

From Strategy to Design to Execution



Jorge Benitez

EDITORS' NOTE *Jorge Benitez has worked at Accenture for more than three decades. Hispanic-Business magazine named him to its "2011 Top 25 Corporate Elite" list and in 2004 selected him as one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the United States. A graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in Accounting, he was born in Cuba. He and his family came to the United States when he was 10 years old.*

COMPANY BRIEF *Accenture (www.accenture.com) is a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company that combines unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies. With over 257,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments.*

How is the North American market positioned for Accenture?

We help companies grow and invest in challenging and complex markets, and our business has been strong over the past several years. Today, we have more than 42,000 people in North America – approximately 38,000 in 30 cities in the U.S. and another 4,000 in Canada in eight cities.

What makes us unique is that we provide deep industry expertise, have tremendous skills and capabilities in technology and functional areas, and work for great clients like Best Buy, Warner Brothers, and the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

We provide end-to-end life cycle solutions – from strategy to design to execution – and a large part of our business involves developing business functions for our clients and operating the solutions for them in a supporting role.

An Interview with Jorge Benitez, Managing Director-North America and Chief Executive-United States, Accenture

In North America, we are leading the way in building scale in areas such as analytics, digital marketing, mobility, and software, particularly in the cloud.

Having the best people, differentiated market leadership, and a commitment to the communities across North America create a powerful recipe for success.

Is there still strong growth in the U.S. market?

Yes. The U.S. is our largest market and one of the most competitive. We continue to gain market share, having grown our U.S. business by 13 percent in fiscal year 2012 and 14 percent on average over the past two fiscal years. We have a great opportunity to sustain this growth. With a population of more than 300 million people, the U.S. continues to be the source of innovation in a wide variety of areas.

We're doing a great deal of transformation work across a number of industry groups and we see opportunity to continue to grow our business profitably, even given the challenges in the global economy. In fact, clients with large operations in North America have become extremely resilient and have adopted a "new normal" of slow but consistent growth.

Have clients' needs evolved? Is the need generally more complex today?

For some clients, the answer is yes, particularly because they require faster reaction to market forces.

At the same time, we've had to adapt to make sure we, too, can react quickly. It's one of the reasons we're building our software assets. This way, when we meet up with a client, our assets are already developed and we can deliver value more quickly.

We currently serve 19 industries and because we know them well, we know what our clients need and can leverage our capabilities precisely to meet those needs.

How important is it to have a diverse workforce? How is it defined within Accenture with regard to inclusion?

We believe that equality plus opportunity equals success. We gain superior business and personal results by embracing diversity and having the ability to tap into everyone's talents, abilities, and experiences.

This goes beyond gender, ethnicity or religion – it encompasses understanding the different

experiences and perspectives of our people and contributions they can make. We have found that we develop better solutions for clients when we harness that diversity and bring it to life within our teams.

How critical is it for you to engage your employees in corporate responsibility?

On a personal level, I believe we have to repay the generosity of the people who paved the way for us and we do that by giving back to the communities where we live and work.

At Accenture, we know that leading companies must drive a sustainable difference in their communities, and we strive to achieve that. For example, we're committed to supporting veterans as they transition from military life to the civilian workforce. Additionally, our corporate citizenship initiative, Skills to Succeed, has a goal of equipping 250,000 people by the year 2015 with the skills to either get a job or build a business. By the end of our fiscal 2011, we had already equipped more than 160,000 people – nearly two-thirds of our goal – with workplace and entrepreneurial skills.

At the same time, our people on the ground collectively support hundreds of volunteer opportunities and they volunteer thousands of hours. Our North American executives alone serve on more than 500 local boards and committees at nonprofit, educational or civic groups.

How has the firm retained its culture over the years?

Our six core values of client value creation, one global network, integrity, having the best people, respect for the individual, and stewardship have been a constant for us around the world since our inception.

At the same time, we have a long-held commitment to training and development to ensure that our people have the necessary skills and capabilities to serve clients at the highest level and, at the same time, to advance in their careers. Annually, we spend an average of more than \$800 million on training – and that training begins the first day an employee joins Accenture and continues throughout his or her career.

We often say that our success depends on our people's success, and these kinds of approaches help support our culture and our ability to deliver high performance to our clients. ●