



# Kano Methods

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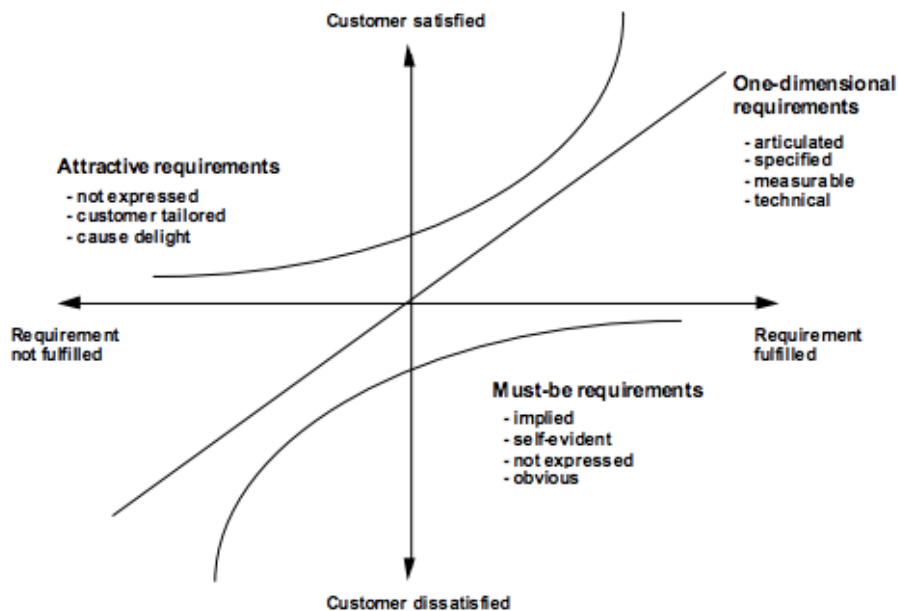
This is a useful market research tool which helps clarify the 'voice of the customer'. Originally developed in the 1980s by Noriaki Kano, a Japanese professor, it aims to help understand customer perceptions of quality in a more detailed fashion. It suggests that sometimes potential users may have latent needs or requirements which they cannot articulate. In such cases three types of user need can be identified: 'must be's', 'one-dimensionals' and attractive features or 'delighters'.

Must be's are those features which must exist before a potential customer will consider a product or service. For example, in the case of an executive car it must be relatively large and expensive.

One-dimensionals are the more quantifiable features which allow direct comparison between competing products. For example, in the case of an executive car, the acceleration and braking performance.

Delighters are the most subtle means of differentiation. The inclusion of such features delights the target customers, even if they do not explicitly demand them. For example, delighters in the case of an executive car might include ultrasonic parking aids, rain-sensitive windscreen wipers and photochromatic mirrors. Such features are rarely demanded by customers or identified by regular market research. However, indirect questioning or tools like repertory grid can be used to help identify latent requirements.

The Kano model uses a simple framework for exploring these. The vertical axis is a measure of satisfaction whilst the horizontal axis indicates the extent to which a feature is actually present and implemented.



The model can be used in a number of ways – for example, to compare different offerings by different companies and identify gaps where innovation might contribute competitive advantage. Or to explore future trends in product quality and the potential for creating innovation space around novel features.

Importantly the time dimension is often used because what begin as delighters can rapidly become one dimensional, and the move to being features, which are expected, as standard – and customer *dissatisfaction* occurs when they are not present.

In the original work two other dimensions were identified but these are rarely used in surveys because they represent ‘extreme’ situations. They are called ‘indifferent’, where customers do not care whether or not the feature is present, and ‘reverse’ where the above kind of dissatisfaction occurs.

Kano methods are an important tool in Quality function deployment.

For more on the Kano method, see <http://www.kanomodel.com/>

Original reference:

[Kano, Noriaki](#); Nobuhiko Seraku, Fumio Takahashi, Shinichi Tsuji (April 1984). "Attractive quality and must-be quality". *Journal of the Japanese Society for Quality Control* (in Japanese) **14** (2): 39–48. ISSN 0386-8230.