



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

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I feel like the Forrest Gump of death, doom and destruction, because I seem to be right near when really major and unfortunate events happen.

My first experience with a natural disaster was when I lived through Hurricane Andrew and lost everything I owned. We evacuated to a closet for a day and sat there as the hurricane beared down on everything. And when we woke up, it really was like a war zone.

Out of that experience, I learned that if you bring people together, all of them with different capabilities and vantage points, and you leverage off of that strength, you're actually amplifying your ability to solve problems. In the case of 9/11, I was living in Washington D.C. at the time, and I was actually en route to drive right by the Pentagon where the planes were hitting. I just went forward and started to develop relationships across the 'Big Four' accounting firm I worked at, at the time, to pool all the resources together to develop a homeland security practice.

I later decided I wanted to go into public service, and I was appointed to a role at the same time that Hank Paulson was coming in to lead the Treasury Department. And the secretary turned to my office and said, "You handle blowups, we need some type of protocol when things start to melt down." And he was alluding to the potential for financial firms to actually fail from potential financial crisis. We reached out across the financial regulatory community to build relationships to get their buy-in on a way to manage and communicate during financial crisis.

At Accenture, I am most excited about our ability to actually solve some of the most difficult problems that our financial institutions have. Over the past decade, I've been increasingly concerned and involved in cybersecurity, because it really is the existential threat that could make our entire society crumble. It's all about helping our institutions go beyond what they have today: their outdated architecture, actually adopting the cloud and leveraging that to be able to provide a better customer experience in a really safe and sound manner. We have incredible and talented people who really know how to make the cloud secure for them.

I'm Valerie Abend, and, to me, Leading in the New means using all of your tools in your toolbox. Especially during a crisis.