This exercise proved that the KANO model for prioritization is preferred in this scenario. The scenario involves two founders creating an app for users who want to hike to be more active. Their goal is widespread adoption among both people who hike, and those striving for a healthier, more active lifestyle. The goal indicates that measures of success revolve around overall customer satisfaction and repeat users. Since it is so dependent on that criteria, prioritizing certain features based on customer value is more appropriate.

ICE and RICE methods are great for a quick internally-driven priority list, but they are not thorough or detailed enough to truly rank the pros and cons of each feature to build from a customer satisfaction standpoint. The weighted scoring method was much more straightforward in that I had data from the KANO method to reference when scoring features against each criteria. In this scenario, the weighted scoring results supplemented the KANO results very well. They reiterated what the top 5-10 features to build were. It is clear to the product manager now what to prioritize, and the results were achieved using both internal (stakeholder) and external (users) points of views.

The effort required for KANO and weighted scoring is high because of the numbers and calculations it takes to complete. This can get unorganized, confusing, and timely when completing with stakeholders in a meeting who aren’t great with this level of detail. The margin for error in the excel formulas makes for a risky application because if anything is incorrect, all the data will not accurately represent what features customers value. However, the KANO Feature Map solves one of these problems by being the end product that stakeholders see when the product manager has completed all the calculations on the back end. It shows in a more simple, colorful and visual way what the findings are.

Customer insights are key in any product management position, regardless of industry. I have learned that understanding the customer, and prioritizing items in the backlog make up a large percentage of the overall job of a product manager. This makes sense because prioritization drives the product roadmap and the Agile sprints. It is also very important to balance prioritizing objectively while considering the interests of all stakeholders involved. As a product manager, advocating for the voice of the customer is a main element, and communicating rationale for prioritization to stakeholders is key. Maintaining good relationships with the product team and cross-functional members will help when a product manager has to de-prioritize one department’s goals for the interest of the business and/or customer.

Choosing a prioritization method is only half the battle, the other half is getting others on board and to support your decisions as the product manager.