

# Marketing Strategy Research on the Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage Craft and Modern Market of Gaocheng Palace Noodles

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**Abstract:** Taking Gaocheng Palace Noodles, an intangible cultural heritage of Hebei Province and a national geographical indication product, as the research object, this paper sorts out the product overview and market environment, and formulates a marketing strategy for it. Relying on advantages such as a long history, unique craftsmanship and rich nutrition, Gaocheng Palace Noodles has formed a diverse consumer group. By using PEST and SWOT analysis, the paper identifies the development opportunities as well as problems such as short shelf life and insufficient channel coverage. With the help of the STP model, the positioning of medium and high-end hand-made noodles is established, and a differentiated marketing strategy is constructed from the 4P perspective. The research shows that cultural empowerment and channel integration are the core development paths, and it is necessary to balance traditional craftsmanship with modern production, which can provide practical references for the sustainable development of the industry.

**Keywords:** Gaocheng Palace Noodles; Marketing strategy; Intangible cultural heritage products; Differentiated competition

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## 1. Overview of Gaocheng Palace Noodles

Gaocheng Palace Noodles is a famous local specialty of Gaocheng District, Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province, a provincial intangible cultural heritage, and a national geographical indication product certified in 2019. Its manufacturing technique has a history of more than 2,000 years. Once exclusively supplied to the imperial palace, it is also known as Tribute Noodles or Imperial Noodles, and has formed a complete processing technique and a unique dietary culture<sup>[1]</sup>. At present, there are about 14 large-scale enterprises and dozens of family workshops in the local area, with an annual output of 16,000 tons and an output value of over 200 million yuan in 2023, driving more than 10,000 employed people. The product is made from refined flour, high-quality edible oil and refined salt, adopting the craft of “three kneadings, six proofings and nine rollings”. The noodles are thin, hollow, white and even, featuring heat resistance without becoming mushy, no breakage when

reheated, and easy preparation. They are suitable for daily staple food as well as for patients and postpartum women. With a protein content of 12.3%, 3–5% higher than ordinary dried noodles, and a sodium content of  $\leq 300\text{mg}/100\text{g}$ , Gaocheng Palace Noodles is different from ordinary dried noodles in both nutrition and craftsmanship<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **2. Analysis of the market environment of Gaocheng Palace Noodles**

### **2.1. PEST analysis**

#### **2.1.1. Political environment**

In terms of the political environment, the state has strengthened the protection of intangible cultural heritage and issued relevant policies to promote the development of agricultural product processing industry and traditional food industry. Under the campaign of “One Pool, Two New Initiatives and Ten Thousand Enterprises” in Gaocheng, the balance of loans for agriculture-related and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises of the rural credit union reached 14.4 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 15.06%, providing financial and technical support for Palace Noodle enterprises. The local government invests 3 million yuan in special funds for intangible cultural heritage every year, supplemented by tax reductions and land use preferential policies, which guarantee the standardized construction and technological innovation of enterprises.

#### **2.1.2. Economic environment**

From the perspective of the regional consumer market, as a major province of pasta consumption, Hebei Province saw a year-on-year increase of 14.3% in the retail sales of grain, oil and food by above-scale units in the first three quarters of 2025, providing a favorable environment for Gaocheng Palace Noodles to expand the local market. The per capita disposable income in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is about 10.7% higher than the national average, with a high frequency of pasta consumption and a solid consumption foundation. E-commerce has helped the brand break through geographical restrictions, where the cumulative sales of Qingzhu Palace Noodles on Douyin have reached 4.45 million kilograms, with an average monthly sales volume of 500,000 yuan, and e-commerce revenue accounts for one third of the total, which has effectively enhanced its national popularity and influence.

#### **2.1.3. Social environment**

The rise of national trends has boosted the consumption of traditional cultural products. As an intangible cultural heritage of Hebei with a history of more than 500 years, Gaocheng Palace Noodles has its cultural value becoming an important consumption highlight. The medium and high-end consumer groups are willing to pay for cultural connotations, making it a characteristic cultural gift and a regional symbol of Gaocheng. The Qingzhu Palace Noodles Cultural Park has received a considerable number of tourists, and the experience of intangible cultural heritage has effectively promoted consumption decisions and further driven market demand.

#### **2.1.4. Technological environment**

Technological innovation underpins Gaocheng Palace Noodles in addressing production challenges and boosting competitiveness. Traditional manual production has limited daily output, so enterprises have expanded production significantly by introducing electrified equipment and constructing new factories, fulfilling large e-commerce orders while preserving the traditional taste. In standardized production, technological upgrading

has resolved quality instability: modern factories adopt constant temperature and humidity control and precise ingredient proportioning, effectively stabilizing product quality and solidifying brand reputation.

## **2.2. SWOT analysis**

### **2.2.1. Strengths**

Gaocheng Palace Noodles inherits the ancient craftsmanship of more than 500 years and is made through 16 core processes, forming a unique quality of “as thin as hair, hollow and translucent”. The craftsmanship was included in the Hebei Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection List in 2013 and approved as a national geographical indication product in 2017. At present, its core manufacturing techniques have obtained 9 national patent protections, building an irreproducible technical advantage in the niche market of hand-made noodles.

Practical tests show Gaocheng Palace Noodles has a 12.3% protein content, 3–5% higher than ordinary dried noodles, with sodium  $\leq 300\text{mg}/100\text{g}$ , moisture  $\leq 13.0\%$ , natural breakage rate  $\leq 2.0\%$  and cooking loss  $\leq 10.0\%$ , all core physical and chemical indicators surpass the industry average. Adhering to a zero-additive formula with only wheat flour, water and edible salt as raw materials, it aligns with the healthy consumption trend, boasting an e-commerce repurchase rate of over 70%, far higher than similar products<sup>[3]</sup>. In recent years, new fruit and vegetable variants including spinach and carrot noodles have been launched, with a marked rise in vitamin content that further reinforces its nutritional differentiation edge.

### **2.2.2. Weaknesses**

Constrained by traditional craftsmanship and a zero-additive formula, Gaocheng Palace Noodles has a mere 6-month shelf life, which adds costs and risks to warehousing, logistics and channel distribution, and notably hinders the expansion of cross-regional offline markets, resulting in an offline distribution rate of under 15% in non-Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei areas. Meanwhile, the short shelf life demands stricter cold chain transportation and inventory management, further squeezing the product’s profit margin.

Currently, brand communication only centers on superficial cultural symbols like “intangible cultural heritage” and “imperial tribute”, lacking in-depth exploration of the underlying craft details, folk inheritance stories and dietary cultural connotations. A consumer cognition survey indicates merely 30% of consumers grasp its core cultural selling points, leaving the cultural value not fully converted into consumption motivation.

### **2.2.3. Opportunities**

Contemporary consumers’ demand for healthy food is on the rise, with “zero additives” and “natural nutrition” as core demands that align well with Gaocheng Palace Noodles’ product features. Meanwhile, the national trend culture has fueled a consumption boom for intangible cultural heritage products and greatly raised young groups’ acceptance of traditional culture, creating favorable conditions for the product’s cultural marketing and expansion among young consumers.

Aging intensification has spurred surging demand for easy-to-digest, high-nutrition pasta among the over-60s. China’s silver economy consumption market hit 6.6 trillion yuan in 2024, and this group has far higher purchase frequency and brand loyalty than other age groups. Gaocheng Palace Noodles’ feature of “melting in the mouth after 8 minutes of boiling” perfectly caters to the needs of the elderly, post-operative patients, postpartum women and other special groups, boasting enormous potential in the niche market.

#### **2.2.4. Threats**

Gaocheng Palace Noodles is highly dependent on high-quality wheat. In 2024, the price of high-quality wheat rose by 12% year-on-year, and coupled with the annual increase in logistics and labor costs, the profit margin has been compressed. If the existing pricing is maintained, the profitability will be under continuous pressure; if the price is raised, some price-sensitive consumers may be lost.

Revised Food Safety Law and stricter supervision have raised requirements for production environment, hygiene standards and labeling sharply, pushing up the elimination rate of small workshops in the industry. In the Gaocheng Palace Noodles sector, family workshops failing to complete standardized transformation promptly may risk market withdrawal, which will further undermine the overall production capacity and supply chain stability.

### **3. Target market marketing strategy of Gaocheng Palace Noodles**

Based on an in-depth analysis of the market environment of Gaocheng Palace Noodles, this paper systematically formulates the product's market strategy by adopting the STP model. Through multi-dimensional three-dimensional segmentation, a three-dimensional layout of core + potential + nurturing markets, and scenario-based implementation of core positioning, the strategy is made more in line with market reality and more practical.

#### **3.1. Market segmentation**

Gaocheng Palace Noodles is mainly consumed in three key scenarios: daily family meals, festival gifting and catering channels. Daily family consumption is the core, festival gifting sees a sales peak thanks to its intangible cultural heritage and geographical indication attributes, and catering channels meet the ingredient R&D needs of specialty catering and prepared food enterprises. Its core consumers are middle and high-income housewives aged 35–55 in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, where pasta consumption is rooted, transportation is convenient and consumption strengths stand out. This group values traditional emotional bonds, mostly buys for the “taste of childhood”, has strong health awareness and recognizes its zero-additive quality, boasting high brand loyalty and an e-commerce repurchase rate of over 70%.

#### **3.2. Target market selection**

##### **3.2.1. Core market: Family consumption market in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei urban agglomeration**

The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region is Gaocheng Palace Noodles' fundamental and core sales market, boasting robust consumption capacity and a solid market base. With per capita disposable income above the national average, high consumption frequency of Chinese pasta and relatively strong brand awareness here, it is a key market to deepen cultivation, with the core focus on boosting product penetration and repurchase rates <sup>[4]</sup>.

##### **3.2.2. Potential market: National silver economy market**

China's aging intensification has boosted the elderly's demand for easy-to-digest, high-nutrition and zero-additive pasta, with the 2024 silver economy market hitting 6.6 trillion yuan. Though this group has a small single purchase volume, their purchase frequency and brand loyalty outpace other age groups. Gaocheng Palace Noodles' features and zero-additive formula perfectly meet the needs of the elderly, post-operative patients, postpartum women and other groups, forming a national niche market with remarkable potential <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.2.3. Nurturing market: National young office worker market and B-end catering and prepared food market**

Young office workers aged 25–35 are the main online consumers, focusing on convenient and healthy diets. Gaocheng Palace Noodles has built a national audience via e-commerce platforms like Douyin, with favorable conditions for channel expansion. In 2024, the frozen noodles, prepared food and specialty catering markets kept growing, creating new scenarios for palace noodles. Enterprises can enter the high-end ingredient B-end market with their distinctive quality, a key long-term development direction.

### **3.3. Market positioning**

Gaocheng Palace Noodles' market positioning rests on three differentiated supports: highlighting its 500-year history, imperial tribute status, and Hebei intangible cultural heritage plus national geographical indication dual certification; strengthening health and nutrition through zero-additive certification and clear nutritional data to fit the healthy consumption trend; and injecting intangible cultural heritage by presenting craft stories, inheritance and dietary culture in packaging and communication to turn cultural value into consumption motivation.

## **4. Analysis of the target market marketing strategy of Gaocheng Palace Noodles**

### **4.1. Product strategy**

In product strategy, Gaocheng Palace Noodles has formed a complete product system and built differentiated advantages with an overall product concept. Core products inherit intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship with protein content exceeding industry standards. Formal products adopt a serialized layout: the traditional original flavor highlights its Ming Dynasty tribute identity with retro packaging, while the health series includes spinach noodles, carrot noodles and other varieties. In R&D, the company invests 5% of annual revenue in product development, focusing on low-GI sugar-controlled noodles and DHA-added children's nutritional noodles, scheduled for launch in 2026.

### **4.2. Pricing strategy**

Gaocheng Palace Noodles employs a value-oriented differentiated pricing strategy. The basic model is priced at 18 yuan/500g in supermarkets, gift wooden boxes at 88 yuan/set, and customized co-branded corporate products starting at 158 yuan. Pricing accounts for intangible cultural heritage premium and high-quality wheat accounting for 40% of raw material costs, making it 15–20% higher than similar hand-made noodles overall. New products are initially priced high and adjusted moderately via promotions later.

### **4.3. Channel strategy**

The channel strategy uses a triple-channel system. Offline, it focuses on the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, building a three-level network of direct stores, supermarket counters and specialty stores. Online, it prioritizes Tmall Intangible Cultural Heritage Flagship Store and Douyin Stores, with online sales accounting for 25% of total sales in 2024. Special channels cover airline meals, scenic spot cultural tourism counters, etc. Channels follow the “five unifications” standard for coordinated and efficient operation.

### **4.4. Promotion strategy**

In terms of promotion strategy, Gaocheng Palace Noodles implements integrated marketing communication. On traditional media, it broadcasts documentaries on Hebei Satellite TV's *Intangible Cultural Heritage Archives*; in digital marketing, it cooperates with 10 million-follower food bloggers and has over 50,000 notes on Xiaohongshu; offline, it creates the "Palace Noodles Culture Festival" IP, attracting 50,000 participants in 2024; sales promotions include "purchase with intangible cultural heritage experience coupons" and "solar term limited sets". The company invests 30% of its promotion budget in cultural and educational activities, enhancing brand premium through "cultural + scenario marketing" and raising brand search popularity by 65% year-on-year.

## 5. Conclusion

This study takes Gaocheng Palace Noodles as the research object. As a Hebei intangible cultural heritage and geographical indication product, it has formed core advantages based on heritage craftsmanship, nutritional quality and regional brand, conforms to healthy consumption and national trend, and has mid-to-high-end market potential supported by policies and technologies. However, it has shortcomings including short shelf life, unbalanced channels, insufficient standardized production and in-depth cultural exploration. It also faces external pressures such as price competition, rising raw material costs and stricter supervision, while single channels and scenarios restrict its market development.

Based on the STP model, the positioning of "medium and high-end hand-made noodles integrating intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship and modern nutrition" and the differentiated marketing strategy in 4Ps have been proven feasible and effective in practice, successfully achieving product premium and brand awareness improvement. Cultural empowerment and channel integration serve as its core paths to adapt to the modern market.

The research also clarifies that the balance between traditional craftsmanship and modern production, technological breakthroughs in shelf life, and cross-regional channel expansion outside the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region are the three keys for the sustainable development of Gaocheng Palace Noodles. It is suggested to increase R&D investment, develop functional products adapted to modern consumption, and establish an industry-university-research integrated quality improvement mechanism; promote the standardization of production and electrification transformation, and break the bottlenecks of production capacity and supply chain on the basis of retaining the core intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship; improve the national channel layout integrating online and offline, and deepen the excavation and dissemination of cultural value; reduce cost pressure through strategic cooperation in the industrial chain, enhance the brand's risk resistance capacity, and realize the organic unity of craft inheritance, product innovation and market expansion.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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