

**Diagnostic questions on and around customer recruitment, retention,  
service recovery, and retrieval**

1. Who are your most profitable, must-keep customers?
2. Who are your unprofitable, should-shed customers?
3. What is the value of your most profitable customers?
4. What is the volume of your annual customer turnover?
5. What is the value of your annual customer turnover?
6. What are your customer acquisition costs?
7. How much do you waste on the acquisition of unprofitable customers?
8. How can you be more selective about the customers you retain?
9. What is the lifetime value of your 'average' type of customer?
10. What is the lifetime value of your most profitable, must-keep customers?
11. How long does it take for customers to become profitable?
12. How long do customers stay with you?
13. Why do your customers leave ?
14. To whom do you customers go when they leave you?
15. Why do customers stay with you? Are these the best reasons?
16. Which customers are at this moment planning to leave you? Do you know about them?
17. How can you anticipate and prevent defections?
18. What approaches to customer acquisition work best? Which are most cost effective?
19. What are your specific 'measures that mean something' - real indicators of customer value.
20. How will buying patterns and behaviour change in the next five years? Are you ready for this?
21. Why do your former customers return? From whom? Which defectors never come back?
22. What is the profitability of your returning customers?
23. How many 'hostages' do you have? How many customers are 'handcuffed' to you?
24. Do you differentiate the customer service you offer different customers? How? Why?
25. Who are your 'apostles' - people who actively and directly encourage others to buy from you?

26. Should you reward 'apostles'? for referral business? If not why not? If so, how?
27. Who are your 'terrorists' - current or past customers deliberately deterring customers?
28. What is the value of the damage these terrorists create? How do you know?
29. What can be done about these terrorists? Who specifically needs to do what?
30. What irritates or angers your customers? What will you do to lessen this?
31. What are the real strengths and weaknesses of your competition?
32. What is genuinely unique about you and your products or services? Are you using these well?
33. Why do customers complain? Do you make it hard for customers to complain?
34. How do you see complaints? As the rantings of minorities, or representatives of many others?
35. Why do customers choose not to complain? How empowered are your staff to resolve issues?
36. How can you make better use of what can be learned from customer complaints?
37. How, specifically, do you make it difficult for people to do business with you?
38. How can you get back those customers it makes sense for you to retrieve?
39. What excellent customer service practices of others can you learn from, adapt and adopt?
40. What else do we need to raise or work upon to get the most from this?

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