

Kano Model

The Kano Model is a systemic approach to understanding customer needs and wants and the value that customers place on the various features your product or service offers. It was developed by Noriaki Kano, a Japanese educator, and was designed to help answer the questions:

- What does the customer need?
- What does the customer value?
- What does the customer expect?
- What delights the customer? The customer often cannot pinpoint these needs, but when these unexpected features or products are offered, they “wow” the customer.

Using Kano Analysis:

- Collect customer data from many possible channels—interviews, informal and formal surveys, customer complaints, focus groups, observation.
- Based on that information, identify the customer needs that are known or perceived.
- For each potential need, ask the customers how they would feel if your product or service features met that need...or alternatively, did not meet that need. For each question, you are trying to learn if and how the customers value that feature...they like it, they expect it (and would be dissatisfied if it weren't offered), they don't really care about it, or they don't like it.

Once you have this data, you can determine whether the features of your product or service are satisfiers, dissatisfiers or delighters.

Dissatisfiers or basic needs: Must haves. These needs are often unspoken and are expected. If your product or service does not meet basic needs, customers will be extremely dissatisfied. **Example:** A vacation rental was advertised as partial ocean front. If I stood on my tip-toes and the wind was blowing just right, I could see one little figment of ocean.

Satisfiers: standard expectations. These are often spoken and the degree to which your product/service has or doesn't have these satisfiers contributes to satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Satisfier elements have a linear relationship to customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The more of these you offer, the more satisfied the customer will be. **Example:** the housekeeping service offered at this same vacation rental was very timely and non-intrusive. Each morning while we were at breakfast, the room was thoroughly cleaned and extra towels were left for the pool/beach.

Delighters: unexpected offerings that delight or “wow” the customer. These needs are often unspoken. If you offer these, the customer is excited about your product or service. **Example:** the rental office at this same vacation rental called ahead of our vacation to ask if we would like them to stock the refrigerator with some basics. They provided a checklist of possible items and they were in the refrigerator with an itemized bill (with no up charge!) on our arrival.

Note that even though the housekeeping service was great and the shopping/stocking service was very much appreciated, the lack of the ocean view was a killer for the vacation spot. Make sure that the basics are covered before offering “wow” factors.

This figure illustrates the Kano Model. On the vertical axis is dissatisfaction/satisfaction scale. On the horizontal axis is the product/service performance scale.



Remember that customer needs and expectations are always changing. Something that delights a customer today will become a basic need in the future.