How did IKEA start?

Reading + Grammar: the past simple

1 KEY VOCABULARY

found	*v.*	fundar
furniture	*n. (uncountable)*	muebles
customer	*n.*	cliente
price	*n.*	precio
quality	*n.*	calidad
flatpack	*adj.*	en caja plana, para armar
store	*n.*	tienda
catalogue	*n.*	catálogo
expand	*v.*	expandirse, crecer
transport	*v. / n.*	transportar / transporte

2 USEFUL PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

- **He founded the company in 1943.** → *Fundó la empresa en 1943.*
- **It started selling furniture in 1948.** → *Empezó a vender muebles en 1948.*
- **It didn't sell furniture at first.** → *Al principio no vendía muebles.*
- **When did it start?** → *¿Cuándo empezó?*
- **Low prices for many people** → *Precios bajos para muchas personas*
- **It became a global brand.** → *Se convirtió en una marca global.*

6 EVERYDAY LIFE INSIGHT

★ **Big companies, small beginnings**

Many global brands started very small, sometimes with one person and a simple idea. Telling the story of a company — when it started and how it grew — is a common topic in conversations at work.

3 THE KEY POINT

Use the **past simple** for finished actions in the past. Regular verbs add **-ed**; irregular verbs change. Negatives and questions use **did** + base verb.

+ Kamprad **founded** IKEA in 1943. His father **gave** him some money. (give → gave)

– IKEA **didn't sell** furniture in 1943.

? When **did** IKEA **start** selling furniture? – In 1948.

4 QUICK PRACTICE

Complete with the past simple of the verb in brackets.

1. IKEA ____ (start) as a small business.
2. Kamprad ____ (not / have) a lot of money.
3. The company ____ (grow) very fast.
4. When ____ you ____ (buy) your desk?

5 ANSWERS & EXPLANATION

Answers: 1 started · 2 didn't have · 3 grew · 4 did … buy

Regular verbs add **-ed** (started). Irregular verbs have special forms (grow → **grew**). With **didn't** and **did** in questions, use the base verb: *didn't have, did you buy*.

Today's resource: From humble origins to global brand – a brief history of IKEA (IKEA) · https://www.ikea.com/us/en/this-is-ikea/about-us/from-humble-origins-to-global-brand-a-brief-history-of-ikea-pubad29a981/

> *Every big brand was once a small idea with a clear plan.*



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