

CUTLERS COLLECTIVE AUSTRALIA

Frequently asked questions

Q: Do you have a marketing strategy?

A: Marketing is a work in progress. We want it to be as cost effective and organic as possible. Social media promotion and SEO will be our biggest help initially. Also the knife shows and knife magazine. With some conservative projected figures, there is a marketing budget of about \$4000+ for the first year. We can achieve quite a lot with that. That is a \$4000 spend to get customers to see you and your products, and provide a simple and easy way to make their purchase.

Q: The other thing to consider would be product quality/ verification. Not sure how you'd go about doing that other than only stocking reputable makers, and who's the judge on who is reputable?

A: Yes, the reputation of the site relies heavily on the makers making a quality product. Hence the requirement of AKG or ABA membership, or an endorsement by a senior member of those groups.

Q: Would that only include full members of AKG? The requirement for probationary membership is only a 50% pass.

A: I don't think it needs to. The 50% pass is considered quite low, and is only really there to ensure there is some level of skill. It's more about the honest representation of work. Some people will have \$100 knives, some will have \$1000 knives. As long as the product is represented accurately, it should be the buyer who determines the quality they are after.

The platform we are using allows for both product and vendor reviews. This is one small part which puts accountability back onto the vendor. Customers aren't silly, they will do all the research they need to be sure of their purchase. They will look up the vendors online profiles and suss them out.

Q: Do you intend to have makers and their blades to you for storage and inspection?

A: No, that would assume I was to be the absolute judge of quality, which is not the direction I want to go. Maybe we would have our own quality inspection group and have our own requirements similar but more stringent than the AKG.

From a shipping perspective, if several knives are purchased from different vendors, vendor will receive their payment and shipping fee, along with the shipping instructions as if they were the sole vendor. The customer (and us as admin) will see it as 1 order.

Q: Are you planning to provide photography etc? Or just add products to a catalogue?

A: Each vendor will have their own login to add their product, upload photos, manage sales, etc.

Q: So self managed, but you provide the infrastructure?

A: Yes, It will be like eBay or etsy, but with the sole purpose of promoting our community.

Q: I suppose this would provide a medium for them (vendors) to make money without having to advertise.

A: Yes, that is exactly the crux of this. The fees and commissions paid by the vendors, are what pays for the advertising and promotion. Like anything, we as a community can be stronger in numbers.

Q: Is it going to be an online store or Facebook type thing?

A: Full online store. Automated checkout, credit card facility. Automatic shipping calculator and Invoice generator.

Q: Is there a reason you went with kitchen cutlery over all blades? I'm sure the shooters mag would do a spin if you had custom hunting knives.

A: I wanted this to appeal to a very specific genre. The home cook market is massive, and only getting bigger. It will be more than just knives, I have a wood turner on board (pun intended), who does spoon carving and pepper grinders and all sorts. The bush craft and hunting would be targeted at a very different audience and at this stage would be a whole another project.

Q: So the idea is pay more monthly fee, pay less transaction fee

A: Yes, we have done this to help us budget our advertising. Also, you get more features with higher plans like the Ministore, email addresses, and space on the home page banners.

Q: At the moment does it have facilities to do made to order items? Made to order would mainly be kiridashis and cheese knives.

A: You have 3 options for out of stock items. 'No stock' where it won't allow a customer to add to the cart. 'Buy in advance' allows the customer to backorder the item. And 'Sign up for notification' where it will allow customers to sign up to get an email when there is stock again. These options are great for repetitive products like simple knives, bottle openers, etc.

Q: Also a non listing mode or maybe private listing that's link only so I can bill people through it for custom orders or other stuff that's not on the site as a listing.

A: Each product can have one of 3 statuses. Active, Hidden, Disabled. Hidden items are available, but won't show in a search. Disabled items are great if you want to take something off quickly but you might need to put back up, or for templates.

You can even set each item to only be available to certain customer groups.

Q: If you could set up your own auto price for customs that'd be amazing.

A: You could do it as a price per inch / mm, and have options for handles, materials, colours, Damascus layers, and have the price adjust accordingly as a fixed amount or a percentage. It would take some setting up, but it would be very effective.

Q: Have an easy way to go between seller view and regular buyer/ full site view. Etsy does not do this well and its annoying for trying to figure out what terms to use to come up in their search engine and seeing if the listing looks nice to a buyer.

A: There is a preview button on the top of the listing page so you can check it as you are adding information before the item is active. There is also a Google search preview to show how it will look in google search results. Including the description, price and stock status.