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# Finders Keepers

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Your company has invested a pretty penny in Customer Acquisition. Your marketing budget has almost certainly increased as global competition spawned. As more aggressive marketing campaigns saw light during the past 18 months, utilizing more accurate marketing automation software and powerful analytical tools, it also became clear that it is not going after the new market segments where the challenge lies ahead, but rather in maintaining existing or recently acquired customers.

As the cost of customer acquisition dropped due to electronic commerce and marketing techniques, a paradox began for customer service and the cost for customer retention dramatically increased. See, the same techniques that make it so great for marketers to find new customers its also great for customer to find new suppliers when organizations fail to support them adequately, thus balancing out the positive effect of higher customer acquisition.

"For most businesses, the shortest, most direct route to profitability is by holding on to customers, plain and simple," says Don Peppers, a partner at Peppers & Rogers Group. So how do you empower your organization to do just that? There lies the million-dollar question. This is precisely what a number of business and IT disciplines have dedicated to. The "art/science" of keeping the customer loyal, at a price you can afford is certainly not an easy path, and it promises to become even more complex as CRM and DCM expand their horizons beyond fortune 4000 organizations and begin to preach to smaller organizations which are just as concerned about keeping their customers as anybody else.

Changing the way you do business, realizing that a customer-centric organization is made, not born can be an overwhelming experience. Furthermore, focusing these realizations into changing actual business and systems infrastructures can be -no doubt- a daunting task. For larger organizations very little will change in how they approach these challenges, as deep pockets certainly ease the path towards modernization. Smaller organizations, however, will have to walk the path of strategic alliances in order to achieve the desired results.