



ID, Empowered by Accenture - Making an Impact

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

[00:53 - 06:27] **Lee Elliot-Major:** All right, okay, so I'm on. Well, thank you, everyone. I'm Lee Elliot-Major. I'm the first professor of Social Mobility in the country. And people often say he's a leading thinker in this area, my 16-year-old daughter always reminds me that's only because I'm the only professor of Social Mobility that I'm a leading person in this area. I'm also nothing to do with social distancing. Social Mobility is about the chances of getting on in life. And my work is dedicated to improving the chances of people particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds. And the hope really is that your background shouldn't determine what you do in life, it should be down to your hard work and talent. And sadly, what we know in this country, as well as America, actually, is that that's not the case that we have lower social mobility in this country than elsewhere in the world.

This is a personal as well as professional passion. I, myself come from a sort of working-class background. I guess you'd call it. I lived on my own when I was 15 years old, my mom and dad split up. I'm from a place called Feltham in West London, which is famous for its young offenders' institution. And I was the first

person in my family to get into higher education. And yeah, and basically, my life didn't look great at age 15, in many ways. But the thing that that turned it around for me was two things really, the power of people, the people around me at the time and education. I went back to college, I retook my E levels, and then I ended up doing a PhD, and became an almost the eternal student in many ways. And, but it was really people that helped me at various points in my life. And I think that's something we all should remember, actually, that, now that I'm older and have been successful, in some ways, it's really, I think, crucial to remember that you can actually help people coming through who are younger than you.

But I went back, I did a PhD, I ended up being a Chief Exec of Sutton Trust, which is a big social mobility foundation. I was a journalist for many years. And as I said, now, I'm a professor of social mobility, I've written several books. And in many ways, I guess you would see me as a success, I find it difficult to say those things actually, to be honest, still to this day, and I think that's part of my background.

And what I would say about my life thinking about others from similar backgrounds, is that your history does stay with you. And I think I've been through phases where I was almost embarrassed by who I was where I was from, I suffer like many, I think, from imposter syndrome still to this day. And I think I'm what you might call a sort of awkward social climber. That's someone who's kind of lost where they came from. And but doesn't really not feel at home where they got to. So I think, when you talk about social mobility, it's easy to think that it's all easy and it's successful when you become successful in the eyes of others. But as I said, your history stays with you. And I think it's important now I've, I talk about my history a lot, very proud of where I come from, and I think that's something that we should all have in these debates, actually.

So, what do I do now? I think that the things that I push for now in terms of social mobility is the idea that you should fill your potential wherever you're from and that includes both a gender or ethnicity or social class. Those things shouldn't prevent you from fulfilling your potential. I worry a little bit of in these debates about the sort of what I call the American Dream version of social mobility, which is sort of plucking one person out of their backgrounds and sort of leaving the rest behind. I think in this country, we need discussion about the prospects for everyone. So, you get into debates about the extent of inequality in society. I think, for example, teachers and nurses should be paid more in society, we should value jobs that give back to others.

So social mobility, for me is not about an individualistic notion of success. It's really about giving back to others and fulfilling the things that you want to do. It's about your background, not determining your choices in life. So I'm very proud to be the country's first professor of social mobility.

And I hope that these few comments will have stimulated some of you who are interested in this area, because as I said, at the moment, whether it's in terms of diversity into big organizations, which I work with a lot, or whether it's inequalities in schooling, or the people that are in-charge of the country, actually the lack of diversity in those that are in-charge. I think that we have a big challenge and I hope I will remain a big part of that for years to come. So thank you very much.

[07:01 - 14:17] Ayomide Akin: Hi, everyone. My name is Ayomide Akin. And it's really lovely to be here presenting and sharing my story with you guys. I'm a Digital Strategy Manager here at Accenture, specifically sitting in interactive, mostly focused on product innovation, venture strategy. I'm really helping clients take an idea and kind of make it into reality. And I guess closest to my heart as the work I do as a co-lead of Accenture's African and Caribbean network and network with an Accenture that's been a relentless champion for quality throughout its existence.

I joined Accenture just under six years ago. Straight out of university I was very, very excited, was had all kind of my corporate outfit. So my heels already thinking I was joining something like suits. But in the reality is, I actually found my first couple of years, quite difficult. I had very, very low work confidence. I didn't think I was ever going to be able to achieve anything at Accenture. I really didn't feel that I fitted in, or that I couldn't be myself. And I think the most challenging thing is I found that I couldn't see that many people that were or that looks like myself that were in leadership positions. And I found that quite difficult because I wasn't sure if I was being able to succeed in an environment such as Accenture.

I was lucky, I have found a mentor, someone that looked like me who was just a level above myself, who was able to kind of build my confidence, relate to some of the struggles that I had and have similar shared experiences. And also advocate for me and provide me opportunities that are needed, that were given to me to able to showcase what I was able to do. And that really was a turning point for me in my career. And over time, I began to realize that my story wasn't unique, but instead was quite consistent amongst many people within the black community within Accenture and beyond and across the corporate landscape. And all of that is what kind of has pushed me to be really passionate about the advancement and support of [Technical Difficulty] community and really making the playing field.

So when myself and my colleague, Cody Chloe began running an African Caribbean network, we set ourselves a really clear kind of threefold vision that what we wanted to achieve as a network. And it was all based off kind of our own experiences and the experiences of the people, the community that we've really been talking to over time.

So the first thing is that we wanted to create a home for the black community. And as a community, we need kind of space to be able to be ourselves. And as I mentioned, I didn't want to show you that I could be myself in Accenture. And African Caribbean network creating that space where you can talk about things that relate to your culture, and who you are and really made a huge difference. And we really wanted to continue that through kind of socials and events.

The second part of our vision was about uplifting black talent. Black talent has been left behind for many years and we really need to be uplifting the community through sponsorship coaching, in order to

set a kind of level at playing field. And we do this through kind of monthly training sessions. And we have monthly training sessions and an annual training session that we do all about providing coaching and training around the key skills needed to succeed in this environment.

And then lastly, the last kind of part of our vision is about educating the wider business and the black experience. Prior to Black Lives Matter, discussions around race are really held in echo chambers of people who already converted on the issue. And it was mostly amongst ethnic minorities. I'm talking about the challenges of being an ethnic minority, but not sharing that with the majority. And most of us, I'm sure know, now without allyship, or the support of the white majority, racial injustice will only continue. So we're really passionate about having these conversations in the open with everybody. And we do kind of monthly sessions, we call them Black Table Talk Events, where we talk about things that we often talk about internally as a community, sort of things like intersectionality, black people's relationship to the police and things like that. So these are the kinds of things that we're looking to achieve through the network. And I'm really, really proud of everything that we've been able to do.

And I've also been lucky enough to kind of marry the work I do with the African Caribbean network with my day job as a Product Strategist. I'm currently working on a project called Mobilize, which I'm very, very passionate about. It's literally she is like my baby. So taking it back just over a year pre-COVID times, I just come in at the Mobo awards for six months. And for those that don't know, the Mobo awards are a kind of yearly iconic award show in the U.K., similar to the BRIT Awards, or in the U.S., similar to the BET awards. And they've been a real advocate for diversity in the creative industry for

over 25 years. So I was working at the Mobo awards for a year.

And during that time, we did a whole lot of different things. But one of the things, I started looking at was diversity specifically in the creative industry. And it highlighted that unknown too many people, it was actually not very diverse. Only 1.4% of employees in the creative industry are black. And we identified the issues around this was similar to my own experiences, issues around opportunity, mentorship, sponsorship, allyship and also organizations just really not having a clue on what to do.

So what we started with a small team to start looking into the problem area, and we came up with the concept, Mobilize, a new digital venture which unites, uplifts and empowers creative talent within the black community. And we were really excited about the concept and really thought that it was something Accenture should get behind. So we pitched the concept to our CEO Ollie, CEO at the time Ollie, he loved it. And we got funding to support and we're currently working on the project. The venture as a whole at the moment.

We've got a team of across Accenture, inclusive of kind of looking at the business strategy, the marketing the product design and build and working with our agencies Bow and Arrow, Karmarama, Fjord, client innovation services to create this new venture, which really we think will make a massive difference towards moving the dial. I don't know why I use that phrase, I hate that phrase, but making a really active difference towards the black community in the creative industry and the creative industry as a whole.

So I'm really passionate about us using our specialisms and our skillset. And I'm really passionate about us using our specialisms and our skillset to truly make an active difference towards what we are passionate

about and what we see as areas of need. I think if we're able to do that, we'll be able to make a really active difference towards making society more fair, more equal and more just. And I think, if we all able to do that, and really be able to given the opportunity to utilize our skillset, we can make a really, I guess, a better world as a whole. So yeah, that's everything for me. But thank you so much for having me.

[14:58 - 22:01] Ben Ngobi: Thank you. Hi. Hello, all, good morning, afternoon, wherever you are. My name is Ben Ngobi. And I lead Accenture's Procurement Sustainability Program. I've been in the company for the past -- nearly 10 years now. And I'll have to admit that I have got the best job probably in the company, but I'm sure there'll be quite a few people who would disagree with me. Essentially, what we do in our team is work with our suppliers, our supplier partners, clients, to advance supply, inclusion and sustainability. So a lot of you have heard a lot about social injustice, inequality, we've got a climate challenge, we have human rights issues around the world. So companies like ourselves have a duty and we have an opportunity to use the leverage that we have to advance change to bring about change, to create change, wherever possible. So I'm in a small team that is slowly growing, doing just that. How do we make sure that our suppliers understand how to measure, manage and report their emissions impact? Do they know how to -- really what energy means? And what targets can they put in place to drive that journey towards being green companies.

Around the world talk about human rights, it's very much around, what are we doing to meet both legal and non-legal obligations to make sure that corporations like ourselves, are looking inside our supply chains and thinking about what we can do to make sure that some of these undesirable events are not taking place.

The other pillar that we really look into is supply inclusion and diversity, so very much around how do we -- the same way we're talking about I&D generally, how do we make sure that we have women on businesses, minority on businesses, LGBT, social enterprises and so on, given opportunities to bid for work. So these pillars are core to what we do in our team, to advance supply, inclusion and sustainability.

Interestingly, when I left university, I actually wanted to go to the UN, it was always my dream. But it never worked out. It was immensely difficult to get in. Every time you get an application, you are number one of X, that was a little bit demotivating. But it's through that my desire to do what I do today, I started setting up a small plan to say, what skills do I need in four or five years time to be able to get to, to the journey that I wanted. And so through that, I went back into three university, I did a degree in management and environment. And then, I did another degree in development studies, focusing a lot on the developing economy, growth and so on. And then lately, an MBA International Management, right?

So through my vision of what I wanted to do, I started kind of carving out a path for myself, to where I wanted to go. And then, fast forward 10 years, 10 years later, I am doing exactly what I wanted to do. And that's what I said, at the beginning, I probably have the best job in the world, especially given the current climate. So at a high level, I've given you a view of what we do. But then, tangibly, what does that mean? So it does mean that we need -- I do need to recruit brilliant individuals, engineers, mathematician, who really can calculate emission reductions and be able to say, this is what we are doing tangibly to make our impact on the environment.

We do need to be recruiting and working with talented people who understand how

to build systems -- technology systems, that can help us understand what suppliers are giving us from that ESG perspective and actually building scoring models around that. So that's a huge project, which is exciting right now, which is going to hopefully help us to manage ESG data better and it's global. And yeah, we do plan to go live in the U.K. sometime in June. It's exciting because we are going to be touching thousands of suppliers at scale and be able to manage that comparison of who is doing what and how can we help those who are not performing well to improve and those suppliers aren't performing well, especially if they're small, medium enterprises, diverse suppliers. I know we will put them into our diverse supply development program which is one of our flagship program. We run globally to help build capacity of small medium enterprises.

So if you find a gap in certain area, we will aim to kind of help build the capacity. Again, try and level the field, try and educate, try and give opportunity to businesses to advance in their responsibility around human rights and environment and so on.

Now, Accenture alone, actually quite big, I think we still need partners to go along. And actually one of one of my other exciting opportunities was through by leadership is actually create an offering, I call it client offering in a way. So building what we've done, learn from and actually go and help our clients do the same. So we can create critical mass. Ultimately, we need to make change, we haven't got much time to make change, positive change. And so we try and offer our help and speak at events and engage clients, suppliers to do the same thing. So one of our offering actually, we started four years ago, which is a pilot, one of our big products company in Italy. Fast forward to now, we're helping quite a few other clients as well introduce

supply, inclusion and sustainability programs, as well.

So it's been a journey for me, I'm super excited, still excited to be here to be given opportunity by leaders who remain nameless, in the U.K. and abroad who have really given me the space to innovate and to do really cool, cool things to help improve the way the world works and lives.

So I just wanted to leave it on that note. And I really want to hand it to Usebe, who then lead the close to the day, one of our I&D empowered by Accenture. Thank you.