

# Marketing Strategies Based on the Analysis on the Features of Tool Knives

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## ABSTRACT

As the demanding number of descent knives grow, knives are great deal in the business market. According to a sanding gear selling company [1] Red Label Abrasive's survey report of 100 knife maker, "the survey indicated that the industry appears to be in good financial health. 73% of knife makers have raised their knife prices in the last two years and 71% of knife makers have indicated that their sales have increased this year when compared to last year." Almost every man who encounter the outdoor, combat, and general working situation will purchase a descent knife for using as tool, self-defense weapon, and spiritual ballast nowadays. And knife TV shows like "Forged in Fire" is dragging more and more people into the fields of understanding and using knives as well. The purpose of this research is to provide customer opinions for tool-knife-producers to make better marketing strategies. The research analyzed the appearance and structural durability of tool knives in the market. In addition, the author gathered opinions from some experienced users to put forward suggestions.

According to the research results, the appearance and structural durability of the tool knives in the market can meet the users need. What is more, most of the interviewees do not care much about the appearance of the knives. Instead, they value the functions and suggested that the people better have some basic knowledge, especially the functions, about the knives before buying. Therefore, the author suggests that the sells and producers can focus on the propaganda of the functions of tool knives.

**Keywords:** *marketing strategies, features of tool knives, appearance, structural durability*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knife is one of the most common tool used by humans all around the world, yet many of the people has lack of knowledge of how to choose a decent one that workers will be able to use with confidence or even rely their life on it in a life and death situation [5]. As David M.Ewalt has said in his article "NO.1 The Knife": The knife is one of the most ancient tools in our arsenal, in use for more than 2 million years, longer than modern humans have walked the Earth [5]. It is evolved alongside us, changing form to meet our needs, and demands. This research will give the users a general idea of how to choose from different kind of knives and features that influence the performance of a cutlery. Most of the information are from researcher's experience of using cutlery in various kind of situation, and experience hard-core knife user or knife company's test from Youtube.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A lof of the knife experts has done a brilliant job of testing the different method of knives such as the durability of different knife structure, blade material, and ergonomics. Most of the forms of research results are showed in the from of videos or forums. The result of the experiment that they have done are great, but most of the resources are showed in the form of video, or on the forum; there is only a small quantity of the result are showed in the form of a paper report or an article. Additionally, the result of the current knife test are mostly too professional for the majority of the knife users to have access of. A decent of amount of the knife users are viewing knife as a tool just as well as the other tool the are using, such as a hammer, a screwdriver .etc. An worker who uses knife are not necessarily a knife enthusiast; they will not likely to spend nor needed to spend a considerable amount of valuable time to do research on a regular tool, just like they shouldn't be

spending two hours of time to picking up a hammer from home depot. Therefore, this research article will provide the information gathered and studied by the author for people that need a knife in order to accomplish their goals a straight forward instruction of what kind of knife should they get.

### **2.1. The mindset of choosing and treating your cutlery**

A knife can be important for any kind people as long as they needed it. Many of the times a decent quality knife will not only be a mighty helper in various kind of situation, but also can be a great factor in life and death situation. There are a lot of factor one needs to look when choosing a knife, the ease of displaying, good handle and cutting geometry, reliability.etc There are a numerous amount of different knife models in the market, users needs to find the one that fits their best needs; the one that fits other people's use does not necessarily be a good tool that everyone will be satisfied with. It is important to to build up experience and practice with the cutlery one choose to use, getting used to and be familiar with your tool will increase your degree of proficiency with the cutlery therefore makes the cutlery becoming a more productive for the task that one tries to accomplish. Practice with your cutlery will also help one to be familiar to the limit of the tool, such as the maximum strength of the knife's lock or blade, edge retention of the blade, corrosion resistant of the cutlery, heat resistant of the handle material.

To be over confident with the cutlery is unwise; no matter how reliable and how much vigor and care one have spend for selection your cutlery, there is always a chance that it might fail in the very moment that one needed it the most. The best mindset to treating one's cutlery or even any tools is to always be careful while using it, and always spend time to maintaining and repairing the cutlery. This is the most efficient way of increasing the durability of your cutlery. Maintaining your cutlery will minimum the risk of your cutlery be failing at the moment that one need to use it. The another good factor for constantly maintaining your knife is that it can increase the life expectancy of your knife before it broke, this will be financially beneficial for a lot of the knife users since a decent cutlery tool will cost a relatively large amount of money. One of the true story that are recorded on a article named "Knives save lives!" from "American Knife & Tools Institute" illustrate a perfect example of the importance of picking the right knife, practicing with your knife, and maintaining the knife. The story narrated that: [3] "A North Dakota farmer gets the sleeve of his work jacket caught in the power take-off of his tractor. As he struggles to free the cloth, he is able to get a one-hander out of his pocket, open it quickly, and cut the cloth before his fingers and arm are mangled by the revolving

shaft." In this case, if the farmer in the story did not pick the right knife, for example if he decide to pick the French Opinel pocket knife (A great traditional folding knife, has decent quality but cannot be opened with one hand) for carrying with him, then he will not be able to open it with just one hand. If he did not practice with how to open his knife with one hand with enough proficiency, then he might fail to open his knife in the stressful situation. If he did not maintain his knife regularly , then his knife might not be sharp enough to cut through the cloth that he is wearing. If any of the steps that are listed above are lacking, this story can have a very different ending, the farmer might not be able to save his arm or even his life from this situation.

### **2.2. General knife structure overview**

Generally, people will usually only have one knife as their EDC (stands for Everyday carry) set up. EDC gears generally need to have the two important features to follow: Compact, easy to display, and reliable". It needs to be able to serve in all kinds of situation, the examples are: self-defense, general cutting, escaping, and all kinds of different use that a knife are supposed to accomplish. It is supposed to be the one knife that does it all, although it might not be great at all the uses, but it will do the job in the vital moment. The type of knives that are capable for using as a EDC can be generally dividing into two types by their structure, Fixed blade, folding knives, and OTF knives (OTF stands for Out to the front). Fixed blades are the most reliable ones of all three since the handle and the blade of the fixed blade knives are one piece of complete steel. This will give the fixed blade knife the toughest reliability. But the downside is since this kind of structure is non folding, it will usually take a lot more space than the other two kinds. To display a fixed blade knife is very safe and reliable since pulling it out from the sheath all the effort it needs, but it is also the slowest one. OTF knives are the one that are easiest to display and takes only minimum space, which means it is suitable for conceal carrying. The disadvantage of it is that because of its complex structure, it is the least reliable structure out of all three. OTF knives are usually powered by a special spring structure that connected to a button, which means it is easily broken when it suffers impact from hard material, and can be jammed by the sand, and liquid. OTF knife's reliability is relatively low compare to the other type since the blade part is held by a hollow handle that contains the springs and switches of the knife, but good OTF knives that has high level of reliability does exist, but the price compare to a folding knife is relatively a lot higher. Microtech Ultratech series is a good example, various youtubers such as "X-Ring" and "Talon Sei"[2] has tested it with hardcore falling, blade destruction, dust and liquid resistance.etc, and it has a very decent performance. OTF knives are usually the most expensive one in all three kinds due to

the complex structure that it has; a decent OTF knife can cost up to 300 to 400 US dollar while a good EDC small fixed blade knife can be purchased for around 100 US dollar. For folding knives are in the middle of the two categories. Folding knives are decently reliable since it has a stable pivot part that holds the blade onto the handle, and most of the folding knives have a very reliable lock that make sure the blade will not move when you are using it. Folding knives generally have more reliability than a OTF knife, but not as good as the fixed blade knives. The display speed of folding knives is faster than fixed blade and slower than OTF knives. Folding knives usually have a thumb stud for fast display with one hand, so the difference between an OTF knife and a folding knife is relatively minimum. For the expense, the price of a high-end Zero Tolerance mass production folding knife with Bohler M390 powder steel blade, titanium and carbon fiber handle, ceramic pivot pin bearing is no more than 300 dollars, which is significantly lower than the price of an OTF knife.

### **2.3. Appearance**

The appearance of a knife is one of the features that are very easily to be ignored for people who are picking knives, and the people who are doing guide for how to picking up knives. When picking up knives, the first step is to valuating the features that you need your knife to have in order to best finish the job or mission that you are trying to accomplish. Generally, a knife with a more darker colour such as black, dark green, and brown will give it a more offensive look to the people who sees it, but it will also give the knife a better concealment because of the better fitting in the environment or your outfit depends on your use and different situation. A lighter colour such as yellow, pink, light green, and blue will make it looks less offensive. For the size of the knife, in most of the scenarios a bigger knife will be more offensive than a smaller knife, and it will be easier to get spotted as well. Another factor will influence the appearance and level of threat in people around you's mind is the shape of the blade. A more rounded edge without a tip will make it look less like a weapon but more like a tool. A straight, long and big piece of blade shape such as "tanto" will make it look a lot more offensive, and a sharp, long tip will stimulate people around the knife's eye socket, therefore calls up their defensive mind. The shape of a knife that are specialized for fighting will also increase the level of threat of the cutlery, a karambit, balisong, or short sword shaped knife will make people think the knife is a offensive weapon for hurting people. A blade with dark color coating will decrease the probability of a knife being spotted, it will also increase the corrosion resistance of a blade since the coating will isolate the steel from the matters that will corrupt the steel. Different types of knife structure will also making differences for the

concealment and level of threat, but it cannot be making into a simple rule; a OTF knife in most of the time will make it have a offensive appearance since it will easily classified into the weapon scenario in a lot of people's mind, but if a OTF knife is small enough then people will think it is a fun version of utility knife therefore thinking it has no threat to them at all. A folding knife works in a similar way, the same model of folding knife that has different colour such as black and pink will make people have a completely different cognition. For a fixed blade, it will sometimes considered to have a larger threat to the surroundings since it is non-foldable therefore it has a larger body.

If the knife a user use will be largely exposed into the surrounding people in a public area such as an office, the user can choose a knife with less offensive look, but not necessarily the actual function due to your use. In most of the cases, a user will want a knife that serves multiple purpose; maybe a user will use a knife to open packages or cutting papers in the office, but also as well using it as a self defense tool after work when they are in the public area. In this case, since a considerable amount of people classified knife as a weapon, and carrying a weapon will make them feel unsafe and being threatened, one of the solution is to choose a knife with a bright color in order to calm the people in the office and not making others have negative mindset about the knife user and decrease the potential problem the knife user might cause, but keep the full function of the knife so that it can still be used as a self defensive weapon. The other possible solution of this case is to carry a knife that have maximum concealment, such as choosing a dark green color handle with a black coating on the blade; this way will make the knife very hard to be spotted or memorized by other people therefore making the knife less a threat for the people around by making them have less chance of seeing it. In this method for the self defense part, when encountering dangerous such as a man wants to harm you, to have a dark green color will giving them a psychological threat and making them harder to spot your weapon. From the cases above, the way of a knife user choose their knife are variable, there is infinite way of choosing knife depending on your thought and mind, this paragraph is only elaborating the impact of the different appearance of knife, users can pick up their knife by matching the fact listed above to their own use and deciding what to pick as their tool of completing their task.

### **3. EXPERIENCE FROM SOME KNIFE USERS**

This research is accomplished by researcher's daily experience with different kind of cutlery, and information that the researcher has collected by reading articles from both internet, paper, and conversation with other knife experts through the years. The researcher

himself is a knife enthusiast collector that have years of experience of operating different kind of cutlery in various different situations and environments. A lot of the articles and information the researcher has viewed are from the website Bladehq.com, Bladeforum.com, American knife & tools Institute, youtube channel cutlery lover, Wranglestar, and Lugermonger. Experience knife user, my American host family parent Mitchell Fields, and a friend of researcher called Eric Wu are the one that the researcher had conversation with to exchange the opinion and experience with knives with.

The overall result of this research is the most important factor for selecting knife is to select one that fits one's need the most while having the best reliability and function with the least amount of expense. For a regular knife user to know and understand and recognize the different kind of knives' advantages and disadvantages therefore have a better mindset of how to selecting their cutlery. It is also for a knife user to have the right attitude with their cutlery and knows the importance of understanding the overall limitation, function, accessibility of their cutlery therefore making the cutlery stay the most productive phase for accomplishing their various tasks when needing the cutlery.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Notice that this research is not a complete and almighty guide for knife users, the knife user need to apply the information with rationality and adjusting it according to the real situation that individual knife users face. Currently for knife users, the main problem of picking cutlery that fulfill their need is that sometimes users are too concerned about the model of steel a knife is made of; certain trust worthy high quality model of steel does guarantee the quality of the knife in some degree, but in most of the times people should not be so obsess with the model of the steel since it will make them ignore a lot of the model of knives that has been tested through the years. A lot of the models of the high-end powder steels does not exist in 10 or 20 years before, but some very tough and durable knife models that does not come with the high-end steel models has been used by various people in the field for centuries. Models such as Kabar 1217, SOG Seal series, Buck 110, and Opinel series only comes with some budget steels(High carbon steels, AUS 8 stainless steel, 420HC.etc). But with extremely good heat treatments that these company offers, these budget steel can actually sometimes be far more reliable than the high-end steels with heat treatment that are not so good.

Also, these old knife models that has been tested for years has been proved that they are reliable already. For Kabar, once a hunter used this specific knife model killed a bear for self-defense while hunting[6], and it has been the official knife model that equipped by the US marines from World War 2 all the way up to the end of the Vietnam War, many soldiers has relied their life on it. SOG Seal series were tested and used by the Navy Seals for years as well. Buck 110 has been tested by various youtubers such as "Outdoor Boys"[4] with various cutting test, and the 420 budget steel(which now has been considered as one of the cheapest and low quality knife steel) are actually quite good. The general suggestion for knife users is: don't miss any good knives because of the steel they use, the reliable old knife models has been tested by users through the years which can almost guarantee the quality of the knife. The newer knife models that use high end materials sometimes can be actually not as reliable because it has not been tested and used by a considerable amount of knife users, which makes the quality of the knife be questionable.

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