

National Changhua University of Education

Department of Business Administration

# Maestro Wu

OK.

International Marketing

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## Table of Contents

 Introduction .....	3
STP .....	3
Segmentation .....	3
Targeting .....	5
Positioning .....	5
Product .....	7
Pricing.....	8
Promotion .....	8
3P .....	10
People.....	10
Process .....	11
Physical Evidence .....	11
Conclusion.....	12

## Introduction

Maestro Wu is a traditional knife brand from Kinmen, Taiwan, with a history of over 80 years. What makes it unique is its use of discarded artillery shells from Kinmen's former battlefield, combining remnants of war with traditional craftsmanship to produce high-quality knives with collectible value. The brand embodies both historical and cultural heritage as well as environmental sustainability.

According to America culture, after World War II, American middle-class families used home dinners to display social status and etiquette, often inviting their bosses as a way to expand networks. As economic conditions improved, the focus of dinners shifted toward emotional connection. Sociologist Alice Julier observed that many families continue to host guests at home to express hospitality and care, emphasizing the guest's comfort.<sup>1</sup> The research shows that over 79 percent of Americans believe shared meals with family and friends will continue to take place at home—even after the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the American middle segment holds significant purchasing power. Those in the 55th to 99th income percentiles collectively own 67% of the nation's wealth. This is our ideal target market: individuals who appreciate unique, high-quality products— and are willing to pay for.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the cultural characteristics of the United States, we believe that Maestro Wu's knives are not just kitchen tools, but also gifts that combine history, craftsmanship, and aesthetics—perfect for middle-class American households that value quality living and the art of hospitality. ✓

## STP

### Segmentation

(1) Demographic:

- Low-income segment: Individuals earning less than NT\$52,000 per month.
- Middle-income segment: Individuals earning between NT\$52,000 and NT\$156,000 per month.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bonappetit.com/story/dinner-party-history>

<sup>2</sup> <https://justcook.butcherbox.com/americans-want-to-host-dinner-at-home-more-than-ever/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/a-visual-breakdown-of-who-owns-americas-wealth/>

- High-income segment: Individuals earning more than NT\$156,000 per month.<sup>4</sup>

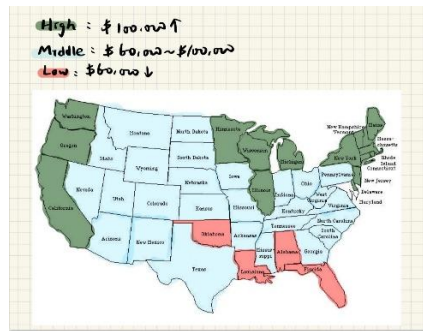


Figure 1

## (2) Behavior:

Consumers are categorized into four groups based on their knife usage patterns: Chefs, Home-cooking families, Outdoor Lovers, and Collectors. ✓

- Chefs use knives very frequently, approximately 10 times per day, which is considered high usage frequency. They tend to purchase new knives every 1 to 2 years.
- Home-cooking families use knives at least 1 time per week, and they typically buy new knives every 2 to 5 years.
- Outdoor Lovers use knives about 1 to 4 times per month, and their purchase frequency is approximately every 1 to 3 years.
- Collectors have very low usage frequency, but they may purchase 1 to 3 knives per year, often for collection purposes rather than regular use. ✓

## (3) Psychology:

Consumers are categorized according to their core values and motivations.

- Pragmatists – These consumers value practicality, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. They make decisions based on logic and what delivers the most function for the least cost.
- Traditionalists – A form of food culture based on traditional customs and values, in which family members, relatives, or community members gather regularly or during special occasions to share food, exchange emotions, and maintain relationships.
- Self-Reliant / Independence Seekers – These consumers prioritize independence,

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/a-visual-breakdown-of-who-owns-americas-wealth/>

preparedness, and survival.

- Aesthetic-Driven Consumers – They are motivated by design, beauty, and personal expression. Their purchasing choices are often influenced by how a product looks and feels.
- Eco-Conscious Consumers – These individuals care deeply about sustainability, ethics, and environmental responsibility.

## Targeting

Hospitality-oriented middle-income households (West & North east Coast, USA)

## Positioning

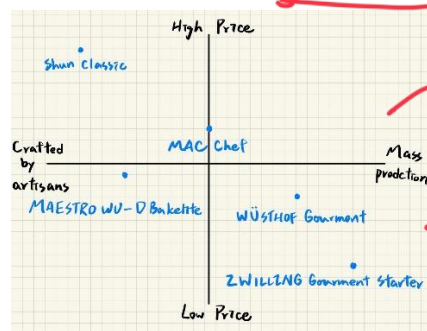


Figure 2

This is our positioning map. We believe Maestro Wu knives firmly occupy a space in the high-quality and mid-to-low price segment, competing with both Japanese handcrafted knives and German precision-made ones. You can see that every brand has its own unique strengths — from machine-made affordability to artisan exclusivity. Let us now look into how each of these brands presents its value and where Maestro Wu stands out.

- WÜSTHOF: The WÜSTHOF Gourmet series is made in Germany and primarily machine-produced, using laser-cutting technology on high-carbon, stain-resistant steel. Its lightweight design makes it ideal for everyday home cooking. Priced in the low-to-mid range, it emphasizes practicality and value rather than artisanal craftsmanship or collectability.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hichef.com.tw/products/9281-5>

*Figure 3*

- Kai Shun: The Shun Classic series is handcrafted by Japanese artisans, featuring a VG-MAX steel core and 68-layer Damascus stainless steel cladding. It blends traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics. The handle is made of ebony Pakka Wood. Due to its fine craftsmanship and premium materials, Shun belongs to the mid-to-high price range, often chosen for gifts or by professional chefs.<sup>6</sup>

*Figure 4*

- MAC Knife: The MAC Chef series is made in Japan and produced with a semi-handcrafted process, combining machine precision with artisan skill. Crafted from molybdenum steel, it features a slim, sharp blade with European-style shapes. Known for its balance, light weight, and sharpness, it is ideal for professionals and serious home cooks. Priced in the mid-range, it offers a strong balance between performance and affordability.<sup>7</sup>

*Figure 5*

- The ZWILLING Gourmet 3-piece set is made in Germany using precision-stamped manufacturing and the brand's signature ice-hardening FRIODUR® technique. Each knife is crafted from a single piece of high-carbon stainless steel, combining durability with lightweight maneuverability. While primarily machine-produced, the craftsmanship quality is high, aiming for long-lasting performance. The traditional triple-rivet handle offers

<sup>6</sup> <https://shun.kaiusa.com/classic-blonde-3-pc-starter-set-2.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.macknife.com/products/chef-series-set-3-pcs-chef-32>

ergonomic comfort and balance. This set belongs to the mid-price range, ideal for home chefs

seeking dependable everyday tools with professional-grade features.<sup>8</sup>

think  
target  
think  
product  
adaptation



Figure 6

## Product

Maestro Wu's knives are handcrafted by highly skilled artisans using specially treated recycled artillery steel. This material offers exceptional hardness and durability, while presenting a distinctive texture and finish. The brand features a rich and diverse product line, with over 300 knife models across 13 series<sup>9</sup>, designed to meet the needs of a wide range of consumers.

The knives come with six types of handles: Wooden handles provide a warm appearance and comfortable grip but require regular maintenance and should not be soaked in water.<sup>10</sup> Modern handles feature an innovative ergonomic design that ensures stability and grip. Made from corrosion-resistant materials, they are durable and easy to clean.<sup>11</sup> Pakka wood handles offer better grip than traditional wood, with water resistance, anti-slip qualities, and high durability, although they are slightly heavier and may feel bulky for users with smaller hands.<sup>12</sup> Modern steel handles are lighter than traditional steel, corrosion-resistant, easy to clean, and include special anti-slip etching.<sup>13</sup> Matte black steel handles are fully metallic with a sleek industrial look. They are extremely durable and easy to clean, though heavier and colder to the touch in winter, and lack anti-slip features.<sup>14</sup> Sandalwood steel handles exude a premium aesthetic with cultural and collectible value. However, they are more expensive and require regular oiling to prevent drying and cracking.<sup>15</sup>

Maestro Wu also offers elegantly designed knife gift sets, typically containing two to three practical

<sup>8</sup> <https://shun.kaiusa.com/classic-blonde-3-pc-starter-set-2.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product.php>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=28>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=26>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=14>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=3>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=173>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/product-detail.php?id=147>

knife types. These gift boxes combine secure storage with aesthetic presentation, making them an ideal choice for both personal use and tasteful gifting. ✓✓

Customers can opt for personalized engraving services, allowing custom text on the blade. This adds a unique personal touch and commemorative value, transforming the knife into not just a practical tool but a symbolic collectible or meaningful gift.

In addition, Maestro Wu provides a two-year product warranty from the date of purchase, along with knife repair services—ensuring that customers receive reliable after-sales support and peace of mind when encountering any issues.

## Pricing

✓✓ We chose to use the market skimming pricing strategy, Maestro Wu<sup>16</sup> emphasizes professional craftsmanship and special artillery steel, want to attract customers who appreciate the quality and value of our products, price is the first step for customers to choose goods, compared to the material and function is also more intuitive, so the price is the most direct way to determine the value of the product. The knife handles we chose to use for the gift box are Bakelite handles, which are waterproof, non-slip and durable with an ergonomic grip. Based on our analysis, a box of 3 Bakelite handles for \$169-\$250, we decided to use \$220 as the final price to enter the US market. With the lowest price of \$169 including cost, plus the option of CIF shipping cost, insurance and customs duty, the gift box needs to be packaged with a small blessing card, Maestro Wu provides engraving service, complete after-sales service and 2-year warranty, all of which made us set the price at \$220.

## Promotion

- Product Offering Tailored to U.S. Middle-Class Culture

In line with Maestro Wu's brand heritage and product philosophy—and considering the American middle-class tradition of hosting gatherings at home—we propose introducing the knives to the U.S. market in the form of curated gift sets. ✓ good

We selected a gift set composed of a fruit knife, an 8-inch slicing knife, and a serrated utility knife,

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<sup>16</sup>[https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/?srsltid=AfmBOorG05ywShfgk8d59TQGL8JC4J\\_5UMXtirJe03xPhjpsL-aXm\\_gS](https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/?srsltid=AfmBOorG05ywShfgk8d59TQGL8JC4J_5UMXtirJe03xPhjpsL-aXm_gS)

all featuring Pakka wood (phenolic) handles. This material offers excellent resistance to heat, moisture, and corrosion, while being highly durable and easy to maintain. With its dense structure, non-absorbency, and ease of cleaning, the handle perfectly aligns with the American preference for low-maintenance and hygienic kitchen tools.

These three knife types were carefully chosen to suit various American household cooking scenarios—from daily meal prep to weekend barbecues and festive gatherings—making the set practical, versatile, and highly relevant.

Each knife is forged from recycled artillery steel left behind in Kinmen, Taiwan, and crafted through more than 80 years of inherited craftsmanship and dozens of hand-forging steps. The result is a knife that not only offers premium functionality but also carries a unique texture, history, and cultural value. This gift set becomes not just a kitchen toolset, but a meaningful symbol of craftsmanship, heritage, and storytelling.

- Packaging & Personalization

The gift set comes in a modern wood-grain textured box, featuring a clean and elegant design suitable for festive gifting or personal collection. Customers can opt for laser engraving personalization, adding names or messages to the blade, making it not only a practical tool but also a memorable gift with emotional significance—perfect for hosting, holidays, or special occasions.

- Digital Marketing & Content Strategy

The official website will be updated with English and other language versions, enabling international consumers to better understand the brand story, knife features, and recipe content.

We will utilize platforms like Instagram and YouTube to regularly share product highlights, new releases, and cooking demonstration videos, increasing customer engagement.

Additionally, we plan to collaborate with well-known American chefs, restaurants, food bloggers, and video creators to present Maestro Wu knives in authentic cooking settings, showcasing both their practicality and cultural value.

- Customer Engagement & Loyalty Programs

To lower the barrier for first-time buyers, we will offer first-purchase discounts or trial periods. A

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whose cultural story?

no fit with price skimming

membership program will allow customers to accumulate points redeemable for products, receive exclusive discounts, and gain early access to new releases.

We will also encourage customers to leave reviews on the official website, e-commerce platforms, and knife-related communities to gather genuine feedback and enhance brand trust. To boost word-of-mouth marketing, we'll create shareable unboxing and usage videos, helping the brand spread organically among potential users.

- Distribution Strategy in the U.S.

(1) Online Channels:

Multilingual support, diverse payment methods, and international shipping options will be implemented on the official website. Maestro Wu will establish flagship stores on popular U.S. e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Walmart, as well as on knife-specialty sites.

(2) Offline Channels:

The brand will set up dedicated sections in department stores and kitchenware retailers, and collaborate with premium gift shops to promote limited editions and custom products. Long-term procurement partnerships with restaurants and hotels will also be explored. Additionally, participating in industry exhibitions will help increase brand exposure and attract potential business partners.

### 3P

**People**

*Service & Sales*

- User: Housewives, househusbands, cooking-enthusiast parents, and young couples who use knives frequently in their daily lives. They care about functionality, sharpness, and whether the design matches their kitchen aesthetics.
- Guest: Friends, relatives, colleagues or bosses invited to home gatherings. They experience the product as guests and form impressions based on the host's use and display of the knife.
- Influencer: Food YouTubers and lifestyle influencers who create cooking or home content. They promote the brand by featuring the knives in videos or posts, influencing public opinion and encouraging trial.
- Staff: Customer service agents, online support staff, and social media managers. They

represent the brand in digital spaces and assist users before, during, and after the purchase.

- **Maker:** Knife craftsmen from Maestro Wu in Kinmen. They bring traditional forging techniques, emphasizing craftsmanship, heritage, and quality control.
- **Retail Frontline:** In-store sales associates, cookware shop staff, and product promoters at pop-up events. They interact directly with customers, offer usage advice, and demonstrate products.

### Process

Unfamiliar with the brand name Maestro Wu:

? Process customers go through for service.

- **U.S. Consumers Lack Trust in Taiwan's Knife Brands.** Provide brand story, introduction of craftsmen, and background introduction of Kinmen culture on the counter of partner kitchenware stores to highlight the value of culture and craftsmanship.
- **Not clear about the maintenance of knives:** The service life of knives can be easily affected by wrong maintenance. Include a maintenance guide card in the gift box and set up a "Maintenance Tutorial" on the official website.
- **Customer service could not reply immediately:** Because of communication difficulties in time zones. Enhanced official customer service system with live customer service during US time
- **Not sure who this knife is suitable for:** Too many knives make it difficult to choose. Provides an online quick gift selection tool with design questions to help customers find the perfect gift combination.
- **Received damaged or defective products:** Long distance shipping may result in broken tips or dented boxes. Provides 7 days free return and exchange (half of the shipping cost will be charged).

### Physical Evidence

When customers send out a gift set, the packaging includes not only the knife itself but also photos of the knife-making process and an explanatory card—allowing the recipient to feel the care and dedication behind the gift. In addition, a maintenance instruction card is provided to help customers use and care for their knives properly, ensuring extended product longevity.

The brand also actively shares videos of master artisans crafting knives and shows the brand's story through social media and its official website. This ongoing engagement helps people understand that these knives are more than just tools; they are the result of meticulous handcraftsmanship. The website features detailed product descriptions and a dedicated maintenance section with images and guides<sup>17</sup>, making the shopping experience easier and helping customers feel more confident in using their knives.

## **Conclusion**

Through STP analysis and competitor comparison, we positioned Maestro Wu as a culturally rich yet practical Taiwanese knife brand with a mid-to-low pricing strategy. Our competitive advantage lies in the brand's origin—knives forged from traditional military techniques—and its alignment with the needs of middle-income U.S. households that value hospitality, especially those located in the West and Northeast Coasts. These consumers care about functionality, but also appreciate the emotional and cultural value that kitchen tools bring to social gatherings.

Our pricing strategy focuses on affordability while maintaining a sense of quality, making Maestro Wu knives an attractive choice for everyday cooking and hosting. In terms of distribution, we plan to leverage mainstream U.S. e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Etsy, while enhancing the customer experience through our official website that emphasizes brand storytelling and care tips. For promotion, we focus on visually driven platforms like Instagram and YouTube, highlighting our handcrafted process and the warmth of home cooking. Collaborations with local lifestyle influencers will further deepen our connection with our target audience.

In summary, with a compelling cultural background, accessible pricing, and strategic marketing, Maestro Wu is well-positioned to enter the U.S. market and become a trusted kitchen companion for hospitality-driven, middle-income families.

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<sup>17</sup><https://www.maestrowu.com.tw/?srsltid=AfmBOop6eAMtutpsfONeVvDwLiWT7ValMmcxQCBo>