



The war in Ukraine and a changing world: Accenture's response

Accenture's response to the invasion of Ukraine was swift and decisive, offering humanitarian aid and assistance to those in need, and supporting our people, clients and partners through the turbulence of war.

On February 24, 2022, as the first Russian missiles fell in Ukraine, Accenture convened a task force focused on the conflict and ways we might provide assistance to those impacted. A truly global organization, Accenture's footprint is extensive, which means we have resources—but also risk—in nearly every country in Europe.

First of all, the war in Ukraine is a humanitarian tragedy which concerns us all as individuals, enterprises and societies.

As the struggle in Ukraine deepened, our task force met multiple times a day, calmly working out the company's response. When the team in one time zone went to bed, another awoke and took the baton in an around-the-world relay that demonstrated the company's full power.



The immediate questions kept pouring in: “How can we help our 350 Ukrainian people in Poland get their families to safety?” “How can we assist our clients as they are exposed to higher cybersecurity risk, ensure day-to-day business continuity and navigate disrupted supply chains?” “How do I donate to help?” “How do we handle evolving international sanctions?” “What does the war mean for the future of globalization?” Many of Accenture’s more than 700,000 people, our 7,000 clients and 185 ecosystem partners had questions, and they needed answers fast.

The company’s response would evolve over time, but in the immediate aftermath, the priority was taking care of our people who were directly affected and contributing to the humanitarian response. This focus expanded as it became clear our clients were also looking for support and strategic solutions as the world scrambled to adjust to a new reality.

Immediate responses

The first step was to create the global task force. After two years of dealing with COVID-19, leaders knew it was essential to have the right people and resources around the table, including representatives from senior leadership such as Chair and CEO Julie Sweet, our

global Chief Strategy and Operations Officers, Market Unit Leadership, Global Industry Leaders as well as from Marketing + Communications (M+C), Legal, HR and Finance.

Once organized, the task force worked rapidly to identify and collect accurate information, to provide a single source of truth for our people worldwide and to deliver the content and resources local Accenture leaders would need to talk to their people and clients as the situation unfolded.

With our crisis decision-making framework as a guide, we addressed a variety of questions, including the impact on our people, our clients and our business.

“When making decisions, we considered not only our stakeholders but our business at large, which is rooted in our core values and Code of Business Ethics,” said Stacey Jones, Senior Managing Director, Head of Corporate Communications.

The task force also had to balance the need for leadership to communicate with the entire company about the fluid and rapidly changing situation on the ground with the expectation of Accenture’s people that they would hear from their local leaders.



Accenture withdraws from Russia

Under Julie’s leadership, the company decided to discontinue our business in Russia, announcing this on March 3rd. Accenture was among the first consulting companies to make such a decision, and, by early June, more than 1,000 global companies had also ceased operations in Russia¹.

As a growing number of companies began to announce exits from the country, the Russian government

announced that legal consequences could follow, including holding local management personally accountable and seizing assets. The legal environment was evolving, and Accenture did not want to put our people in Russia at risk. The Legal team—in consultation with the task force—recommended that Accenture transfer our business in Russia to several local leaders. [We announced](#) completion of the transfer as part of a local Management Buy Out on April 11th, a little over a month after deciding to discontinue our business in Russia.

¹ [“Over 1,000 Companies Have Curtailed Operations in Russia—But Some Remain.”](#) Yale School of Management (2022).

“People first is not just a slogan”

From the start, thousands of Accenture people wanted to help. While local leaders coordinated on-the-ground efforts, the corporate citizenship team worked with global experts to decide which efforts to support. This seamless response—to help colleagues directly affected and to enable employees to help—ensured the company could move forward in a coordinated way.

Inventive initiatives blossomed across Europe, and the world. For example:

- Accenture Slovakia employees developed a secure app to help distribute insulin and other essential supplies to Ukrainian children with diabetes. Others built a ‘Map of Help’ which identified important location points and resources available for refugees in the country and directed Slovaks who wanted to help to the proper places.
- In the UK, Accenture partnered with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to organize essential humanitarian food boxes for delivery to Ukraine. The team worked with food manufacturers and Supply Chain partners, and the Ukrainian embassy in London, to ensure this essential aid reached those most in need.

- Accenture has formed a partnership in Europe with jobs platform provider The Adecco Group. The goal is to support all refugees looking to start a new career and opens a channel for Accenture to recruit new talents. We have adapted our Skills to Succeed Academy to provide basic employment and digital skills to all refugees and increase employability of those who complete the courses.

“We keep saying that one of Accenture’s biggest values is people first. This is not just a slogan... Our people were driving their colleagues’ families from the border after work and are hosting refugees at their own homes now.”

—**Edyta Galaszewska**

MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR
OPERATIONS, ACCENTURE POLAND

[Read more about Accenture’s commitment to helping refugees.](#)





“I’ve been with Accenture for 33 years. This company doesn’t stop amazing me—how we stand behind our values.”

—Jaroslaw Kroc

COUNTRY MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR POLAND

Case study: Poland

While Accenture does not have offices within Ukraine’s borders, we employ 350 Ukrainians in neighboring Poland, the primary destination for millions of Ukrainian refugees. The numbers are startling: Warsaw, a city of 1.8 million residents, had more than 300,000 refugees within weeks of the invasion².

From the first day of the invasion, the team in Poland mobilized to help. Edyta Galaszewska, Managing Director for Operations, Accenture Poland, reached out individually to the 350 Ukrainian employees in Poland. She also checked on the welfare of the 100 colleagues from Belarus and 20 from Russia, many of whom were targets of hate speech outside of their work because of their nationality. Despite offers of additional compassionate leave from the company, most people refused it; as one employee said, “I want to keep working because work is the only place where I feel psychologically safe.”

Accenture people in the Polish office immediately developed a Yammer group to connect refugees with the people who volunteered to ferry them from the border and host them in their own homes. It seemed everyone was affected: The employee who started the Yammer group—and spent hours of his own time setting it up— spent 9 days getting his own family out of Ukraine. (They made it safely to Poland and were collected at the border with help from Accenture colleagues). Others quickly adapted the existing Carrots Academy for Women to upskill and provide cybersecurity training to Ukrainian women refugees—to support and offer employment opportunities to participants.

² [Ukrainian refugees are flooding into Warsaw. Its mayor warns of a breaking point.](#) *Washington Post* (2022).



Helping our clients deal with the immediate crisis and its aftermath

Accenture's Chief Strategy Officer, Bhaskar Ghosh, knew that Accenture's expertise in strategic thinking was essential in helping our people and clients navigate the turbulence of the crisis. While the initial focus was on the humanitarian disaster, many of our 7,000 clients, especially those with significant operations in the area, were also looking for leading thinking, guidance, and strategic support.

Janine Cornecelli, Marketing + Communications lead, Accenture Strategy & Consulting, explains: "Developing and sharing our thinking on how clients should navigate the war was complicated. How do we support our clients worldwide while avoiding opportunism in the face of a humanitarian crisis? How do we create thought leadership in a fluid and evolving situation rife with unknown outcomes? And how do we move at speed to help in scenarios that differ dramatically by country, by industry, by individual client?"

Within a week of the crisis onset, Accenture developed a Ukraine Rapid Response Content Program for our strategists and consultants, who were helping their clients in this highly fluid and nuanced environment. This effort was led by Chief Strategy Officer for Europe,

Michael Brueckner. Additionally, a senior business leader Advisory Board helped ensure the content team was in lock step with the needs of the business and the differing impacts on clients.

Internal content ranged from robust research on macroeconomic scenarios, which were updated weekly, to simple, integrated conversation guides for strategists and consultants in those industries most impacted by the war, to functional content on cross-cutting areas of concern, such as supply chain, energy and cybersecurity.

Externally, the program offered market/client-facing content in the form of [research-backed thought leadership](#). Feedback became a strategic driver of the content, and the team developed a strategy to pulse-test internal and external audiences regularly to understand war-related, top-of-mind people and client concerns. The feedback formed the basis of a content roadmap, and joint marketing and research teams were quickly mobilized to develop highly relevant content at speed, working closely with subject matter experts from the business. Additionally, a [Ukraine war hub page](#) was built on Accenture.com to house all relevant content.

"In this new reality, our clients first asked for immediate help in responding to the disruptions, like managing supply disruptions. Quickly this shifted to looking for more structural vulnerabilities and how to address them to build a more resilient, sustainable business."

—Kris Timmermans

GLOBAL LEAD, SUPPLY CHAIN



“First, the war in Ukraine is a **humanitarian tragedy**. It has also created a massive supply shock across the global economy, with energy and food security now top of the agenda, and, finally, it is changing the macroeconomic and geopolitical landscape. **I am particularly proud of and thankful to our people, who stood together to support our Ukrainian colleagues, their families, and the refugee community.** I am also impressed by how quickly our teams mobilized to support our clients, helping them better understand and navigate this changing world order.”

—**Jean-Marc Ollagnier**
CEO, EUROPE, ACCENTURE



“I’m so proud of how we are stepping up to help clients. Not because we wanted an additional sale, but because we want to be a true partner and exemplify the values we stand for.”

—**Vishaal Gupta** SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, TECHNOLOGY, EUROPE

“Let’s remember: It hasn’t ended, this story. Hopefully the war itself will be finished [soon], but rebuilding of the physical infrastructure, as well as the rebuilding of [people’s] minds—people are so deeply affected—will take years.”

—**Jaroslav Kroc** COUNTRY MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR POLAND

Supporting clients during a volatile time

The outbreak of war and subsequent sanctions have had a seismic impact on energy supplies, particularly for industries heavily reliant on gas and oil. Supply chains have also been severely interrupted and businesses around the world have been impacted: energy prices are rising, inflation is high. These issues and others, from [cybersecurity](#) to scenario planning to general business continuity, were leading concerns for the rapid response task force and Accenture’s Industry and Market Leaders as they had conversations with clients around the world.

Leaders were also conscious of being true allies to clients and wanted to provide innovative solutions that could help those in acute distress. Challenges were significant. The Energy Industry team joined in efforts to help clients

in energy efficiency programs to help mitigate the impact of reduced energy availability and/or higher cost. For example, for a South American energy company the team explored solutions ranging from better data analysis to introducing the idea of circularity into the supply chain to help reduce energy consumption and consequently operating cost. The Utilities Industry team was similarly busy: As a result of the conflict many Utilities within Europe are under pressure from their regulators and governments to increase energy independence and supply security. Accenture is helping a utility in Europe to create a comprehensive plan to seek this.

Many of the Industry teams also began talking to clients about seizing the opportunity offered by the disruption to their business to make longer-term, structural changes, such as accelerating the energy transition.

Progress and ongoing efforts as the war grinds on

So far, Accenture has donated \$5 million in cash to relief efforts. On top of this, more than 12,200 of our people have given \$1.75 million in donations, which the company is matching 100%.

As the response changes from meeting emergency needs to assessing and navigating the ongoing implications of the war, focus shifts to the longer term. Issues such as resilience, data privacy and sovereignty will now be central to how businesses navigate the crisis.

Accenture is adapting to provide key guidance on these issues and many more. Svenja Falk from Accenture Research points to the ongoing question around fragmentation of the global order: “What does this mean for a company like ours, which has a global delivery model, and for our clients, who

are multinational and thinking about talent sourcing, moving ahead?”

The world as we know it will never be the same, a sentiment that the pandemic had already introduced, but one with huge implications for how business works globally. As Accenture remains mindful of the enormous humanitarian tragedy playing out in the heart of Europe, we are committed and ready to tackle new challenges for our people, clients, and business.

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