**Summary**:

Understanding the tradeoffs between cost, quality, speed, and flexibility is paramount to a successful business. We have seen major shifts in how companies handle acquiring customers in recent years. A couple days ago CNBC was discussing how with TikTok being banned in the US Americans have decided to jump over to a Chinese platform called Redshift instead of Instagram. In this discussion they mentioned how this was a marketing issue and Instagram needed to advertise their platform better. Now while I agree with the principle that marketing the platform would help that’s not the entire problem. The TikTok user base knows and understands that Instagram Reels exists, but consumers are seeing it is a poor-quality product whose algorithm is lacking compared to TikTok or Redshift. This example is a little different because it adds in a fifth external element of government control. Individuals are seeking a platform that is less censored by their own government and instead censored by an external government. On top of this, individuals are seeking a product that is higher quality with a better algorithm. Another great example is food quality, we often time’s view quality of a product by its packaging and branding. If you have two products that are identical, you will view the product with the higher quality packaging as a higher quality product even if the product internally is not a higher quality product. In the cheese industry there are only so many ways to make cheese, you can use organic raw materials but often the higher end cheeses are produced with the same ingredients as the lower end products. In fact, one of the highest quality processed cheeses on the market is McDonalds cheese. You would think it contains a lot of preservatives when in fact it does not contain any artificial preservatives. From these two examples we can see that quality does matter but often quality is an illusion illustrated by industry.

**Reflection**:

We can analyze and analyze and see that changing our prices, quality, increasing customization all increase demand and this is certainly true. But we also see that these all correspond to each other, we must market an item and establish the brand reputation and then we must maintain the higher quality offered. In today’s world we often see companies struggle to maintain the higher quality of goods which harms years of marketing and brand reputation. Let’s look at Apple, they almost never produce the latest and greatest phone, but they always produce a great, reliable phone with incredible integration between devices. They’ve maintained this for years and it has helped them establish a major market share in the cell phone market. Now if we look at Microsoft Windows, we see that they have a very prominent market share in computer operating systems but this road hasn’t always been smooth. When windows 8 was released, many individuals hated it due to its bugs and changed the user interface. Every year since they have made major changes to how the user interface works to try to improve the experience but are still working on it. Windows 10 and 11 are very close to each other and this has finally helped them recover many customers. In this example we see that marketing a product is important but maintaining a high-quality product with continuing innovation is just as paramount. As I look ahead to my career, I see this being especially important. Ensuring that I maintain a high-quality product while also maintaining a stream of innovation is going to be super important.