



ACCENTURE & HBR ARABIA INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 'WOMEN OF WISDOM' VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Hi, everyone, and a very warm welcome to all of you who've joined us for the special conversation, International Women's Day is an important moment, an exciting moment in the Accenture calendar, not least because we get the opportunity to celebrate our women, our own women, indeed, our partnerships around the world, the accomplishments of the women we work with, and most especially to celebrate the remarkable role models whom we're privileged to know. And indeed, today, I'm delighted to be in the company of some of some truly astounding and wise women who will be sharing their inspiring stories with us this evening.

But first, I heard a comment yesterday, albeit in a different context, but it spoke about how had we been more advanced or even on track with the MDGs, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, one of which is, of course, gender equality. Had we even been on track, we would have been in a much, much better place to cope with the impact that the pandemic has had on all of us. And it's sobering to think that it's taken something as severe as covid-19 to expose the deep systemic challenges still ingrained in our economies, in our homes and our workplaces.

But the good news is, and if indeed we can look for some good, is that it shone a spotlight on things unspoken. And so occasions such as this conversation such as this are all the more vital right now, giving us that chance to reflect, to consider how we can build back better with the support of all of us who are part of this conversation. And in a brand new report coauthored with Twenty Twenty launched just yesterday called If Not Now, when we look closely at the impact that covid-19 has had, particularly on women, and we offer a roadmap towards achieving a more gender equitable recovery, and we encourage you to take a look at this when you have the chance.

But in the meantime, I'd like to thank our partners, HBL, Arabia and the women who are joining us this evening to share their journeys. And so without further ado and to kick us off with starting with the fireside chat between Accenture's global inclusion and diversity, lead Amanda Lacey and our own regional head of marketing and communications ibru it over to you every. Thank you, Lauren. I am honored it is lovely to have you joining us for this fireside chat so that, first of all, happy International Women's Day and Week for our participants joining today.



So, Amanda, I would like to start with your career journey. Please tell us about your path and how did you grow in your career? Is there any woman or man leader that supported in this journey?

Hi, and thanks to everybody for joining and spending the time. And thank you every fall for the question, I think with Accenture for 23 years. So I'm really showing my age now and it really has been a wonderful journey.

I've had the opportunity to travel to 17 different countries around the world and that travel and that global nature of the company and the experience I've had has really been the thing that really kick started my career journey.

So I'm afraid I'm going to take you all the way back to 2002 when I was a manager in the London Delivery Center and I was asked to go out to China Dalian where we were setting up a new business there and so attracted to China and quickly learned how much I didn't know and had to really be pushed out of my comfort zone as we as we set up that new business there. And it was like being in a startup inside a big country.

It was a really wonderful experience. And so a few months later, in 2003, March 2003, in fact, I was asked to go out to India, Bangalore, and I don't know if you can believe it Ibr, but at that time we had zero employees in Bangalore and today we have over 100000. So it was, again, a really exciting, energetic time setting up the practice there. And I stayed. It was meant to stay six weeks, but I stayed for nine months and then I went back and forth.

And what happened then over the next 10 years was I became the H.R. director for what was our delivery center network. And if you win the clock forward to the end of those 10 years, we had one hundred and ten thousand people across 40 locations. And so that really catapulted my career. It really pushed me out of my comfort zone, too. And and it really led me to where I am today because understanding how things

actually happen in a large company and get down on the ground and building that network of colleagues around the world position me really well.

I met my husband in India. He's actually Jamaican heritage, and we called our first born daughter, India. So we have a lot to a lot to thank that wonderful country for. You asked me about people who helped me along the way and I think we'd run out of time if I had to mention all of the people who helped me along the way. And it was certainly a real mix of men and women and. But keep my key sponsors were actually male up until recently.

And now I would say my key sponsors are female. But I think in any case, both men and women can play really key roles in helping all of us by giving us a really frank coaching and feedback in the moment, listening to our our aspirations and helping to open doors for us.

So if you want you want mute. The problem with teens, I mean, that's an amazing, inspiring journey. What else do you recommend men doing in this equation to accelerate equality? What are your recommendations?

So I think, you know, for us at Accenture sitting here today, we have two hundred and thirty thousand women around the world and women represent over 45 percent. That that has really been in an acceleration in the last five years where before we had sort of plateaued around 35 percent women and about a hundred and ten thousand women. And what's happened in the last five years, and it was really under intense leadership, is the CEO is setting gender diversity and other elements of diversity as a priority for his business strategy goals with being cascaded through the organization.

We're very transparent about those goals.

We're transparent about our progress and then making sure that those goals are part of our performance discussions. And really part of what we believe is, is the success of our business,



because we know that diversity increases innovation. We know it changes culture. And that's hugely important for us. I mean, for our young woman leaders, what are your recommendations for them to grow their journey? So I was thinking about this over the weekend, because I think if you'd have asked me this time last year, I would have talked about the importance of growth mindset, the importance of pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, grabbing opportunities with both hands being fully authentic.

And all of that is still absolutely true and valid. But the last year with the health crisis, with the economic crisis, it's made me much more reflective about the difficult times and where do we get our resilience from. And so what's been more important to me at this point has been things like self care, self compassion and self reflection.

And if I think about the ups and downs of my journey, and I know we're going to come on to some of the downs as well as the ups, it's actually been through those lows that I've learned the most about myself. And so when we talk about authenticity, what's quite interesting is that for me, for my experience, the discovery of who I am, who I show up as as a mother, as a wife, as a daughter, as a leader is actually evolving over time.

And I'm on this sort of long journey of self discovery. And I guess one of my tips would be, is to not rush that. I think there have been times in my life when I wanted to achieve this, this and this, and perhaps I've missed some of the beauty on the side of the road as I've gone along. And so I guess I would end their Ibru. I think, you know, self.

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