

Chapter 11



AL²A with Customers

“There are no secrets to success. Don’t waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work, and persistence.”

– Colin Powell

At this point, we have gone through the first four of six steps of the Customer Strategy Process and you have been presented with four current options to conduct step 5, research. In reflecting on Graphic 10.3, not one of the options presents a venue to complete step 6 – **creating a customer-specific action plan**. AL²A (Ask, Listen, Learn & Act) accomplishes this, as well as providing a better venue for:

- Being proactive with key customers
- Combining both qualitative and quantitative research
- Prioritizing customers
- Involving internal touchpoints

AL²A can also be used for your people to determine emotionally engaged people – complete with action plans. AL²A with Customers is the other bookend.

It incorporates four elements:

- **Ask:** interacting with your customers by proactively asking about their needs.
- **Listen:** understanding what they are asking for and/or need.
- **Learn:** taking this feedback seriously and identifying why gaps may exist.
- **Act:** forming cross-functional intervention teams of touchpoints and creating action plans to address specific customer issues.

Graphic 11.1: AL²A as the Bookends of Strategy



Graphic 11.2 illustrates the six main steps of the AL²A process with Customers. While the AL²A process is a consistent process, these steps are different than AL²A with People as discussed in Chapter 6. When done well, the process is simple. Steps include:

1. Prioritize customers and determine customer-specific teams.
2. Establish attribute criteria.
3. Communicate and implement.
4. Develop and execute action plans.
5. Align the organization.
6. Unite with performance management.