IsaDora:
REPOSITIONING A SWEDISH BEAUTY ICON THROUGH DESIGN

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards entry – July 2025.

FOR PUBLICATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By 2021, IsaDora – Sweden's best-known cosmetics brand – was struggling to stay relevant with younger consumers and under pressure in key markets. With over 40 years of heritage and a leadership position in Scandinavia, the brand had strong equity but an outdated and fragmented design expression. Its packaging lacked clarity, shelf standout and emotional appeal, especially in Germany, its main growth market.

To reverse stagnating growth, IsaDora initiated a comprehensive, design-led transformation.
The project included a full rebrand and packaging redesign across 400+ SKUs, the introduction of a unified brand platform – **"True Beauty from Sweden"** – and a refreshed visual identity rooted in Scandinavian design characteristics: clarity and honesty. No changes were made to the product formulations or pricing, allowing the impact of design to be clearly measured.

The results speak for themselves:
IsaDora grew retail sales +10% (vs. market growth of 4.2%), improved penetration among 18–39 year-olds by +16ppt, and increased perceived value from 16% to 50%.

Design rebuilt IsaDora's relevance, attractiveness and shelf impact, fuelling renewed consumer interest and driving commercial performance.

BACKGROUND

IsaDora was founded in Sweden in 1983 and quickly established itself as a leading mass-market cosmetics brand in the Nordic region. It is known for its fragrance-free, cruelty-free and vegan-friendly formulas, in-house production and broad distribution footprint across 40+ countries. Despite high brand awareness (99% in Sweden), IsaDora had not evolved with the shifting expectations of consumers, particularly younger audiences increasingly drawn to bold, purpose-driven brands (60% of Gen Z preferring to pay more for brands that align with their values (IBM Institute for Business Value)).

By 2021, IsaDora faced stagnating growth, declining relevance, and low brand engagement in key markets:

- Sweden: strong awareness but seen as "traditional" and "dated"
- Germany: low recognition and shelf visibility in a highly competitive landscape
- Gen Z (18–24): just 10% penetration despite growing market influence
- Fragmented packaging across 400+ SKUs, reducing clarity and appeal

Partnership

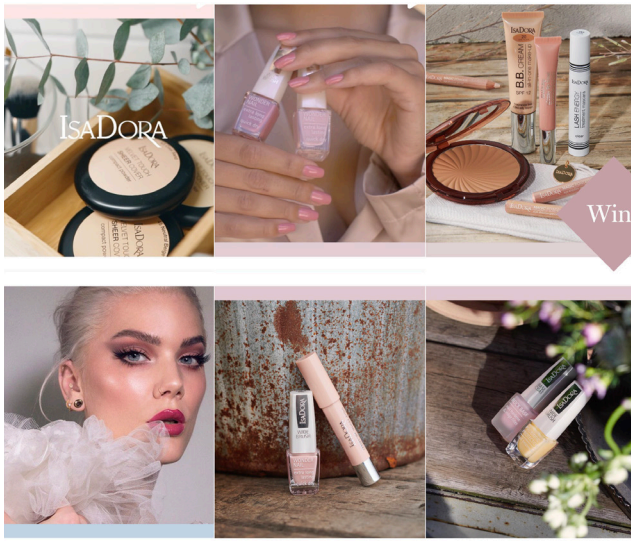
The project launched in 2022 with delivery in-market by Q3 2023.
Launch Date: Q3 2023 – Q1 2024
Design Fees: REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA

Before

Once aligned with global giants in aesthetics, like Max Factor, L'Oréal, and Estée Lauder etc. IsaDora lost relevance, distinction, and differentiation, missing the mark with a new generation seeking bold, value-driven brands rooted in Nordic authenticity.

After

IsaDora's new look celebrates diversity, authenticity, and Nordic beauty, reigniting relevance and reconnecting with a new generation.



Before

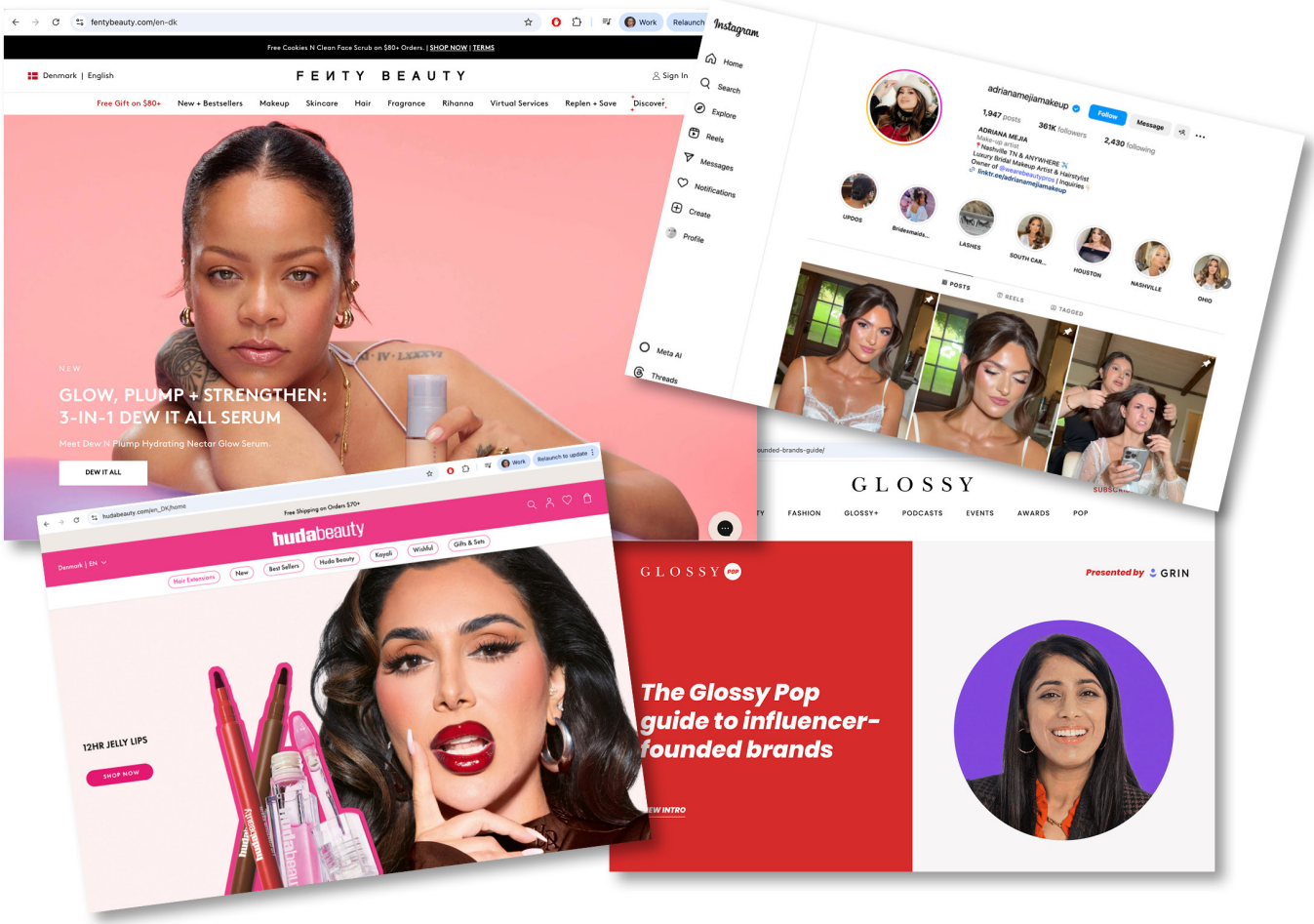
After

CONTEXT

The European beauty market was forecast to grow at 4.2% CAGR (2023–2027, Statista). The cosmetics industry was recovering post-COVID, but consumer expectations had shifted toward authenticity, sustainability, and transparency. New brands like Lumene, NYX, and influencer startups were leading with focused storytelling and digital-first positioning. In this new market reality, 71% of beauty consumers are more likely to purchase products recommended by influencers, and 55% discover new brands via influencer content (Gitnux, 2025). IsaDora, by contrast, was seen as reliable but uninspiring.

IsaDora's strengths – value for money, wide vegan range, full in-house production – were underleveraged. Packaging was inconsistent, with minimal on-shelf navigation. Legacy hero products looked dated. Despite being #1 in Sweden, growth had stalled, especially among younger and international audiences (Gen Z penetration ~10% by 2021).

With 71% buying on influencer recommendations, new beauty brands turn trends into powerful market influence.



PROJECT BRIEF

The brief was clear:
Reposition IsaDora for growth. The design had to:

- Modernise the visual identity while retaining core Scandinavian values
- Improve on-shelf navigation and product differentiation across 400+ SKUs
- Make the brand more relevant and desirable to younger consumers
- Support international expansion with a clearer, more consistent identity

Commercial Objectives

- Increase market penetration in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Germany by 10–15ppt
- Grow penetration among 18–39 year-olds by 10ppt
- Raise brand consideration to 50%+
- Grow retail sales above the category benchmark of 4.2%
- Increase hero product sales by 25–40%
- Improve perceived value from 16% to 50%

Scope of Work
In the fight for relevance in a fiercely competitive industry, IsaDora had something no one else could claim: The stamp of approval that comes with 40 years of legacy, plus a clear set of time-less Swedish values that had never been traded in: honesty, transparency, functionality and equality.

It was time to make IsaDora gorgeous for good once again and take a position as True Beauty from Sweden with a consumer first mindset.
The design encompassed:

- Developed a unifying brand platform: "True Beauty from Sweden"
- Redefined the visual identity: clean, timeless, functional, confident
- Created a flexible packaging design strategy and system across 400+ SKUs
- Introduced formula-true colour coding to improve shopper confidence
- Enhanced packaging materials and finishes

EVERLAND

RESULTS

Design-Driven Business Results
- Retail Sales Growth: +10% YoY (2024 vs. 2023), outperforming the market average (4.2%) by 2.5×
- Hero Product Growth: +40% overall
  - Contour Stick: +117%
  - Glossy Lipstick: +50%

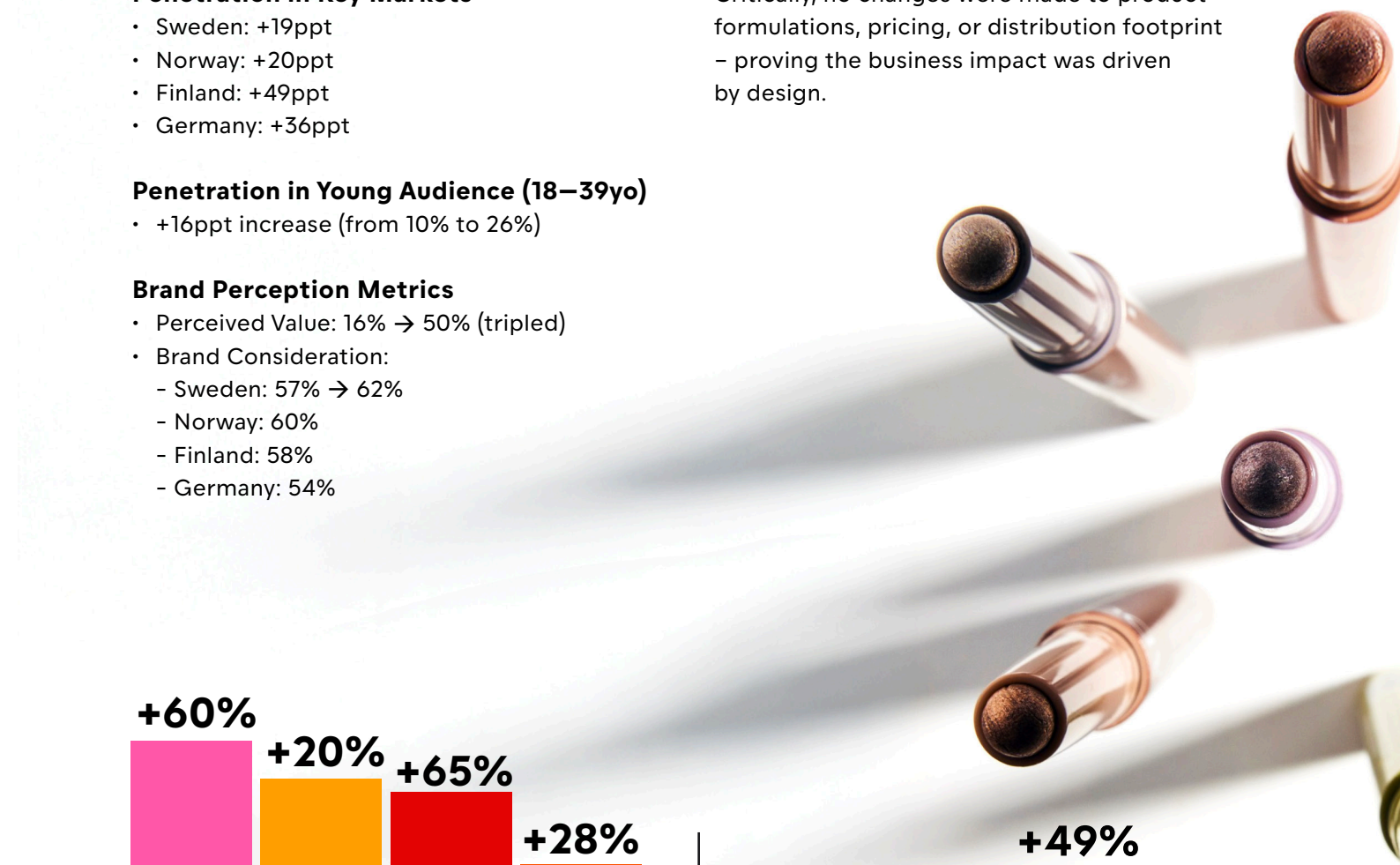
Penetration in Key Markets
- Sweden: +19ppt
- Norway: +20ppt
- Finland: +49ppt
- Germany: +36ppt

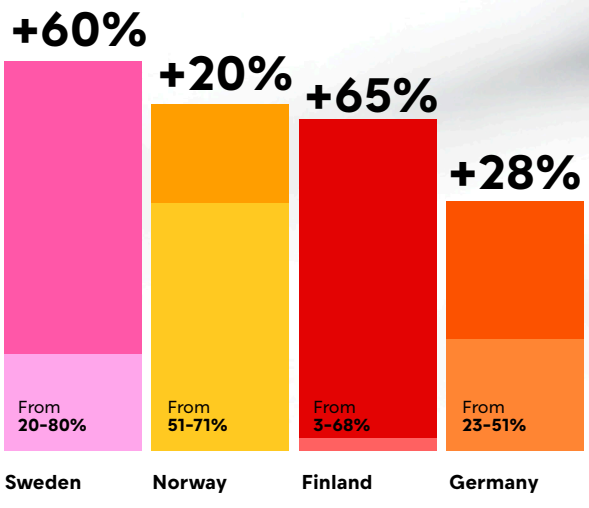
Penetration in Young Audience (18–39yo)
- +16ppt increase (from 10% to 26%)

Brand Perception Metrics
- Perceived Value: 16% → 50% (tripled)
- Brand Consideration:
  - Sweden: 57% → 62%
  - Norway: 60%
  - Finland: 58%
  - Germany: 54%

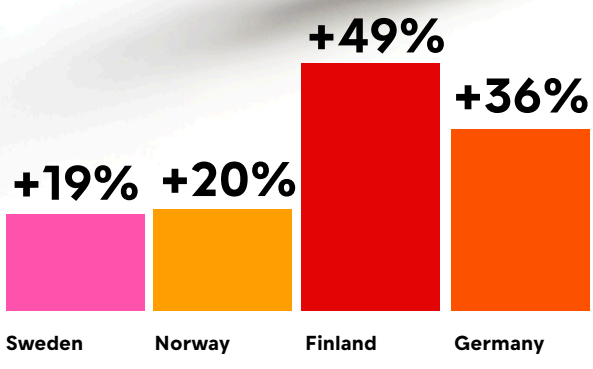
Likeability:
- Sweden: +60% (to 80%)
- Finland: +65% (to 68%)
- Norway: +20% (to 71%)
- Germany: +28% (to 51%)

All metrics met or exceeded original KPIs. Critically, no changes were made to product formulations, pricing, or distribution footprint – proving the business impact was driven by design.





Brand likeability after redesign



Market Penetration after redesign

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

IsaDora's marketing spend, media channels, product formulas, and distribution remained unchanged during the rebrand. No major price promotions or sales campaigns were run.

However, the focus for the brand's marketing shifted to social media, and saw an incredible increase in engagement. Gen Z now accounts for 17% of Europe's beauty and personal care spend, projected to reach 20% by 2029 (euromonitor, 2025), resulting a new media strategy for IsaDora. One that targets social media and user generated content creation.

- Instagram engagement: +1,600%
- TikTok followers: +226%
- Campaign interaction: +91% (UGC, influencers)

In addition, the rebrand launched into a receptive consumer environment:

- 79% of beauty shoppers are skeptical of sustainability claims, creating demand for authenticity and clarity (Forbes, 2022)
- 73% of Gen Z only buy from brands they truly believe in (Desiree Design, 2023)
- 25% of Gen Z feel excluded by beauty advertising, while 38% chose brands that promoted diversity (PR Newswire, 2023)

These market trends aligned with IsaDora's rebrand strategy. However, IsaDora had underperformed in these areas prior to the redesign. The results achieved post-launch were not market-driven alone but also an outcome of the design-led repositioning.

IsaDora

CONCLUSION

IsaDora's design transformation reignited relevance, desirability, and growth. Through a strategically driven redesign of packaging and brand expression, IsaDora increased its market share, reconnected with younger consumers, and enhanced perceived value – without altering products, pricing or distribution.

TEAM:

Global Marketing Director, IsaDora: **Felicia Ibsen**

Head of Global Brand Creation, IsaDora: **Ines Dedic**

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