At the Heart of the Digital Enterprise Transformation

An Interview with Emma McGuigan, Senior Managing Director and Enterprise & Industry Technologies Lead, Accenture

EDITORS' NOTE *Emma McGuigan leads Accenture Enterprise & Industry Technologies which helps clients achieve enterprise-wide transformation by bringing Accenture's deep technology, functional and industry expertise across SAP, Oracle, Salesforce, Workday, Adobe and other leading platforms. McGuigan oversees Accenture's relationships, strategy and capabilities globally and across all industries for the Enterprise partners and is a member of Accenture's Global Management Committee. She is also Chair of the Board of Avanade, the company's joint venture with Microsoft. During her tenure of more than 25 years at Accenture, she has held a variety of positions. Before leading the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, she was group technology officer for Accenture's Communications, Media & Technology operating group. Previously, she was the managing director for Accenture's Technology business in the United Kingdom and Ireland and was the global sponsor for Accenture Technology's talent transformation program, impacting more than 170,000 professionals. McGuigan was named as one of the 50 most influential women in UK IT by Computer Weekly magazine for four years (2015-2018), was listed in Computer Business Review's 10 most successful women in UK technology, and was the Forward Ladies National Women in Business STEM category winner in 2016. In 2013, she was made a fellow of The Chartered Institute for IT. McGuigan joined Accenture in 1994 and became a managing director in 2006. She earned her master's degree in Electronics from the University of Edinburgh.*

Emma McGuigan

COMPANY BRIEF *Accenture (accenture.com) is a global professional services company that helps organizations build their digital core, optimize operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services – creating tangible value at speed and scale. It is a talent and innovation led company with 738,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and Accenture is one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. It combines its strength in technology with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability to deliver tangible outcomes through a broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Accenture Song.*

Will you provide an overview of your role and areas of focus?

I lead Accenture's Enterprise & Industry Technologies business, which is where we manage our alliances with the world's leading technology companies. At its core, my job is all about relationships – building and nurturing deep partnerships where we co-create innovative solutions that solve real world challenges for our clients, while also providing fulfilling opportunities for our people.

How do you define Accenture's Enterprise & Industry Technologies mission?

Our Enterprise & Industry Technologies group is focused on our partnerships with all the leading platform and application providers like Adobe, Oracle, Salesforce, SAP and Workday. It's these relationships that underpin the total enterprise reinvention strategy we drive to help our clients transform every part of their business – from enabling the digital core and workforce transformation, to creating new customer experiences and finding new sources of growth.

We focus on helping our clients choose the right platforms and applications to meet their needs, navigating what can be a complex ecosystem to get the most value from their investments. It is a big and growing need for our clients: over the past two years, we found that 69 percent of organizations have increased the number of application vendors they use, and 81 percent expect to add more from multiple vendors over the next two years.

By connecting technologies so they work together, we help our clients create a single view of data – creating transparency and supporting collaboration across the traditional silos of their businesses. This enables them to be more agile and resilient to changing conditions – something that has never been more important.

What have been the keys to Accenture's Enterprise & Industry Technologies strength and leadership?

Within Enterprise & Industry Technologies, we are hyper-focused on working across our ecosystem to create repeatable, interoperable, industry-led solutions that can be configured and reconfigured to rapidly develop new

"By connecting technologies so they work together, we help our clients create a single view of data – creating transparency and supporting collaboration across the traditional silos of their businesses. This enables them to be more agile and resilient to changing conditions – something that has never been more important."

> **"Within Enterprise & Industry Technologies, we are hyper-focused on working across our ecosystem to create repeatable, interoperable, industry-led solutions that can be configured and reconfigured to rapidly develop new capabilities and build flexibility into the core of the business."**

capabilities and build flexibility into the core of the business. In fact, we just launched a first-of-its-kind Composable Tech Studio to bring this to life for our clients and help them improve agility and speed to market.

Over the past three decades, we've steadily invested in dedicated business groups with each of our key partners, as well as a new Connected Solutions group. All in, we have tens of thousands of skilled and certified people with industry and function experience across 50 countries to help our clients differentiate themselves in their industries.

You also serve as Chair of the Board of Avanade, the company's joint venture with Microsoft. Will you discuss this joint venture and provide an overview of Avanade?

Avanade was formed in 2000 and is one of the most successful joint ventures in our industry. We have always had a great relationship and share many mutual clients, but bringing Accenture and Microsoft together in this way creates the magic of Avanade and provides the opportunity to serve our clients in a differentiated way.

Today, Avanade is majority owned by Accenture and has more than 60,000 skilled people providing cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. We've successfully delivered tens of thousands of Microsoft projects to clients around the world and are proud to be their number one partner.

You recently co-authored a global research report, "Value Untangled: Accelerating Radical Growth Through Interoperability." Will you discuss this research and the key findings?

Organizations have faced an unprecedented number of black swan events over the past few years. We wanted to explore how some companies were able to gain the agility needed to rapidly pivot their business and thrive amid this uncertainty, compared to those who struggled to adapt to changing conditions.

We surveyed more than 4,000 C-suite executives and found that in the last two years alone, one in two companies adopted new technologies and transformed their business faster than ever before. Companies with that kind of agility had one thing in common: high interoperability. When business applications are interoperable, there is greater data sharing, transparency, and quality human connections, which allows organizations to be more efficient, more collaborative and more resilient.

Last year, organizations with high interoperability grew revenue six times faster than their peers with low interoperability and are poised to unlock an additional five percentage points in annual revenue growth. That is a massive long-term advantage. To put it in perspective, if two organizations start with $10 billion in revenue today, the organization with high interoperability stands to make $8 billion more than its peer with low interoperability over the next five years.

The research showed this financial gain was achieved through increased efficiency, increased productivity and increased sustainability.

How important is it for Accenture to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

Inclusion and diversity are essential. They are embedded in everything we do at Accenture and, frankly, they are a key enabler of our business results. We approach inclusion and diversity with the same discipline as any other business priority – setting goals, sharing them publicly and holding ourselves accountable.

We want every one of our 738,000 people to be who they are and be their best, both professionally and personally. That means creating a workplace where they feel comfortable and can engage in open and honest dialog.

I've seen first-hand the power that diverse teams – representing different cultures, races, ethnicities, gender identities and gender expressions – bring to the table. It's unique perspectives that drive creativity, innovation and competitive advantage for us and for our clients.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?

Absolutely. The technology industry needs more women. As IT jobs continue to grow at a record pace, we need to unlock the massive pool of female talent – not only to address the skills shortage the industry is facing, but to benefit from the value diversity creates, as I've just mentioned. That includes capitalizing on untapped talent – like those in rural areas, those with gaps in employment or those who are neurodiverse.

But it's not just about attracting new talent. As an industry, we need to do better at retaining women by creating a culture in tech that is more adaptable and more attuned to the behaviors and styles of women. Companies need to think about how they can adopt flexible work models and better support women in defining their own career paths.

I've been lucky enough to have been supported by Accenture throughout my career, so I didn't have to choose between my job and my family. I worked part-time for ten years when my children were young, and I was even promoted while I was on maternity leave (on merit from before starting maternity leave, rather than because of it, of course). Flexible career options, personalized conversations and sponsorship made all the difference in allowing me to pursue my passions, both at home and at work.

You have been with Accenture for more than 25 years. What has made Accenture so special for you?

I love the art of the possible that technology enables. From leading our Technology business in the U.K. and Ireland, being the group technology officer for our Communications, Media and Technology industry, and overseeing our business with Microsoft, to my role today, I've spent my career at Accenture architecting and delivering technology solutions for clients. I've gotten to work on everything from cutting-edge innovations to large-scale core solutions.

It's given me the opportunity to channel my curiosity and passion for examining the world and figuring out how we can come together to be bold, dream big, and drive change. I'm so proud of the work Accenture has done to make a real difference, like helping to rapidly transition millions of people to remote work in a matter of days at the start of the pandemic and helping businesses meet their sustainable development goals.

I am incredibly excited to be at the heart of the digital enterprise transformation – working with amazing partner organizations to fundamentally shift how we approach technology and innovation, unlocking new business models, and finding new ways of working and new opportunities for our clients and for our people. ●