



IKEA KSA Hires Link Development to Redefine Digital Standards for Customer Satisfaction



A digital pioneer, IKEA Saudi Arabia sought to digitally transform its entire operation to provide a new level of omnichannel customer experience to its B2B, B2C, and IKEA Family customers. Link Development designed an integrated solution and delivered the Customer Hub. Unlocking the power of Microsoft technologies and Link Development customization capacities, IKEA Saudi Arabia's customer-facing business journeys were digitalized to create positive outcomes such as higher sales, increased customer loyalty, lower operating costs, and stronger digital leadership across Inter IKEA.

Customer	IKEA KSA
Industry	Retail
Country	Saudi Arabia
Technologies	Microsoft: - Dynamics 365 - SharePoint - BizTalk - Power BI - Artificial Intelligence - Machine Learning

IKEA Saudi Arabia

First established in 1943 in Sweden, the giant manufacturer and retailer, IKEA, saw 775 million visitors across 389 stores in 42 different countries during 2017. The IKEA vision "to create a better everyday life for the many people" is supported by its business idea "to offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them." IKEA Saudi Arabia opened its first showroom in 1983 in Jeddah. Today the company has seven stores operating with more than 1,200 co-workers, serving 12 million physical visitors and 12.5 million online visitors each year.

A Strategic Leap of Digital Transformation

Determined to be a leader among the Inter IKEA worldwide ecosystem, IKEA Saudi Arabia decided to go the extra mile by launching an ambitious digital transformation initiative designed to boost the digital productivity of the retail chain and to set a global example of digital leadership geared towards customer satisfaction.

The company opted to distinguish itself with distinctive, omnichannel experiences for its corporate, consumer, and IKEA Family customers. Recognizing that great customer experiences start with better co-worker (staff) experiences, the company created revolutionary changes in the ways its physical and virtual touchpoints (in-store, website, mobile app, and call center) connect and interact, and most important, in the way co-workers service IKEA Saudi Arabia customers.

"IKEA strives to create a better everyday life for as many people as possible, and this digital transformation is considered a dynamic solution and a step we have always sought: to upgrade our customer service and optimize our operational performance, in light of the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

This partnership with Link Development will make the work process easier and lead to higher customer satisfaction.

We strongly believe that the Customer Hub project will open up many opportunities for new potential customers and support our omnichannel strategy, all in efforts to win the heart of our customers."

*Saud Alsulaiman
Chief Executive Officer, IKEA Saudi Arabia*

A Matrix of Separate Digital Islands

Lengthy processes to source the right information at the right time challenged the retailer's productivity. Multiple stakeholders, including customer service agents, operations personnel, and sales reps, needed to access an estimated 11 systems to retrieve and manage data. It was a time-consuming task prone to error and miscommunication.

Data was dispersed, insight was elusive, and reports were difficult to produce. Decision-making was not easy, and the customer service process was out of step with today's standards for a digital, upbeat, and on-the-go pace.

Link Development proposed a holistic solution that would bring all these data points together in a single place and provide seamless real-time integration of the whole digital environment.

The Customer Hub: Dynamics 365 and BizTalk

Link Development helped IKEA Saudi Arabia integrate multiple systems into a new Customer Hub, an unprecedented feat in the Inter IKEA global ecosystem. The new hub brought together IKEA Saudi Arabia's enterprise resource planning (ERP), loyalty program, call center (ININ software), retail app, SMS/payment gateway, shipping, marketing, and other business functions.

Using Dynamics 365 (CRM), Link Development created a single unified interface on the Customer Hub that, with the click of a button, provides co-workers with a central location and an attractive and bilingual interface to easily access all systems related to customer operations. Gone are the days of using multiple systems, waiting for results, and doing manual operations.

Customer 360 is Ground Zero

Effective customer service begins with having clear, unified customer data at hand. The Customer Hub designed by Link Development provides a seamless, 360-degree view of a customer's data, drawing from different sources and multiple systems to create a complete picture.

Customer accounts are mapped, so that IKEA Saudi Arabia co-workers can easily see a customer's interactions, sales history, scheduling activities, loyalty points, service requests, and more. What had been tedious and confusing is now a pleasant digital experience for co-workers and customers alike.

Smoothing Out the Kinks

To further optimize internal operational efficiency, Link Development automated three internal journeys for IKEA Saudi Arabia: sales, customer care, and customer contact/operations.

The Benefits:

- A new omnichannel experience with all the IKEA KSA touchpoints
- Early identification and proactive resolution of customer issues and trends
- Faster time to market for new services on all channels
- Enhanced customer loyalty and retention through personalized experiences
- Low cost of ownership with cloud
- Drastically reduced processing times for internal operations
- More customers served per day by each customer service agent
- Improved strategic planning due to timely reports
- Reinforced culture of knowledge sharing among IKEA KSA co-workers
- New leads automatically detected from social posts and routed into CRM

Sales automation tackled B2B and B2C cycles, streamlining lead, opportunity, and quotation management as well as order management, pipeline, and product catalog.

Customer care automation tackled case tracking, four levels of classification and categorization, case assignment and routing rules, alerts and notifications, and service-level agreement (SLA) procedures.

Operational automation addressed resource management, scheduling and dispatching, route optimization, field service requests, warranty services, and service history.

Knowledge is Power

IKEA Saudi Arabia had accumulated a wealth of information ranging from product catalogs and assembly instructions to historical complaints and training materials. This valuable information was scattered and hard to access.

Using SharePoint technology, Link Development set up a digital repository known as the Knowledge Hub, to house accumulated and new information in a single place, making it easier for co-workers to find.

Customer service agents can access the Knowledge Hub through Dynamics 365 (CRM). They can look up product information while interacting with customers through the call center or any other online, mobile, or offline channel. Customer wait times have decreased significantly thanks to customer service agents being able to research and answer customer questions or complaints in real time.

Customer Voice: A Catalyst for Change

IKEA Saudi Arabia customers interact with IKEA stores, products, and personnel across multiple channels. The voice of the customer is an integral part of extending the relationship after the sale.

With voice-of-the-customer surveys and analyses, IKEA Saudi Arabia has gained insight into its customers' true levels of satisfaction and brand perception. Using Dynamics 365, IKEA Saudi Arabia can gather and analyze feedback from web forms, live chats, call centers, social media posts, and e-store analytics.

By analyzing this feedback, IKEA Saudi Arabia can identify customer sentiment, share of voice across social channels, key influencers, and engagement rates, which then inform how the company responds across its various customer channels.

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Link Development helped us to navigate a digital route that looked too complex in optimal time, exceeding our expectations.

At IKEA Saudi Arabia we had many disconnected systems constituting the backbone of our operations. The diversity and disparity of residing data was becoming overwhelming. And, our business ambition for increased customer satisfaction was soaring.

We needed to embed customer excellence know-how in every technical decision and digital direction we take.

Link Development digitally transformed our complex environment into an integrated, productive one. Together, we used plenty of Microsoft technologies and capitalized on the cost efficiency and security of Azure.

IKEA KSA is now a digital leader across the Inter IKEA ecosystem. It doesn't stop here. As digital has no ceiling, neither does our determination to work with Link Development in continuing our journey of digital transformation towards our business objectives.

*Anas Shehab
Chief Information Officer
IKEA Saudi Arabia*

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Bettering Social with Artificial Intelligence

Through Dynamics 365 social engagement, IKEA Saudi Arabia can monitor brand performance across different social media channels.

Social media agents can collaborate by responding to social media posts. They can receive an automated assignment to manage a post, or they can manually reassign a post to the right agent.

Empowered by artificial intelligence and machine learning the Dynamics 365 (CRM) solution can identify potential leads and send them to the CRM online for lead qualification and follow-up. The solution can also learn more about customer sentiment by understanding tags and posts.

Armed with insight from social and customer interactions, service requests, and reports, IKEA Saudi Arabia marketeers are better able to segment customers, cross-sell, and up-sell. Cross-channel campaign planning and management are straightforward, and response tracking is simple.

Tracking Down Trouble

As customer data is pulled together in comprehensive metrics and put into the Dynamics 365 (CRM) solution for assessment and analysis, IKEA Saudi Arabia can use Power BI to further analyze and correct issues. This solution yields insight at a glance, with rich analytics to make more informed decisions and timely changes.

Intelligent, integrated dashboards give IKEA Saudi Arabia a bird's eye view on its whole ecosystem of operations. These dashboards provide detailed reports and interactive business intelligence tools to track sales volume, number of complaints, customer satisfaction, social influencers, customer sentiment, and more.

A Digitally Big Smaland

IKEA Saudi Arabia also wanted to offer something truly different for its in-store customers. To this end, Link Development digitalized the parent-child experience in the IKEA flagship play area, Smaland, to increase child safety and create a more comfortable family interaction.

Children are now electronically registered before entering Smaland, and they must be checked in and checked out. Notifications are pushed to the parent's mobile device with updates on the child's status. Visitor data is routed to the CRM to enrich customer profiles and create opportunities for upselling and cross-selling.

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KSA's retail landscape is fiercely competitive and with huge growth potential.

We wanted to revolutionize our B2B and B2C customer relationships with our brand.

Link Development helped us make a difference, one that future-proofs our quest for customer excellence.

Customers now have an omni-channel experience with our touchpoints across the Kingdom: in-store, website, mobile app, and call center. We can drive business from social and more. Smaland is digitally more unique and safer.

Our day-to-day business has changed. Our employees are more informed. Our process is more productive. Our performance is more accelerated. Our customer-centric solutions are more impactful.

We see a clear vision for customer satisfaction. Link Development is a digital partner that we can depend on in our aggressive plans of using digital in business growth.

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*Asaad Abu Zahra
Country Business Services Manager
IKEA Saudi Arabia*

Microsoft Technologies:

- Dynamics 365
- SharePoint
- BizTalk
- Power BI
- AI
- ML