



# BEYOND 2025: OUR VISION AND STRATEGY FOR ENTERPRISE IT

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**Steve:** This is a fundamental shift in the way that we run Accenture's network globally. And truly disruptive.

**Merim:** Hi, I'm Merim Becirovic. I'm a managing director in Accenture's Global IT organization. My primary role is looking after all of the enterprise technology it takes to run Accenture day in and day out. On today's podcast, I'm going to be speaking with a good friend of mine, Steve Courtney, who is leading our Beyond 2025 Enterprise IT strategy for our Global IT organization. Today, we are going to talk about our vision and strategy for how we look after enterprise IT at Accenture. Welcome, Steve.

**Steve:** Thanks Merim. It's great to be here.

**Merim:** All right, let's get started, Steve. So, I'm going to hit you with a couple of questions here. You know, when you and I have looked at this over the years and we think about our strategy, how important do you think it's been for us to look at what the company puts out there from a tech vision perspective, from a strategy perspective? And how do we use that to align where we're trying to go? And how does that influence this perspective we're trying to work on?

**Steve:** Well, first of all, I think it's extremely important to have a strategy and an end state vision. I think that when we have a well-defined and well published strategy, we make good IT decisions along the way. And in order to make sure that we are synchronized with the overall

arching company vision, we just follow a natural flow down. So if we think about the way CIO develops our strategic imperatives, they come straight from the CEO. So we take our company's vision and we apply that to our CIO objectives. And then the technology vision is built from there. We also work very closely with the business and I go to market offering leads and Accenture Labs, and we collaborate with those teams to co-create on solutions. It's not always an exact match because we have different needs to many of our clients, and we're often at a very different level of technology maturity. But wherever we can, we synchronize on solutions and we consume the same assets and the products that we deliver to our clients.

**Merim:** So Steve, let me pause you there for a second. So I think there's a little bit of secret sauce we should probably let our audience know about, which is what does Beyond 2025 mean to us? Would you like to share?

**Steve:** Yeah, sure. So we were thinking about if we were able to develop our IT platforms and reach a perfect endpoint, a perfect end state architecture across all of that enterprise technology. What would it look like? And then we started to look ahead aspirationally. Well, how long do we think it would take to get there? And this concept of Beyond 2025 was really and we believe that this is something that we could develop within the kind of realms of what's known around technology maturity in the marketplace today. So we were thinking



Beyond 2025 could be any time between now and 2030 in order to make that full level of platform maturity.

**Merim:** You shared a couple of disruptors there, but I'd love to know and I think the audience would want to know which one are you most passionate about?

**Steve:** Yeah, the one that excites me the most, Merim, is this kind of exponential acceleration of technology innovation and how we can build a strategy that can unlock the value of that technology innovation much, much faster than we have done before. And it's not just about identifying the value with emerging technology, but it's putting it in the hands of nearly 700,000 people across Accenture's global workforce and making them more enabled than they ever have been before. So that's the disruptor that I think is super exciting, it's about unlocking that incredible opportunity.

**Merim:** Yeah, I love, I love that perspective, Steve. Let me, let me shift us a little bit along the lines then of, you know, we do this to ourselves first, and we've kind of taken a lot of pride in doing that. What do you think about our client service and client impact and how doing this type of work resonates with our clients? And how does it really help us focus Accenture and ourselves on delivering that 360 degrees of value for our clients?

**Steve:** Firstly, we wanted to build a strategy that wasn't just about supporting Accenture's business growth and doing what most IT shops do, which is responding to business demand. What we wanted to do was actually help to define Accenture's growth and create demand, so enhance the business through the evolution of our IT systems. And with that, we kind of phrase that IT would be the fabric of Accenture's business. We've always considered ourselves to be Accenture's first based customers, so adopting new technology at scale and then using our IT as a credential in the marketplace. But we wanted to go further. We wanted to become what we're calling customer zero. And this is where we co-create the next generation of Accenture's technology assets with the business and tightly synchronizing how we consume technology with what we're advising

our clients to do. We have this aspiration to be twenty-four months ahead of our competitors in consuming the technology so that when we talk to our clients, we can reflect on real experiences and articulate real value stories.

**Merim:** You know what's interesting, Steve, along that you touched the point that I think you and I feel a lot, this concept of tech scouting and you mentioned a little bit of it there with this twenty-four-month scenario. You want, you want to say a couple more things on how we look at the landscape of technology out there, kind of in these time frames? So our listeners can understand a little bit better of how we process all of the new technology that's there?

**Steve:** Yeah, tech scouting is a big part of how we evolve our strategy and we reference a number of different sources to do that. So we look at thought leadership that's happening out in the marketplace. We talk to our vendors, we go across the ecosystem and we talk to other companies and clients all the time. So as an internal IT shop, we have a lot of connections every week with the work that we do with our clients and we pull all that information together to get this holistic view of where we think the market's going and how we believe that could be applied relevant to Accenture and how we can enable our workforce. So we connect with the business not just as we have proven technology solutions that we need to deliver for Accenture. But way, way beyond that. Early in the process, we talk to Accenture Research, we talk to Accenture Ventures, and we collaborate closely with Accenture Labs to build solutions and to apply them to use case scenarios that we can deploy at scale across Accenture.

**Merim:** Right. And you know, I think one of the things of being so connected that way to the ecosystem, to our own business, the law of the customers aspect that many of our ecosystem partners were customer number one for them. So if you think about that strategy and how we're connected, you know, one of the things I've seen that we started very early on that is



gaining a lot of steam in the marketplace right now. But it's sustainability. It's, it's on top of mind, a lot of executives, a lot of clients around the world. Do you want to share a little bit how we've incorporated the concept of sustainability into our strategy?

**Steve:** Absolutely. Well, firstly, this is the first iteration of our strategy. We're building sustainability in our platforms. From the ground up is we actually mandate it as one of the key pillars for success. So everything that we build now net new is architected to consume as few resources as possible with minimal carbon footprint. We're using some of the strategic objectives to drive additional sustainability within our technology platform. One key area is moving away from having a dedicated asset heavy technology platforms that are permanently engineered for peak demand and moving much more towards consuming shared platforms that support variable demand for that kind of just right consumption model. We've already moved ninety-five percent of our business applications and content into public cloud or SaaS, using those types of consumption models and recognize a significant reduction in our carbon footprint in doing so. And we're now aggressively moving other IT platforms, like network and security services to similar models. And then finally, we're actually measuring our carbon footprint. So we're looking across our technology capabilities and we're setting reduction targets and we're tracking progress.

**Merim:** Yeah, I mean, I'm totally excited about this space. I think the benefit of us being in the public cloud, consuming services, being in a consumption-based model helps us. And by being there as each of the providers creates their new sustainability offerings. By being in the cloud, we are automatically set up to be able to take advantage of a lot of those capabilities faster. So this is super exciting. You know, one of the things, Steve, that I would say as we have built this strategy, the thing that comes back the most is how do we know it's OK or it's done? Or, you know, we're ready to shift to something else. Can you talk a little bit about how do we use feedback to make sure that the things that we laid out still makes sense? And how are we going to continue to achieve that success?

**Steve:** Yeah. Feedback is super important, Merim. And I personally love to get feedback. I'm a big believer that everybody in our organization should feel responsible for contributing to the strategy. Ownership and accountability, I believe has to be in one place. I think that's important, too, but a strategy is so much richer if it's built from broad contribution across the whole of the IT organization, the whole of the business and that kind of active collaboration. I also think it's incredibly important to remember that if our people don't buy into our strategy. Or if they feel that they're unable to execute it, it's valueless. So in Accenture we published the strategy, we present the strategy, we talk to our IT population, but also, we talk to our business stakeholders and customers through monthly meetings with global teams, and we communicate how the strategy is being implemented. We do deep dives and drilldowns on specific architectures, and we also host a forum every other Friday that we call strategy and practice. And this is where we put together our top 50 or so lead architects, and we have them critique and evolve the strategy and look for opportunities or gaps or learnings. And this is all for the purpose of trying to accelerate realization of strategic outcomes.

**Merim:** This is awesome, Steve. The point of getting all the architects, everybody have a seat at the table to feel like they are empowered to help us enable this vision, I think is a little bit of that secret sauce that we have put out there. You know, one of the things I think Steve that would help our audience is if we think about some real-life examples. Would you like to share where we are in the journey of implementing 2025 and what are some of the things that are in play right now? And a couple of things. A couple of nuggets of things that are around the corner?

**Steve:** Sure, we have lots going right now. One of the things I love about the Beyond 2025 vision is that we built some high-level business objectives and strategic outcomes, and we challenged our people to go and apply them



across all of our platforms simultaneously and mature those platforms with this strategic intent behind it at the same time. So because of that, we have what every program we run, every investment we make, every transformation that's going on currently is strategic. There's very little tactical work happening. So we have over 30 big programs that are driving us towards our strategy now. But here are some of the bigger and I think most disruptive ones.

Firstly, we are actively decommissioning in global corporate network right now, and we're moving to native internet and ultimately even 5G as our primary transport for last mile. And then we're consuming Cloud one services and a utility type model for connectivity back to cloud and our hosted applications and content. So this is a fundamental shift in the way that we run Accenture's network globally and truly disruptive. One of the other things connected to that, but separate out, is we're completely reimagining end to end security approach. So we're trying to detach security and security products completely from our infrastructure. This means we'll be out of move to a truly zero trust model and then refocus security enforcement. Just about the things we care about at the endpoint and the data and then everything in between becomes dramatically simplified, highly commoditized, lower cost has a lower carbon footprint. So all of those same things that we've been talking about today kind of get blended into, into our security vision.

We are also having a huge focus on customer experience. And that's one of the other big disruption areas that we're looking to drive this year through through this strategy. So we see customer experience IT success. And I truly believe they will overtake traditional measures like SLAs and KPIs. I already mentioned how the focus on our employees enabling them to be more engaged is more important now than ever, and we are working with virtual reality for more immersive experiences with that group. And we're continuing to evolve that through seamless integration with other key engagement platforms like Microsoft Teams and our early adventures into the Metaverse. So time will tell how that engagement model and the power of those emerging platforms will benefit our business, but I'm extremely excited about it

And then I guess finally, one other big area that we are focusing on there and into the future is data. For me, I see data as a significant enabler for Accenture to be a truly insight powered business. We've done so much work with cloud and we already mentioned the big journey and how far we've pushed into cloud. I believe that that is an important foundation for any organization to be able to really start thinking about how data can unlock valued insights and really improve the democratization of data so that we can obtain that value using machine learning and artificial intelligence. I truly think this is where organizations will differentiate in the future.

**Merim:** Well, thanks for that, Steve. You have shared a ton of what we are working on in our Beyond 2025 strategy here. As we all know, developing a vision and a strategy is one of many steps it takes to make any vision and strategy real. Our Beyond 2025 enterprise IT approach for Accenture will help us position Accenture to be a leading disruptor in the marketplace for many years to come. I look forward to continuing the conversation with many of our other leaders as we begin to roll this out. Looking forward to more discussion in future sessions. Thank you for listening today.

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