

# ACCENTURE CEO JULIE SWEET

## on what a post-virus workplace could look like

### VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**Host:** What are you seeing amongst your client base right now, has it accelerated their need for what we call digital transformation? Moving to the cloud, digitizing parts of their business that perhaps had not yet undergone that transformation?

**Julie Sweet:** Thanks glad to join you today. Absolutely in fact it's been become a little bit of a cliché right, the digital is now going to be accelerated as a result of companies needing to go online, working from home. But what we're seeing is that almost overnight there has become a major performance gap that existed pre-crisis between the leaders in technology adoption and digital and the laggards. Pre-crisis that gap was the top 10 percent of companies leading in technology were performing twice the bottom 25 percent. Almost overnight the digital performance gap has widened because right now the leaders, who've already invested, are able to adjust their supply chains faster they're able to adjust to the new way of buying. We have one retailer who had already a hundred stores they were doing omni channel purchasing with curbside pickup and went from 100 stores to 1400 stores, while the laggards, the companies that were online but hadn't really devoted to that channel and hadn't invested, were struggling to reinforce their ability even to have customers actually buy. So overnight the big gap has widened and now the question is what do you do? The leaders are doubling down, the laggards are aggressively partnering to figure out how they can accelerate but with laser focus because

it just became harder from a cost perspective.

**Host:** All right so I hadn't been using the cloud, now I'm suddenly realizing I have to move there, I have to move to all the different applications on top of that. How are you actually advising people, I'm curious by the way, when you can't actually be in the same room with them? When your consultants and people who typically would deal with the CTO or anybody like that can't actually be with them. Is it is it less effective?

**Julie Sweet:** No in fact I think one of the great lessons of this crisis is that innovation can happen remotely. So if you look at what we've done around the world, in the UK we partnered with Microsoft to help Rolls-Royce change their factory from making cars to ventilators, most of that done remotely. We partnered with AWS to help the Government of Alberto and New Mexico and the State of Texas stand-up call centers based on AWS connect teams working remotely. You go to Salesforce, we're working with Salesforce and AWS to do contact tracing, those teams have been innovating remotely so I think the lesson here is you can make very much effective remote working but actually the bigger lesson is just how fast you can move if you're partnering together you're not worried about lengthy procurements. You have to rethink how you transform and the



way that companies and governments have been able to react demonstrates how you do that you work with trusted partners. You set speed, you act with urgency and we are now advising clients to rethink how they do their transformation with those lessons in mind.

**Host:** Right I mean we've talked a lot during the course of our days here Julie about the future of work given how many CEOs we talk to who are rethinking how they do business. Do you truly believe this is a seminal moment, that once we are on the other side of this crisis we're not going to go back to the way things once were?

**Julie Sweet:** I do believe that, I think that it's actually though accelerated what was becoming before and so we were talking about pre-crisis that we were at an inflection point. The last five years you saw digital technology changing things and we saw this at the beginning of the decade, of actually delivering on the promise of technology and human ingenuity. This is the moment where we've accelerated, instead of it taking a decade it'll take years, only a few years. So we think we'll be in a very different place three years from now than we would have been pre-crisis.

**Host:** Hey Julie, really quick on commercial real estate. It's been such a busy week from companies like Twitter saying some employees may never have to return, we keep hearing companies will need less space because of that, others say they'll need more space because they'll have to social distance inside the office. What is the net effect?

**Julie Sweet:** I would say that most of the CEOs I'm talking to right now are seeking to leverage the fact that their workers are working very effectively remotely to actually reduce office space, not expand office space. And I've certainly seen that in a lot of different places. Now certainly, there's going to be some offsets but I think a lot of people have learned the lesson, the things that they thought had to be done in office can actually be done productively at home. We even look at our own business where our productivity increased in our technology business even though almost all of our people around the world, even those who worked in centers who didn't normally work from home as many of our people do, and our onshore in our countries around the world actually increased their productivity. So I think you're going to see it for very good and valid business reasons that you're not going to need as much office space, although I would caution you that it's important to bring people together. And so one of the things that we say is don't go overboard, right like don't go tilting to now everybody should be there because office space is critical to bring people together and keep that engagement going.

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