



CATRA

The World's Cutting Technology Organisation

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN OFFERING A KNIFE SHARPENING SERVICE

1. ***Decide which markets you intend to service, i.e.***

- Restaurants and Hotels
- Butchers
- Abattoirs
- Catering businesses and food retailers
- Meat and Food Processing Factories
- Domestic Households
- Factories using knives for leather, rubber, plastic etc.
- Also some types of machine blades

2. ***Within each market section, decide what type of knife has to be sharpened and therefore what sharpened angle is required and how often the service will be required.***

As a guide, the following angles and service periods are recommended:

KNIFE TYPE	ANGLE	SERVICE PERIOD
Butchers	25° to 30°	1 to 3 weeks
Slaughtermans	20° to 30°	1 to 3 weeks
Cooks/ Chefs	25° to 30°	1 to 2 months
Domestic Kitchen (Plain Edges)	25° to 35°	3 to 12 months
Industrial	25° to 35°	1 to 3 weeks
Table	55° to 60°	12 to 24 months
Pen and Pocket	35° to 45°	12 to 24 months

Probably, with the exception of table knives, an edge angle of 30° is a good working angle for all knives and so most service sharpeners use 30° for all sharpening.

3. ***Marketing of the service is more difficult than the actual sharpening.***

You must have the ability to sell the service. Experience has shown that it is not possible to obtain commitment from potential customers without providing a "free of charge" sample service. Once this is done, the sharpness of the knife produced by the CATRA knife sharpeners sells the service for you. A good marketing plan and technique is the key to the service.

4. ***When selling the service, beware of professional knife users.***

They claim to know it all - usually they don't - but take care not to upset them.

5. ***Consider how you plan to operate the service.***

The main ways are:

- a. Collect and deliver knives from your customer and sharpen them on your own premises. This is not usually attractive to the client as he is without his knives whilst you have them and, of course, you have to make two journeys. But this system is often operated where you own the knives and rent them to the user, so exchanging the knives every 1, 2 or 4 weeks with a set that you sharpen away from the client.

Knife Sharpening Services continued

- b. Mobile service - with the knife sharpener in your vehicle which can either be powered by an onboard inverter or by "borrowing" electricity from your client via an extension lead. Unfortunately, the option of using a 12 volt motor, powered from the vehicle battery, is far more expensive than using an inverter, which converts the 12v DC to 240v AC. CATRA can supply suitable inverters for fitting in your vehicle

6. **Consider cost build up service.**

This is actually made up as follows:

Example (2010 UK prices GBP) Direct sharpening costs/knife sharpened

	CATRASHARP	CATRA I100
Grinding Wheel replacement cost/knife	2.9p	2.2p
Amortisation of machine over X sharpenings	0.1p	0.1p
Labour Cost (average Y minutes @ £15/ hour)	25p	16.8p
	28p	19.1p
CATRASHARP X = 100,000 Y=1		
I100 X = 250,000 Y=0.6		

In addition, the indirect costs have to be calculated such as vehicle cost, non productive labour cost, fuel, advertising material and marketing costs.

These indirect costs dramatically affect the cost of sharpening, for example - a visit regularly to a food processing plant to sharpen 200 knives would be profitable at a price of 75p, whereas infrequent visits to restaurants with reasonable travelling distances between them and sharpening only 6 to 12 knives per visit would need a price of £2 per knife to be profitable.

In 2010 typical charges are in the range of £1.30 to £2.50/ knife

7. **Consider Ways in which the service can be expanded, such as:**

- Sell new knives
- Sharpen scissors
- Sharpen garden and hand tools
- Hire knives

8. **Important selling points.**

The important selling points when dealing with Industrial and Commercial customers are the productivity advantage to them of sharp knives over dull knives. Sharp knives allow faster processing speeds, typically twice as fast, are generally safer to use and reduce strain on operators, typically 50% less effort than a blunt knife, this is particularly useful in reducing the risk of repetitive strain injury.

The CATRA machines do not overheat the cutting edge during sharpening which means that it is not softened which often happens with many of our competitor machines. The advantage therefore from a CATRA machine sharpen knife is your customer will get up to 50% more useful life between each sharpening. Typical sharpening systems that **do over heat** and therefore **soften edges** are:-

Dry grinding with conventional grinding wheels or abrasive belts

Wet sharpening where the coolant is not well controlled

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