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CLOUD FIRST CAREERS EPISODE 3: INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN CLOUD
PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Chhavi Sachdev: Hello and welcome to another episode of the Accenture Cloud First Careers Podcast. My name is Chhavi Sachdev, I'm your host for this series. Join me as I engage in conversations with Cloud professionals at Accenture. Listen to how they do extraordinary things with Cloud. This is the Accenture Cloud First Careers Podcast. Did you know that as of this recording the proportion of women working in tech is smaller, at 32%, than it was in 1984? Today, women hold just 16% of engineering roles and 27% of computing roles in companies in the US. Our joint research with Girls Who Code shows that inclusive culture is key to retaining women in tech roles. In this episode, we have invited two Cloud practitioners who will share with us the importance of inclusivity in Cloud! Listen on to hear how that translates to better experiences for their co-workers, clients, and themselves. Samantha Fischetti from Brazil works as an IT Cloud Service Excellence Manager at Accenture. She is also the diversity ambassador for Accenture Brazil.

Samantha Fischetti: For me, global inclusion and diversity means more than bringing together people from different backgrounds. It is believing that our differences allow us to be a better team, one that makes the best decisions, promotes innovation and offers better business results.

Chhavi: We asked Samantha how this translates on the ground on a day-to-day basis, especially for someone like her who is an ambassador for diversity.

Samantha: We do a lot of activities. And we have a major goal, we want to implement a series of team building activities, resulting in improved teamwork, communication and inclusion. It's my mission and my passion to make our world a whole lot more diverse and lovely.

Chhavi: We'll hear more from Samantha about how she's using her passion towards making her colleagues feel comfortable and included. But let's move east for a bit, to hear from Charlotte Chan. Charlotte is a cloud migration analyst in Accenture's Singapore office and she has also thought deeply about inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

Charlotte Chan: Our firm's greatest assets are all people. And the fact is that my work is, is more of a functional nature and most of it has to be concerned with working well with people. And in order to do my best, I would have to bring my best self to work. And given that I have to work collaboratively with my teammates, we really do achieve much, much more when we are all physically and mentally healthy

Charlotte: and when everyone in a team has equal opportunities to make impact, and be heard, and be appreciated. As an Accenture employee, I recognize my privilege and ability to do what I can, in my own individual capacity to help shape a culture in the workplace that is enjoyable for all. Given that we spend up to 75% of our time working for the company, so why not try to make the 75% of our time, a highly enjoyable one.

Chhavi: Charlotte told us she realized the importance of having diverse teams as she worked on multiple projects over the years. The teams that included representation in terms of both gender and race made her most comfortable in bringing her whole self and best self to work.

Charlotte: One initiative that is really close to my heart that I have also spearheaded as a stakeholder partnership is that of 'I am remarkable' initiative by Google. It's formed by two marketing senior executives at Google, who really wanted to help raise awareness of the importance of self-promotion in the workplace, as well as in communities, especially for underrepresented groups, such as women, because of the negative connotations that usually comes when we want to self-promote

Chhavi: No one wants to work with an individual who is not a team player, but self-promotion does not mean self-aggrandizing. Charlotte explains how this initiative changed her viewpoint.

Charlotte: And I thought that self-promotion is a really critical skill set in the workplace, especially now of the fact that the job market is so competitive. It's no longer just about communicating facts on what you can do.

But it's more of how you can shape and create a story that represents you, and hence, what that story can bring to the firm in terms of value. I decided to bring in this workshop to Accenture. And what I did was work really closely with some of the awesome Google partners here in Singapore, to organize a workshop for Accenture ladies to attend as 'I am remarkable' participants. We had really positive responses out of that, we were able to organize a joint workshop to train the first seven extension ladies to be "I am remarkable" facilitators, so that we can build this initiative from the ground up.

Chhavi: Subsequently, Charlotte has gone to facilitate many more workshops that calls for more women to sit at the table and fight for opportunities to which they are entitled.

Charlotte: A lot of these ladies who attend the workshop, who really felt a power to start self-promoting. And we did conduct a survey to observe how the skill set of self-promotion has helped them in their recent Performance Achievements. And what we found is that majority of them, were able to find value in such a skill set in order to be better positioned for Performance Achievements.

Chhavi: The response has been encouraging, she says, but change has not happened overnight. In fact, the process is ongoing.

Charlotte: And still, there are challenges in terms of what ladies are facing in terms of self-promotion. But it takes a community of both women who are aware of such challenges as well as a community of males in our environment to be supporters and to step up for us whenever they observe inequalities or unconscious biases happening in the workplace.

Chhavi: Unconscious bias is a big issue — especially at the recruitment stage. Samantha can relate. She recalls when she was interviewing for a job at the age of 20 — she was asked questions about her clothes, and whether or not she wanted to have a family, simply because she was a woman. The fact that the company asked about that rather than about her professional capabilities, and that too at such a young age, really stayed with her. Inclusivity of women in tech became a topic that is close to her heart. She knew she didn't want herself and other women to face this in their careers. This, she says, is why her alignment with Accenture was smooth.

Samantha: Companies simply cannot succeed unless they make gender diversity, an organization wide initiative and the men to take part. Creating true gender parity requires participation by everyone. It requires a change in mindset. And we need courage and participation with a lot of collaboration.

Chhavi: She's happy she's in the right place because Accenture has a variety of programs focused on workplace inclusion, diversity and creating awareness around them. Samantha explains.

Samantha: Here in our program, we have women and men. And always you can see our social media's posts is about inclusion and diversity. For me, first things first, if you want your place to be inclusive, you need to lead by example. And put both your assumptions and stereotypes aside to support and celebrate your employee's difference.

Samantha: And I have three principal steps. And I really want to follow them always. The first is, is speak about inclusion. The second for me it's make sure everyone's safe. And the last one is to make sure everyone has the best place to work.

Chhavi: At Accenture, she tries to drive conversation around gender diversity and equality through different programs both internally and on social media.

Samantha: Gender equity is one of our priorities here at Accenture. We are sure that diversity unlocks innovation, defines the growth of the workforce, and consequently of the companies expand and open new markets. With that in mind, we need diversity programs to show who our women are, how they complement each other with this cloud world. And how we can combine skills and knowledge to chart a path towards a future with more equity and acceptance. And here I really promote gender equality through actions, promote Accenture to be more attractive in social medias with impactful content inside the company and outside the company.

Chhavi: Studies have shown that having an inclusive culture at the workplace leads to a positive impact on the company's bottom line. One specific study on diversity and inclusion at the workplace from Accenture found if people feel a sense of belonging and are valued by their employers for their unique contributions, perspectives and circumstances, they are empowered to innovate more. Charlotte also finds joy and satisfaction in the fact that apart from helping clients with Cloud migration, she is able to make a difference within Accenture by empowering herself and her colleagues.

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Charlotte: I'm an avid community builder, because I really do believe in the essence of building great communities in order to solve problems at scale. This really is a booster in terms of what I feel that I could have in terms of impact at Accenture.

Chhavi: Samantha and Charlotte are so inspiring with everything they are doing for people in the Cloud community at Accenture. Diversity and inclusion impact not just the work culture for the Cloud team but also for their clients as they all come into work wanting to give their best.

Do come back for the next episode in this podcast series in which we talk about Cloud Solutioning versus Cloud Delivery. This is the Accenture Cloud First Careers Podcast.

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