



FY27 Investor Day

Session Transcript: Our Talent Strategy

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CORPORATE PARTICIPANTS

Julie Sweet – Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Kate Clifford – Chief Leadership & Human Resources Officer

Julie Sweet

So as they're bringing on another chair, I'm going to be joined by our Chief Leadership and Human Resources Officer. One of the things I hope that you've noticed is that every one of the leaders you're hearing from is working directly with clients. This is such an important part of our model. We stay on top of trends. We're close to our clients from the very top to the very bottom. Because clients are at the center of everything we do, and the only way to serve clients in that way is, in fact, to be at clients. So it's an exciting part of our model. Our leaders at Accenture get the most energy when they're together with their clients. So, Kate, can you please come join us?

So, Kate might say she has the best job at Accenture because she gets to work with our people. And you've heard a lot about our people from our various clients and our great talent. But I'm going to start with the number one question I get, which is: why do you have still so many people in the age of AI?

So, Kate, over to you.

Kate Clifford

Oh, well, Thanks, Julie. And the question I get is "you have so many people and, are you going to continue to grow our headcount? As you already have 800,000 amazing Reinventors across the world". And the answer is, yes. I do expect that we're going to continue to grow our headcount. You heard from Manish and I think he even bookended with we're going to double our TAM or we have doubled our TAM. And with that incredible growth, we will need incredible people.

And my job is to ensure that we are always fulfilling our client demand, that we have the right talent at the right time to meet that demand. And I really think about it in three ways. First is our core. We will continue to add in our core and that includes entry level talent. We will also continue to add talent in our new businesses. You heard from Rob, you heard from Marc, Accenture Construct with Tracey. Those are brand new businesses, brand new jobs, and we will add talent to fulfill that incredible double-digit demand. And then finally, as we acquire new companies, we'll bring on that talent as well. But we will continue to manage our supply and demand with the rigor that we have. You talked about in your opening 93% utilization in Q4. And we've been running in the low 90s for the last 23 quarters, and we will continue that same rigor over our future.

Now, I do expect that we'll slow the pace of bringing in talent a bit, but we will always have the talent that we need to fulfill our demand.

Julie Sweet

So let's talk a little bit about the new jobs that are being created, both the jobs in the new businesses, you've talked about Tracey, but how about the new jobs in the core business? And how we're preparing people for those jobs?

Kate Clifford

Yeah, it's a great question because I do also believe—in addition to bringing on the talent to fulfill our client's need—my job is to create the workforce of the future. I was reading something from the WEF a while back that said that there's going to be 170 million new roles in the next five years due to AI. And don't worry, I'm not creating 170 million new roles, but we are going to systematically change our jobs. We are re-architecting the jobs for everyone who works at Accenture, and it's really anchored in four key skills. It starts with data and AI. We expect every single one of our Reinventors to have a data and AI foundation. Industry skills and that's the industries of our clients. So, whether it's banking or retail or life sciences or the industry of clients, functional skills, so whether that's HR or finance, sales, marketing, they deeply need to understand the functional work they're doing for our clients.

And then finally, our technology ecosystem. And we're architecting new jobs with those four skills as the foundation. Now, the depth of the skill will change based on the work that our people do every day. But our competitive advantage is that people will have skills across all four. And we have a long history of investing and learning. You've talked about it before we invest \$1 billion in learning. How we spend that money changes. We change and evolve where we spend those dollars. So, for example, we've spent a lot of time talking today about ecosystem partners. We have over 134,000 unique certifications across our AI and data ecosystem partners.

Julie Sweet

And one of our aspirations is to be really seen as the elite university among corporates, because the skills are changing so much that we have to like really, really keep up for them, with them. And so, how do you think about how we're doing the skilling and how you're giving, sort of taking the skilling and then creating these new jobs? And maybe give an example of how we've gone from new job to skilling and what that looks like?

Kate Clifford

Yeah, I'm happy to. And I again, I think about it two ways. There's brand new jobs. I'll talk about an example of that. And then we also have jobs that aren't brand new, like we've had them for a while, but they're really changing. And so, an example of a brand new job and you heard it in some of the videos this morning, is this forward deployed engineer, this FDE. And 18 months ago we didn't have any FDEs at Accenture. It's a brand-new job not only for us, but it's a brand-new job in the market. And that job is -- I think about it -- it's the intersection of a software engineer, a solution architect, a product manager, and a consultant, all wrapped up into one, who's solving real client problems to drive business outcomes. Again, a brand-new job. And whenever we have a new job, I always go out and scan the market. Okay, we've got this new work, how am I going to go hire for this brand-new talent? And when I went out and scanned the market, I saw there was not that many people who had this skill set. I think it was like roughly 2,000 across the market that had this skill. So, we knew we had to build it.

So, to your point, how did we build these skills? And we partnered really closely with

Lan and with Marc, who you heard from earlier to build a 14-week program that takes a software engineer and makes them into or upskills them to become a forward deployed engineer. And in that 14 weeks, it's not just training, it's real practical application of those skills in a client environment. It's hackathons, and it culminates in a certification. So, we don't call someone a forward deployed engineer unless they have a certification in one of our AI and data partners. So, that's a brand-new job.

Another example is just jobs that are changing. You heard from Tracey earlier, she talked about supply chain and engineering. And I think about a supply chain process consultant. A supply chain process consultant used to spend time process mapping, and they were really deep in the function, but that was really where it stopped. And so, we're now focused on upskilling those process people to understand robotics, to understand physical AI—work that they haven't had to do before because it's not just about mapping out the process. It's really re architecting the work.

Julie Sweet

Now, we're very proud that we are Number 4 on the Great Place to Work global ranking, which is cross industry. Can you talk a little bit about why it's so important and why we look at that metric?

Kate Clifford

Yeah, I'm also very proud. And one of the reasons I'm very proud is because that's directly from the voice of all of our people. That's not something we can apply for. That comes on feedback from our global Reinventors, and we hear the things that they love about working here, and the things that we need to work on. And then we welcome both of those things so that we can continue to take action to be the Number 4 and even better than Number 4. But the reason that we should care about it is really two things. One, it drives real outcomes. Engaged teams drive higher profitability. Engaged teams are better with clients, and our clients tell us this through their NPS scores. We see client scores come in 8 points higher with engaged teams. And then leaders are 2x less likely to leave if they're engaged. And if they're engaged, they're engaging their teams. So, there's real outcomes that matter when it comes to engagement.

And then second, I talked about being out in the market and attracting new talent. As I'm talking to candidates, whether they're very senior or junior, they often proactively bring this up to me. I say, "why did you pick up the phone? Accenture called, why did you pick up the phone?" And they will say, "I want to work at a great place to work. I want to work in your culture."

Julie Sweet

Well, now it's not a competition, but there's a little bit of competition at Accenture for who gets the resources to embed AI first. And, as you can imagine, with over 800,000 people, our talent supply chain, there's a lot of value. And so you have been one of the leaders in using AI to deliver business outcomes for Accenture. So, as a final question, why don't we just wrap up with a little bit about how we're our own best credential,

and you're leading the way?

Kate Clifford

Well, thank you for that. And we are our own best credential. What we're out doing with our clients, we have to experience ourselves. And oftentimes we are architecting it with our practitioners together. And what Julie is referring to is what we've done in recruiting, where we've changed. We call it frictionless recruiting, which is really our agentic recruiting solution. And it started from a place that we knew our recruiters needed to spend time with candidates, they needed to spend time sourcing. But where they were actually spending their time was scheduling interviews, where they were actually spending their time was typing information into a system. And so we put in an agentic recruiting solution where agents now do all the interview scheduling. Agents can screen a resume. We have assessments that deeply understand the skills of the candidates to help that process move much, much faster. Now, a human always makes a hiring decision. A hiring manager always makes a hiring decision. But the agentic process has allowed us to reduce our time to fill by 28% and improve candidate quality by 30%. Now those are real outcomes. And so it allows our recruiters to spend more time outsourcing. It allows them to spend more time helping candidates navigate this process. And it's allowed us to increase our time to productivity. So, it used to take six months for an entry level higher to become productive, now it's six weeks, which is five more months of revenue for you, Julie.

Julie Sweet

Yes. Well, thank you, Kate. We're very fortunate to have you leading our leadership in HR function.