading it to become one of the world’s largest furniture retailers.

Meanwhile, the founder kept up his frugal ways, driving the same old Volvo for decades and

showing little interest in the trappings of wealth, despite revenues of nearly \$46 billion. He famously encouraged employees to make copies using both sides of the page, flew coach and purchased wrapping paper at post-Christmas sales. He also relentlessly pursued efficiency in all business operations, believing that customers deserved a good product at a good price and knowing how much hard work went into earning a living.

The war years made resources scarce and shipping large items difficult. Dyslexia made codes and instructions complicated and frustrating. The solution was to simplify design into more shippable packages and make instructions more dependent on diagrams that told stories. The result is products that can easily be sold around the world and in many languages — a way of thinking that economists have labeled “The IKEA Solution.”

No matter what our limitations may be, or where our circumstances place us, there is a workaround. And that name? It stands for **I K** for Ingvar Kamprad, **E** for Elmtaryd, the name of the family farm, and **A** for Agunnaryd, the name of the village where Kamprad was raised. Now you know.

Simplify to Multiply... [PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

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