 By: Elizabeth Tyler
It's no revelation that IKEA drives you crazy, but now a scientist from University College London has worked out just how and why they do it.

According to Alan Penn, director of the Virtual Reality Centre for the Built Environment at University College London, it's all part of IKEA's plan to keep us in store and buying more. The theory is that while following a zig-zag path through the store, the IKEA customer becomes disorientated and is thus more likely to pick up strategically placed impulse purchases.

 Using a strategy employed by out-of-town retail parks - "trapping" the customers in store for as long as they can - IKEA places as many distractions as possible between the customer and the item they may have come for.&#65533; The path is "effectively their catalog in physical form" says Penn. "You're directed through their marketplace area where a staggering amount of purchases are impulse buys, things like light bulbs or a cheap casserole that you weren't planning on getting ... Because the layout is so confusing you know you won't be able to go back and get it later, so you pop it in your [cart] as you go past."

(More on TIME.com: See what happens when you don't have customers: 'Stores That Are No More')

But the Swedish giant denied that it's store layouts were intentionally designed to confuse customers: "Our furniture showrooms are designed to give our customers lots of ideas for every area of the home including your kitchen, bedroom and living room," said Carole Reddish, IKEA's deputy managing director for the UK and Ireland.

IKEA currently has 283 stores in 26 countries and profits of &#65533;2.3billion last year, so it must be doing something right. (Via Daily Mail)

Source: http://newsfeed.time.com/2011/01/27/how-ikea-seduces-its-customers-by-trapping-them/?artId=?contType=?chn=