

A Learning Culture

An Interview with Beth Marrion, Senior Managing Director, Accenture

EDITORS' NOTE *Beth Marrion is a senior managing director and client account lead for one of Accenture's largest global clients. A member of the company's Global Management Committee, she serves as the client account lead for the Americas. With P&L responsibility for four dimensions of Accenture's business, including Strategy & Consulting; Song; Technology; and Operations, Marrion has 25 years of experience in consulting and transformation. She leads large initiatives to reinvent retail businesses, enhance customer experiences, and improve operational efficiencies. She has expertise in data & AI, customer experience, retail operations and supply chain. With leadership roles in civic organizations whose missions address the most challenging issues facing the people of Chicago, Marrion serves on the Executive Committee and board of directors for NextUp, a network to advance all women, grow business and eliminate barriers for women in the workplace. She also serves on the board of directors for The Economic Club of Chicago, The Executives' Club of Chicago, and the Civic Consulting Alliance. Marrion holds degrees in Economics and French from Duke University.*



Beth Marrion

accelerate revenue growth, and enhance services – creating tangible value at speed and scale. The company is a talent- and innovation-led company with 801,000 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. The company combines its strength in technology and leadership in cloud, data and AI with industry experience, functional expertise, and global delivery capability.

Accenture's broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy and Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Song, together with a culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enables the company to help its clients reinvent and build trusted, lasting relationships.

Will you discuss your career journey?

As a freshly minted undergraduate from Duke University, I started my first job as a consultant for Accenture. Today, I've been here nearly 30 years. During that time, I've worked across every segment of the retail industry within Accenture. Back in the late '90s when e-commerce was just getting off the ground, I had a chance to work with a leading toy retailer to launch their online capabilities. The company went live with their online store just before Christmas and was nearly brought to

a standstill based on the enormous number of orders that came in. They were faced with the harsh reality that many of their customers were at risk of not receiving their gifts before the holidays. It was an "all hands on deck" moment where we had Accenture teams working side-by-side with our client in warehouses and call centers to ensure the holiday was a success. From that point on, I knew retail was where I wanted to build my career.

In fact, I've recently had a full circle moment: today, I'm focused on client business which I initially worked on 20 years ago. This great company has been extremely successful for decades and now they're at an inflection point. We're shaping an end-to-end reinvention of their business model, including talent, operations, and technology, powered by AI. Under the guidance of a new CEO, along with a leadership team that has a number of Accenture alumni, we've hit the ground running – shaping how the organization will leverage AI and automation to leapfrog the competition. That's the effort I'm leading and it's incredibly gratifying to work alongside such a high performing team – both on the client side and Accenture.

How do you describe Accenture's culture?

I would describe our culture as positive and inspiring, reflecting our commitment to people, innovation, and impact. Our people-first environment encourages bold thinking, lifelong learning, and working together to solve some of the world's most complex challenges.

“I would describe our culture as positive and inspiring, reflecting our commitment to people, innovation, and impact. Our people-first environment encourages bold thinking, lifelong learning, and working together to solve some of the world's most complex challenges.”

“The keys to Accenture’s industry leadership is fueled by a multi-faceted approach, including a strong emphasis on talent development and innovation, a commitment to thought leadership, and a laser focus on our clients and outpacing changing business needs.”

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

My role is primarily in two focus areas: the first, leading our team and client relationships at the client I referenced earlier. We’re growing their business as strategic partners – we have a unique relationship. Our Accenture team has a running start, given the Accenture alumni in the leadership ranks at this client. They know how to work with our team, as we’re bringing new ideas, energy, and thought leadership to them to drive growth. During any period, this would be a complex project, and particularly so given the current macroeconomic environment, including tariffs. The sheer project size is formidable, with more than 2,200 stores across the U.S. and a team of nearly 900 people from Accenture.

The second area of focus for me – a big honor – is serving as a Client Account Lead (CAL) on Accenture’s Global Management Committee. In this role, I help our CALs across the Americas – leaders who are closest to our clients – prepare for and address some of their biggest challenges by leveraging the global strength of Accenture. It’s an exciting time; we’re developing a global blueprint to ensure we’re learning from one another and sharing curated topics to accelerate performance and outcomes for our clients.

In my role, I’m hearing messages directly from our CEO about our business – I’m charged to effectively communicate those to our CALs, and share some context to offer clear, practical

and actionable guidance. It’s a heavy lift, but it’s a great opportunity for our CAL leadership team to collaborate in a meaningful way, to learn from each other and develop together, continuously improving.

What have been the keys to Accenture’s industry leadership, and how do you define the Accenture difference?

The keys to Accenture’s industry leadership is fueled by a multi-faceted approach, including a strong emphasis on talent development and innovation, a commitment to thought leadership, and a laser focus on our clients and outpacing changing business needs. Fundamentally, Accenture is a learning culture – we prepare our people for emerging technologies, especially in AI, by investing in skill development and training. It’s a culture that fosters innovation and that makes it an exciting place to build a career. Accenture’s research and thought leadership helps shape the future of business and technology; this helps us understand our clients’ needs and develop tailored solutions to create client value. Finally, our responsible leadership builds essential trust with our clients, and trust is the bedrock of our business.

What has made community engagement and philanthropic work so important to you?

Chicago is not just where I work – I was raised here and now have raised my family here. Giving back aligns with my personal values and Accenture’s mission to improve the way the world works and lives. One recent assignment

was to serve as the Chicago Office Managing Director. It was rewarding to increase my own involvement in the civic organizations that make a significant difference in Chicago, including the Executives’ Club of Chicago and The Economic Club of Chicago, which both contribute to economic development and leadership within the city. I also serve on the board of NextUp, focusing on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the workplace. Accenture’s retail consulting business has a long legacy of female leaders, so I’ve always had incredible women guiding and sponsoring my development. NextUp helps me pay it forward to the next generation of diverse leaders, both within Accenture and across NextUp’s extensive network of partner organizations.

How do you describe your leadership style?

Two concepts define my leadership style: collaboration and continuous learning. As a leader at Accenture, I take my responsibility to mentor and guide people new to their careers very seriously – and it’s very rewarding to see our people thrive and grow.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

In addition to “be prepared to work hard” – that’s a given – here’s what I share with young people: seek mentors, jump at the chance to learn, and give back to the communities where you work and live. This will build not only a strong foundation for a career, but a strong foundation for life. ●

“Accenture’s research and thought leadership helps shape the future of business and technology; this helps us understand our clients’ needs and develop tailored solutions to create client value.”