



THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE WITH AN INNOVATION MINDSET

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Hosted by: Accenture's Jennifer McLaughlin & Saideep Raj

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Hello everyone, my name is Jennifer McLaughlin and I'm our Northeast 5G lead at Accenture. I'm very pleased to introduce a friend of mine, a colleague. He's Senior Managing Director of Innovation, he's a great speaker, and we're really excited about discussing how innovation and 5G work together. Welcome, Saideep. How are you?

Saideep:

Hey, Jen, I'm so thrilled to be here. Thank you for having me on this.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, this is a conversation that honestly I could have any time and could talk all day. So, I'm excited as well. Can we start with just telling me a little bit about yourself and share with the audience what gets you excited every day about innovation?

Saideep:

Sure, so slightly broad, I lead innovation as part of our strategy and consulting practice at Accenture. I'm originally from London, now based in Philadelphia and my past roles at Accenture were really growing new practices, new business models. And it was in and around the customer experience space with Salesforce, which was a hotbed for innovation. So, obviously great training ground for me in this innovation role. And now what I love is the demand for innovation is just through the roof. And this idea of just constantly learning to be able to look at these new breakthrough approaches that are really solving our client's biggest issues. I love my job, I have to say.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

That's awesome, I feel like 5G is a sweet spot for innovation. It's like this promise of how it's going to evolve and bring on convergence of technologies and new business models, and it's just... it needs that innovation mindset to get started. So, I'm super enthralled by how we're bringing all of that together. One thing, we have recently... I'll say recently, because I've had a long career as have you at Accenture. But, I would say in the last decade or so, we've really made a concerted effort to integrate the concept of innovation in everything we do on behalf of our clients and focused on them. Can you just talk a little bit about how we've really brought that to life, to bring value inclusive of 5G, but honestly just overall in solving issues with our clients?

Saideep:

Yeah, I love you say that because, you're right. This has been a multi-year focus for us around really driving innovation for our clients. And first of all, we'll start with the super down to earth definition of what you and I call innovation. We say it's a new way of doing things that adds value. I mean, fundamentally, that's what it's really about. And now what I see there is it crossed three horizons. Obviously it's crossed R&D, it's then across this innovation entrepreneurship, really looking at startups and how you actually start to break through on the new, and then how you deliver something at scale when using the ecosystem. And when you think about that in each one of those horizons, we're driving a few things.



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Saideep:

One is how we inspire? How do we provoke change? That's a really key thing that is now in this new reality, physical, digital. A lot of people talk about the metaverse. We're creating this new metaverse for inspiration. The second is how we experiment to co-create for a breakthrough value. And third is how we scale innovation. How do we make it stick, is really like the heart of the big crunch question. Especially as you think of post pandemic, how do we keep this pace of innovation going?

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Totally, I mean, I feel like in a lot of ways, things got accelerated through the pandemic, but we can't really keep up this uber acceleration that we've had. So, we've got to find a happy medium. We don't want to go all the way back and we also can't really keep up this pace. So, it's going to be very interesting. I want to go back to your number two about experimentation.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

One of the questions that I get day in and day out in all industries is, what's the secret use case for 5G? What's the answer? And 5G is one of those things that requires us to change our mindset, think outside of the box and really shed ourselves of our current constraints that we've had for the last decade. Also, our understanding of cellular technology and communications, it just opens up such a plethora that if you're not in a mindset of innovation, experimentation, and shedding all that baggage we have, it's going to be hard to be disruptive and find that secret sauce, if you will. So I'm just curious, I really think that experimentation crosses over with 5G in a tremendous way.

Saideep:

I'm really glad you pointed to that because it is, I think very true, isn't it. When you think about something as profound as what we see with 5G that it's not about leading with technology, right? I mean, this is not like trying to look for the nail for this fantastic hammer. What is it we really need to be solving the business problem? I'll tell you that lately I've been watching a little TV and I'm into these British detective stories.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

I've been watching a tremendous amount of TV just for the record.

Saideep:

Have you? Okay well, this is what my focus is. And I love that because it's really uncovering these things that other people miss these detective stories, you're really looking for these clues. It's often innovation is in the seams of these business processes. I also love it because it's really at the heart of customer experience. We were talking about that and it's around looking at those unmet customer needs and really being observant, really dig into those. That's where you find these business problems that then we want to apply innovation. I think that's powerful. And I've got this... The client we're working with is a European Telco and their normal product development cycle 18 months to do, and they're doing so many things internally around the regulatory changes around this with legal and then texting with different forums, and so on. In eight weeks, we actually went from start to finish to launch this new set of two services that they had.

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Saideep:

It was a game changer for them because, what it started to do is all the experimentation that they were thinking about internally, design thinking [inaudible 00:06:48], they turned to customers to be able to do it. They actually went to their customers directly and actually started to test, and it was using this case using cloud as a neighbor. They wouldn't have been able to move that path with cloud. I think with 5G and edge compute exactly the same way, it's an enabler around driving that speed and experimentation. And now they're using it as a learning approach for how do they can keep going at that pace.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, I think the drive, and again, I think a lot of our... A culture change that would have taken so long was forced as a survival mode and the... during the pandemic, the bottom line is you have to be steadfast to leading with value. I love your scenario I use it all the time, 5G is not a hammer looking for a nail, it's what are you trying to accomplish? And then let's leverage 5G cloud at the edge, all of these enabling technologies that you didn't have to your avail before. But, you've got to be focused on your value. And then the speed component, if you think about how long it would take to change the cultures of our large clients to be okay with reaching out direct to clients and shortening that window, it was just foreign. And then we were all thrown in an environment where, "Oh, we can't wait 18 months, we got to get moving."

Jennifer McLaughlin:

And I think, I know we are, right? We're encouraging our clients to capitalize on that and keep that momentum and use some of it again at a more reasonable pace. And probably some of us are cranking now, but let's keep that going. And when you have something as exciting, exciting to me of 5G and what it can unleash, it really enables you to think about new

businesses, new revenue streams you didn't have before. Yes, increase your current product set. But think about what else you could do that is beyond what you've done to date, right. That's that lose that experimentation mindset that you were saying.

Saideep:

I love that, and you're right. 5G is the enabler for this acceleration. I get a lot of clients asking me, they saw how they've got through this period of 18 months of craziness. And it's been like brute force. How can they now sustain this and build that muscle of experimentation? Like what you're saying now, it's going to leverage 5G. It's really interesting because people talk about an innovation culture. How do we create an innovation culture? Think about air cover we want, the skills that we need, the base of the way that you really allow it experimentation. We're working with a life sciences company and we're taking their leadership team through how do you really create this culture of experimentation? And it's really interesting because they think that things like cloud and 5G and as, I can't bring that into my own world.

Saideep:

So we changed the mindset to say, "Actually these are solving real problems." They used the experiment by basically firing this thing that they wanted to get done to someone else typically in their technology group. How could they do some of these more things themselves to experiment and try out their role play with each other? It was game changing because now they're storytelling their own individual stories around how they're bringing these technologies to life and experimenting results. It completely changed the way that they're operating. That's what I think is really an innovation culture.



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Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, I think I agree. I mean, it's just such an exciting time and I'm very pleased that so many enterprises, many of which are hopefully watching this, are thinking that way and really trying to get and maintain that culture. Now I want to take a slight shift, but I feel like it's so critically important for 5G, and hopefully we can just... You'll go there with me. But Accenture releases a tech vision every year, and in this year's, you talk a lot about the mirrored world and some aspects of that are Digital Twin Digital Process Twin. But, what I really like is the fact that virtual and reality really blends and is enabled by things like computer vision that 5G enables real-time decisioning. There's so much that 5G is going to unleash in this mirrored world. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that.

Saideep:

I love what you picked up on that, that was my favorite trend out of the tech vision this year.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Mine too, mine too.

Saideep:

Well, and you're right. It's so much more than just the Digital Twin, which I think people think about is modeling different equipment and so on. This is around really, truly creating a mirrored world. And we've got in our innovation team, this fantastic team called, "what if" they really need to ask the big, what if questions? What if this were to be different, to be able to allow us to think about this business problem in a different way? Well, this mirrored world allows us to try out and test these what if scenarios. And now with IoT, this ability to look at 5G and the edge now extending our understanding of how the different products and services are actually used for our clients. They're able to drive these what if scenarios in wholly different ways, much more adaptable, much faster response to market for these changes.

Saideep:

And I love it because it really allows the customers even to hack their own solutions and us to be able to learn from them in applying this mirrored world. And one that we'll be able to have this mirrored world, where the output we turned over to customers to play with themselves, to experiment themselves on how they want to model their products and services. We're working with this company, Driving Air Purifiers, and they installed the IoT to be able to initially solve for counterfeit air filters that were going into machines obviously during COVID, that was a real bad problem. You want to make sure that your air is purified properly. But now the IoT and the adaptive software of all of these purifiers is changing the way that people use these. They can learn a lot more now about how these purifiers are used, where are they kept in settings, how do they actually [inaudible 00:12:46]. By changing and adapting these solutions in a way that was just impossible before, that's why I talk about this collaboration uniquely with a mirrored world that's allowing this game changer for customer experience.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, I think another aspect of the mirror concept is this blend of our expectation of how we live and leverage technology as consumers versus our expectations in our business environment, and in our enterprise. COVID really blurred all that. I mean, you and I, both sitting in our homes having this, instead of in the studio, in our office, we don't converge. So there's just been this meld of, I want the same sexiness and coolness in my work environment when I'm developing products that I'm releasing to my customers that I expect in my own personal devices, whether I'm playing a video game or I'm doing something on my tablet or my phone. So that blend, I think, is another culture change, that is one of these phenomenons that came out of COVID, there's no more, "I'm willing to put up with this type of performance from my work environment, even though I wouldn't put



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up with it in my personal." That's all blending, and that just raises the bar for our clients. There's so much more, even if you are a B2B environment, the expectations are more to the ease of being consumer. So, it's like this interesting phenomenon that I think that came out of COVID.

Saideep:

I think you're right, that aspect of different expectations. I think it's melding these different identities that we used to have. We used to have a work identity and focus on what we do at home, now we're getting more integrated. And I think that it's really interesting. I'm working with this startup called, Life Bead, and it's really around the learnings that we take from our lives, our home changes, there's a new parent or, taking care of the elder. How do those leadership skills enter into the workplace? [crosstalk 00:14:41] But I think that's so relevant for what we think about in 5G and edge. Because, the workplace is then changed, right? We've now really dreamed this authentic self for ourselves. The way we work is operating and changing, and the way we think about these identities you want to melt together. And the last thing I say is that's what this metaverse is about. I think people have called this for years, this vision of the blend of a physical, digital reality. And I think there's so much potential in making it richer for us to be able to have this more authentic self that we have blending across these different dimensions. I think it's going to be game changing.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, I find it refreshing. So, one thing before we close out, I know because I'm here obviously, but Accenture is really in a decisive way, blending 5G and innovation. We are creating a network of our innovation facilities that are going to focus on different aspects of 5G. So, I just wonder if you could comment on that, I know we are focused in North America in particular in

Fiscal year 22. Obviously again, the pandemic slowed us down a little bit last year. But, I wonder if you could just talk a bit about how we're going to really integrate for our clients, innovation, our innovation facilities, our innovation capabilities with technology at 5G.

Saideep:

Wow, I think it's so powerful because actually now across several of our centers, we're using 5G as being part of the fabric of the way that we bring our industry solutions to life. And I think of that as really being something that is really inspiring for our clients. 5G is embedded in the fabric of the way that they're seeing energy transition happen, or the way that they're looking at the future of work, and we're able to show it in real life. So, if you come to our center in New York and it's incredible, that view over Manhattan. We're integrating that into a physical, virtual reality space that actually is enabled through 5G to really bring to life the potential. In Houston, we're actually taking the kind of industry scenarios to really bring to life. What is it that companies are doing to kind of really drive this change? And I think your point that you said at the very beginning with, it's about the business value. What is it that's really enabling, what can you take away from being inspired? And I feel like, I don't know if I knew I learn from one industry and I take it to another. And I think that's what's so helpful for clients, is they start to kind of experience this to kind of be inspired by those cross industry examples.



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Jennifer McLaughlin:

Yeah, I often say depending on your industry and where you are as an enterprise, you may or may not be ready to move decisively forward in all aspects, leveraging all this technology wants. In fact, most are not, but when you're defining your strategy and you're thinking about the business value you want to generate, you just want to be aware and have it be part of the evolution. Because it is going to be prevalent, it is going to be an enabler. So you need to be doing it in context. And what I love about what we're doing in our innovation facilities is, once we're all able, of course we can broadly come together, marry our what if scenarios with our open-minded thinking, but understand the technologies of today and where we're going tomorrow. So you get that full gamut in the innovation process, which I think is going to be great for our clients and really excited about that

Saideep:

Yeah I think you're right.

Jennifer McLaughlin:

So, yeah so Saideep, I mean... This is really, I truly appreciate it. I was so excited that you agreed to do this. I just want to thank you, I think I'll share with the audience that you've also agreed to have some kind of one-off conversations if anyone would like to do that. So again, I truly appreciate your time there. And I just want to say thank you. I don't know if there's anything else you want to wrap up, but this has been tremendous.

Saideep:

Oh, well, Jenny, thank you for having me on this. I share your passion and enthusiasm for why 5G is absolutely an engine for innovation. So, what a fantastic topic to be chatting about today. Thank you so much.

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