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## Gender equality must be part of everything we do as men and women leading our business

Video Transcript:

### Alastair Blair, Country Managing Director, Accenture Ireland

Hi, I'm Alastair Blair. When I think about gender equality, I always think back to my parents. They had a huge influence on my life. I always think my father taught me how to deal with people and work with people, and my mother, obviously, would have taught me the importance of education.

She was also convinced from an early age that we should go to co-educational schools because she believed you got a more balanced education and a more balanced view of life. That really brought home the importance of gender equality to us as a family. Educationally, she was very keen that we took on broad-based backgrounds.

She was also the only woman in three generations of her own family, since she was surrounded by men. So her view was that broad-based education was vital.

She was quite keen to get a broader perspective, perhaps other than the numbers, as she would have called them.

And indeed, I see that myself in my own life with my own two daughters. They love using technology, but I'm beseeching them almost on a monthly, weekly, daily, even hourly basis in some cases--if I'm able to get them away from the technology--to try to understand at a much better level how the actual technology works and how it was created.

It's very important for us to reflect back on the fact that some 10 or 11 years ago, Mark Ryan and the leadership team made a very concerted effort to put gender equality at the forefront, and it has remained there ever since. We've now arrived at the point where one-third of our leadership team is female, and I think that is a terrific statement--but we have some ways to go.

I also reflect back on how did we arrive at this point and what was important to bear in mind. I can vividly recall presenting at the first Accenture Women's Day in 2004 when I was the male sponsor for the program. The importance is that it's a women's and a men's issue. This is not a female or a women's issue alone. It has to be on par with everything we do as men and women every day leading, driving, and growing our business.

Secondly, I think when you reflect back on our business over the last ten or eleven years, we've been through one of the worse economic down turns any of us would want ever to experience. I am absolutely certain that the diverse nature of our workforce and the diverse nature of our leadership team in particular is one of the critical factors that has made the difference, and we've emerged from the economic downturn as a business in a far better place.

When I extend that out to the wider marketplace and you see how many organizations, the government, and everyone else in the country now focused on this issue, I think we're in a good place. We have an awful lot to contribute, and I think that when you take that one step further, and you think about how core this is becoming to us as a country, the future is bright.

With that at the heart and center of everything we do, then the future will be bright, hopeful, and we can look our kids in the eye and say, "There's a future for each and every one of you. What do you want to do and be?"