



2022 APAC Effie® Awards Bronze Winner

WHEN IT FEELS LIKE HOME

Category: Retail

Product/Service Classification: Retail

Brand: Fantastic Furniture

Client: Fantastic Furniture

Lead Agency: Connecting Plots

Contributing Agencies:
Infinity Squared
Bohemia Group Sydney
Incubeta Australia

Original Version

Executive Summary

After decades of discount prices and package deals, Fantastic Furniture had a problem, with 64% of consumers seeing them as poor quality and cheap. Even their own customers referred to them as 'plastic fantastic'.

We needed to stop Aussies from being ashamed of buying Fantastic Furniture.

Our campaign proved that with everyday low-prices and on-style furniture, Fantastic enriches Aussie homes, allowing life's precious moments to play out to the backdrop of our furniture.

We turned shame to fame, grew consideration by 5%+, smashed our targets and saved the brand from devalued disaster.

Market Background

Fantastic Furniture started as a market stall at Sydney's Parklea Markets in 1989. Throughout its 30+ years of operating it has become an Australian icon with more than 80 stores nationwide. Much of this growth has come through being known as a low cost, value-based furniture store, providing bargain prices and package deals.

While for a time this reputation helped grow the brand, when Swedish furniture brand IKEA decided to ramp up its Australian presence from 2003 (1), they completely changed what it meant to be a low cost furniture retailer.

The low cost, everyday pricing positioning had lost its competitive edge. So in 2018, Fantastic rebranded, but part of their brand equity remained...

State of the Marketplace & Brand's Business/Strategic Communication Challenge

Despite Fantastic's best efforts, they were still not breaking through their historic reputation.

Outside of consumers who bought purely on price, they couldn't appeal to a bigger audience. Fantastic had a rejection problem.

Their low prices and brand heritage had given consumers the perception that their products were bad quality. In fact, 64% of consumers who reject Fantastic see it as poor quality and cheap (2).

This was a big problem, especially as we knew growth would come from new customers. Fantastic Furniture needed to address this rejection problem before sales started suffering.

However, improving the quality of the furniture wasn't the solution. Through qual research we learned that perceptions of quality were in fact much higher once the products were in people's homes (3). But if Fantastic's products were better quality than audiences thought, what was the real issue?

We discovered the real reason for these rejection woes through an anecdote told during qual research where a customer admitted to asking a delivery driver to 'park around the corner' out of fear of being seen having Fantastic Furniture delivered (3).

No one wants to be seen as being cheap and buying 'cheap' furniture was a source of shame. So much so that EVEN their most loyal customers were ashamed to be seen buying Fantastic.

The brand had built the reputation of being 'Plastic Fantastic', a symbol of cheap-ness. Something consumers just don't want to see themselves as.

Objectives & KPIs

Our goal was to help Fantastic Furniture become more than just a low cost furniture retailer and instead be a furniture store that was sought out. They had the awareness (4), but we needed to change consumers' minds.

Our objectives were clear:

- 1) We needed to change consumers' perception of the quality of the products...
- 2) Creating long term growth through brand relevance with a broader set of audiences
- 3) So they would start considering Fantastic Furniture for their next purchase.

To measure success of these targets we set the following measurable KPIs:

- 1) Increase consideration among all furniture buyers, from 26% to 28% in 12 months (2%+) (4)
- 2) Increase consideration with new audiences, Rookies and Young Families by 2%+ in 12 months (4)

Ultimately, if we could get more people to consider Fantastic Furniture by shedding the reputation of being cheap and shameful, this was how we would build growth long term.

Sourcing: Section 1

- (1) Lloyd, Simon (13 March, 2003). "After 27 years, Australia is stacking up for Ikea". Australian Financial Review.
- (2) Fantastic Category Quant research of 3669 in market customers, 12/4/2019 and 23/4/2019.
- (3) Fantastic Consumer Qual research, Dec 2018, 10 in depth customer interviews.
- (4) Nielsen consumer survey, Fantastic Furniture consideration for Furniture buyers and segments, March 2020, sample size of 39,030.

Audience

EXISTING FOCUS:

Our past campaigns had focused on two core segments, and these would still be core focuses to maintain our current share of market:

- 1) Home Dreamers - 35-45 year old parents of young children, who are usually shopping to adapt to changes in home life. Replacing worn out furniture, or buying their child's first real bed. (920k population) (1).
- 2) Making Nesters - 25-35 year old, urban dwelling couples, who are setting up their first home together. They are interested in design and want a stylish home, within their means. (500k population) (1).

NEW CONSUMER FOCUS:

In order to drive our ambitious goals and to start creating brand relevance for audiences who would extend our market share in the future, we wanted to target two new consumer segments:

- 1) Rookies - 18 - 24 year old singles who are flying the coop. They need furnishings for their first place away from their parents, often students or apprentices. They want their home to feel 'luxurious' but on a budget. (620k population) (1).
- 2) Young Families - 25 - 39 year olds who have just started having children. Looking to furnish their home for new additions and changes to their own lifestyle. Focused on function. (728k population) (1).

Across all of the segments we saw some strong similarities. Most noticeably, they all believed that 'home is a source of pride and comfort', and felt that 'home is where memories are made' (1). They want to feel

Insight

We wanted to replace shame with pride, so we researched how consumers expressed pride in their home.

When we looked at the social conversations happening around furniture and home decoration (2), it wasn't about brands or the features of products.

It was about the little people who slept in our kids' beds and the tall tales shared around our dining tables. Furniture enabled all the special little life moments that make our homes so special and this is what our audiences actually cared about.

This revealed a simple intuitive truth: Once the furniture leaves the store, it's no longer Fantastic Furniture. Instead, it becomes someone's 'Fantastic story'.

Our insight gave us an opportunity - to be the enabler of the moments that create memories, to be there enabling the joyful home life these consumers desired. Slashing shame and building joy.

In the wake of COVID-19 lockdowns throughout 2020 we were presented with an opportunity to implement our insight to maximise the impact. Consumers were now using their homes very differently. And this new home life made our insight even more true. Home was no longer just the centre of family life, it was also the office, the gym, the restaurant and the entertainment quarter.

The Big Idea

Fantastic Furniture gives true comfort that enriches home life.

Sourcing: Section 2

(1) Nielsen consumer survey data, March 2020 to June 2021, sample size of 39,030. (2) Desktop research of #Fantasticfurniture, #homedecor and #furniture on Instagram.

Bringing the Idea to Life

To neutralise the shame related to 'Plastic Fantastic', and to bring to life the pride that Aussies feel in their homes, we needed to show how Fantastic enables those joyous moments of home life and authentically reflect those relatable moments that a comfortable home creates.

We needed a bold and memorable slogan that all Aussie's would instantly relate to and would motivate them to buy Fantastic Furniture.

'When it feels like home, you feel like you' became a statement of truth proving that with everyday low prices and on-style furniture, Fantastic Furniture helps to enrich our homes by allowing life's precious moments to play out.

To bring this to life we had 3 key tasks:

- 1) Show real home life
- 2) Make the home Fantastic
- 3) Use context to relate

SHOW REAL HOME LIFE:

We made the home lives of Fantastic's customers the hero of the brand, shining a light on relatable moments of comfort, using humour and honesty to make it authentic and not like a catalogue. Appealing to consumers' emotional connection with home was something we needed to get right.

We focused on moments of idiosyncratic behaviour, the kind of moments that become the in-jokes of family life. Mundane but endearing, with enough of a twist that they pique the interest of our audience. Not cliché, but relatable in a universal way.

Through film and photography we invited audiences to quietly observe 'slice of life' vignettes. All captured in a single take and from an observational POV, to create a real sense of intimacy - allowing the audience to feel like they were seeing inside a real Aussie household. The things we knew our audience would immediately relate to. This made our creative attention grabbing and demanded an emotional response.

MAKE THE HOME FANTASTIC:

We then inserted Fantastic into these moments. Fantastic's products became the backdrop for each of the moments, using subtle and deliberate line and price inclusions, designed to punctuate the scene with the relevant product. The furniture were not the centre of the action, but price details brought attention to category associations that reminded the audience of the products.

This had the effect of breaking the reality of the construct and alerting the audience to both the message and the products. Now in this context, audiences could see the products as stylish, fully functional and well suited to the home environment. This created the moment of reappraisal.

USE CONTEXT TO RELATE:

With 4 audiences to speak to we knew we needed a suite of vignettes for the idea to land. While video was the focus, we saw that a mix of broad reaching and more contextual placements were being used.

This gave us an idea to be more tactical in how we could amplify our relatability. By mapping out our segment's moments and the contexts that would be used to communicate, we realised we had a unique opportunity.

Solving this problem needed an innovative approach. By carefully choreographing our shoot day, instead of getting 4 video assets for a standard TV buy, we were able to create 23 individual vignettes, enabling us to reflect a wider variety of audience moments. These were then able to be used in both broadcast and with data informed contexts. Creating connections between programming, content and audience data, helping build an even more relatable message and creating more reason for each audience to consider Fantastic Furniture for their home. This drove brand consideration.

Sourcing: Section 3

N/A

Results

Having a thirty year old brand spark reappraisal and buck the negative perception of its heritage is no mean feat. Convincing audiences who know the brand for the wrong reasons to reconsider the brand takes years. But through our strategy of highly relatable, honest and funny moments, we managed to undo decades of negative perceptions in a single year.

PERCEPTION:

- 1) Our ads tested as positively influencing purchase and changing perceptions of the brand for the better.
 - 2) 43% of respondents said they felt more inclined to purchase Fantastic after seeing one of the ads (1).
 - 3) 53% of respondents said they felt better about Fantastic as a result of seeing the ad (1).
 - 4) Perceptions of 'value for money' lifted 4.99%+ (2).
 - 5) Perceptions of 'cheap' dropped by -3.91%+ (2).
- We'd tackled the problem, and our solution was mending the shame around cheap.

CONSIDERATION & LONG TERM GROWTH:

In the space of 12 months consideration lifted across all core audiences (3):

- 1) Home Dreamers - lifted from 29.7% to 31.4%, a 5% lift
- 2) Making Nesters - lifted from 22.8% to 28.1%, a 23% lift
- 3) Young Families - lifted from 26% to 29.2%, a 12% lift
- 4) Rookies - lifted from 17.1% to 26.3%, a huge 53% lift

These lifts were significant, not just because they are huge shifts in a single year, but also because they represent significant future revenue for the brand, as these consumers move in and out of being in the market.

The campaign also supported amazing sales results with Fantastic having the second highest sales year on record (4).

Additional Marketing Components

✓	Couponing		Leveraging Distribution
	CRM/Loyalty Programs		Other Marketing for the Brand running at the same time as this effort.
✓	Economic Factors		Other
✓	Giveaways/Samplings		

Other Contributing Factors

October 2020 through to October 2021 was a turbulent time for Fantastic Furniture, making the results from the campaign that much harder to achieve.

Primary factors at play included:

- 1) During the second wave of COVID, Fantastic Furniture had temporarily closed over 36 of its showrooms across Victoria, NSW and ACT.
- 2) As stores were closed, consumers needed to switch to purchasing online, a challenge for the category that Fantastic Furniture are addressing, but impacts consumers propensity to buy.
- 3) COVID lockdowns also affected international shipping, leading to shortages in many products. This created constraints in fulfilling all orders, particularly as Fantastic consumers tend to be more need driven than other competitors (4).
- 4) Always-on search activity ran throughout the campaign, but this is also true of the period prior and so would not have impacted perception or consideration attributes.
- 5) In January and June of 2021 Fantastic Furniture had their annual sale period. In a YOY analysis of sales this would not impact performance as it is part of every year's plan.

This campaign was the only brand related creative in the market for the majority of the period and is therefore the chief contributor to any brand attribute

Sourcing: Section 4

- (1) Brand tracking and ad testing data, 5,000 consumers in market, monthly dips from August 2020 to November 2021 (
- 2) Brand Tracking data, October 2020 compared to November 2021, general population, sample of 5000 consumers. (
- 3) Nielsen consumer survey data, March 2020 to June 2021, sample size of 39,030.
- (4) Internal sales data.

Investment Overview

Paid Media Expenditures

Current Year: 2020 - 2021	Year Prior: 2019 - 2020
10M - under 20M	10M - under 20M
Compared to other competitors in this category, this budget is:	Less
Compared to overall spend on the brand in the prior year, the brand's overall budget this year is:	About the same

Budget Elaboration

The majority of all media was paid, with a large emphasis on broad reaching, broad targeted channels. These were then supported by data-informed targeting in digital media to reach each segment with individual messages.

Overall expenditure did not have a significant increase YOY, but the category did have a significant uplift in spend comparatively. Efforts were made to maintain SOM as total category spend increased.

Owned Media

The campaign was integrated across all owned channel communications as part of the launch. This was largely comprised of social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) and email communications. The primary goal of the campaign was to change the perceptions of both customers and non-customers, so owned communications did not play a large role in influencing the results of the campaign.

Sponsorships

NA

Communications Touchpoints

	Branded Content - Editorial		Digital Mktg. - SEM		Print - Magazine
	Branded Content - Product Placement		Digital Mktg. - SEO		Print - Newspaper
	Cinema	✓	Digital Mktg. - Short Video (:15-3 min.)		Public Relations
	Contests		Digital Mktg. - Social: Organic	✓	Radio
	Digital Mktg. - Affiliate	✓	Digital Mktg. - Social: Paid	✓	Retail Experience: Digital
✓	Digital Mktg. - Audio Ads	✓	Digital Mktg. - Video Ads	✓	Retail Experience: In Store
	Digital Mktg. - Content Promotion		Direct Mail		Sales Promotion, Couponing & Distribution
✓	Digital Mktg. - Display Ads		Events		Sampling/Trial
	Digital Mktg. - Email/Chatbots/Text/Messaging		Health Offices / Point of Care		Sponsorships - Entertainment
	Digital Mktg. - Gaming		Influencer / Key Opinion Leader		Sponsorships - Sports
	Digital Mktg. - Influencers		Interactive / Website / Apps		Sponsorships - Unique Opportunity

	Digital Mktg. - Location based		Internal/In-Office Marketing		Street Mktg.
	Digital Mktg. - Long Video (3+ min.)		Loyalty Programs		Trade Shows, Trade Communications, Professional Engagement
	Digital Mktg. - Marketplace Ads	✓	OOH - Billboards	✓	TV
✓	Digital Mktg. - Mobile		OOH - Other Outdoor		User Generated Content & Reviews
	Digital Mktg. - Product Placement	✓	OOH - Transportation		Other:
✓	Digital Mktg. - Programmatic Display Ads		Packaging & Product Design		
✓	Digital Mktg. - Programmatic Video Ads		Print - Custom Publication		