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ID, Empowered by Accenture - Panel Discussion: How will we measure change and be accountable?

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

[0:22 - 1:43] **Simon Eaves**: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for joining us in this session around, how we measure change and be accountable and what I hope has been a very enjoyable, impressive and thought-provoking couple of days.

My name is Simon Eaves. And I'm just going to briefly do a few introductions and then we'll get going into the core topic.

Firstly, myself, I'm responsible for all the Accenture's business in U.K. and Ireland. And I'm delighted to be here and it's a privilege to represent our company on the U.K. stage. I'm also delighted to have two very special guests with me here this afternoon. We have Rebecca Tully, who sits on the U.K. executive leadership team and supports us on people matters and particularly coordinates and develops all of our activities around inclusion and diversity.

And then secondly, we have Dr. Simon Hayward. Simon is an honorary professor of the Alliance School of Business at Manchester University and is the Founder and Chief Executive of Cirrus a specialist, human capital and leadership development company, which has just joined to be part of the Accenture family. And it's a delight to have Simon here with us.

In the spirit of the last few days, I'm going to ask each just to introduce themselves in a bit on their identity. So first of all, Rebecca to you.

[1:44 - 2:35] **Rebecca Tully**: Thank you, Simon. So hi, everybody. Alongside my I&D work in Accenture, I have the privilege of being the team captain in strategy and consulting for talent and organization, human potential practice. In terms of my identity and my DNA, so I'm a proud working-class northern girl from background. My parents met when they were aged 11 in a fancy house in Southport. They were both working downstairs. In fact, my grandfather was the

gardener there. And when the upper-class folks went away for summer, they, the downstairs folk were allowed to bring their families. And so that's how my mother and father met. So I was the first person ever in my family to go to university. And really, it's through University and Accenture that the world has unlocked for me, so very delighted to be here today.

[2:37 - 2:39] Simon Eaves: Thanks, Rebecca Simon?

[2:40 - 3:36] Dr. Simon Hayward: Thanks, Simon. Great to be here and to be part of Accenture. I think of myself as an influencer. I'm the son of an entrepreneur who built a successful engineering business. And he told me to work hard and to value education. I'm the proud father of three great sons who are now grown up and pursuing their own individual ambitions in life. And they have helped me become a little more empathetic over the years. And my purpose in life is to change the way leaders lead. And this has been expressed through building Cirrus, through academic research, and publishing some books on leadership that have done quite well.

And I find charity fundraising very fulfilling, so I'm involved in the local hospice where my friend, Adam died six years ago and my father died also of cancer in his 60s. And at weekends, I love running, research and red wine, but never all at the same time.

[3:39 - 9:30] Simon Eaves: Brilliant, thank you both. And I should complete with a little bit of identity on myself post those fantastic ones. And let's see if I can get anything where, there's some common themes here not that's determined who's here, but I'm a child of the northwest of England, similar sorts of background, etc, to Rebecca and found my way to London, and had a very, very successful career and development mostly around Accenture.

You know, my identity now is, is often determined by family. I'm tremendously proud of my daughter, who is at the front of epigenetics over at UNC in Chapel Hill and my son, he plays sport to high standard and I'm hoping he'll also learn how to eventually make his own way.

You know, what I'm passionate about at the moment, is the link of biodiversity neuroscience, etc, and the effects on life. And that's been very much driven by the fact that my mom has had Alzheimer's for 12 years plus and she's still with us, in body but unfortunately, not in mind. And getting ahead of that is important to me.

So, without further ado, let's start to frame the topic. And just to sort of set the stage because this is actually about analytics and numbers, let me not disappoint you by not giving you a few numbers and targets. So it's 17th year in 2021, since Accenture started to celebrate International Women's Day. And whilst at one level that could feel a long time, it could also feel a very short time.

We've been one of the companies, which has been brave enough to say that by 2025, we will have 50% split between male and female for those that express a gender preference within our business. And we've come a long way towards that to give you some recent stats by '19, 55% of our recruits were female and that had risen from 36% in 2015. Same year '19, 42% of our promoted to Managing Director were female and that have risen over the same periods in '15 from 24%.

In our overall firm at the moment, you may be aware we have 215,000 women within our overall business. And at a board level of Accenture, so including our non-execs, we have 42% female participation. And there are GMC, which is our operating board around about a third.

How have we done that we've got three deliberate areas that we think about recruitment, development, progression and retention and activities across each and every one of those areas and recognizing that they all have an interplay of sophistication, that pulling people in and taking care of our female leaders and recruits is vital in a very distinct way, development and training and program that Rebecca has been at the heart of developing distinct activity. We've increasingly recognized the need for sponsorship on progression to Managing Director and also within Managing Director being something which is hugely important, and then retention programs to support our female leaders and recruits throughout that period of time with Accenture.

Now, also targets, I have moved on quite rightly into other areas. As a company we went public, I think in the last year, with such significant and correct attention around Black Lives Matter around our ethnicity targets. And particularly we've gone public that we will have by 2025, black participation in our workforce at 7%, from its current level around 4%. And that during that same period, we will double the number of managing directors who are black within our organization.

And to give you a sense we've moved our black recruiting up by 43% on our African and Caribbean network now has 600 plus active members. And then, the third piece of the jigsaw. In terms of the facts around what we've done is, is the whole advocacy groups, which hopefully you get a sense of and those play multiple roles across our organization across gender and various other activities. And you know, the two areas, which I think are particularly important and relevant for this time, are we now have 22% of our U.K. and Ireland workforce who are mental health allies, a massively important area given the last year we've been through and the rising tide

of need and recognition for mental support.

And we have over 4000 LBGTQ allies also within our organization, who have been through a level of understanding of how to help support and cope with often the microaggressions and the issues faced by those core constituents in life and our society.

So in some ways, maybe impressive stats, right? But we're in a very interesting period, right? We're in a very interesting period, the essence of these last couple of days have been seeking to challenges and make us think differently. And where do we go next, right? Where do we go next around this, which is all the setup for the panel now and the discussion?

So yeah, I'm now going to work through five questions with my colleagues here and see sort of bring it to life of where we go. And I'm first I'm going to come to Rebecca, right? You know, all of those stats are impressive, Rebecca, etc, in so many ways, and we've come a long way. But, you know, what role do you think setting these goals really has? And are they really driving the meaningful change we need?

[9:33 - 10:41] Rebecca Tully: Yeah, I mean, firstly, Simon, it's so easy, isn't it to set goals? I know. I'm very good at it. 31st of December every year, I lay out my new year's resolutions and there we go. But you know, setting goals is the easy part actually sticking to them and attaining goals is much trickier as we know. And I think when you set a goal, it needs to be ambitious enough to inspire action, but similarly, it needs to not be unrealistic. And I think part of the issue I see for ourselves and Accenture and also with our clients is that they, you have to understand and get under the skin of your workforce today. And not just at a macro level, you have to understand the some of the parts,

because if you can understand a bit more about that makeup, then you can actually start to set some healthy stretch goals that you can work to attain. So I think where we've seen that done in Accenture, we've seen great success and where I've seen that done at some of our clients. But so yes, the short answer is, I'm a big believer in goals. But ultimately, it's what comes with it. And that tracking and that attainment, that's really the important part and the challenging part.

[10:43 - 11:22] Simon Eaves: Yeah, yeah. And all of the associated actions that go with it to achieving its kind of significant -- KPI in itself there's nothing without all of the actions against it and understanding. At that point on the detail, understanding the depth of detail of the constituent audience is very resonant with the discussion of the last few days, which is around inclusion and where it's all about. Thank you. Thank you.

So Simon, we now get to, you know that the difference which is, okay, we've done these goals a lot, people have published and etc. But what after the goals, do we keep them forever? Do we keep knocking them out? What where do we take this whole discussion around goals?

[11:25 - 14:40] Dr. Simon Hayward: Thanks, Simon. Well, keeping the goals helps keep the focus on action, as you say, which is fundamentally what it's all about. It's also I think about the balance between this action and building a truly inclusive culture. And as we know, culture is driven by leadership, by history and also by what we measure as success. And I think leaders have a disproportionate influence on the culture of this and every organization on is aggregated behavior. And therefore, having an inclusive and diverse culture will sustain change over time and that's the best route forward. So a culture where empathy, deep listening. So fundamental respect for the whole person are highly

valued, especially at the executive team level, like here at Accenture or Microsoft, where Satya Nadella, so rebased the culture on collaboration, learning and personal growth, when he became CEO.

So a culture where senior leaders are Public Advocates for diversity, which shows both public commitment and public accountability, and where leaders have open conversations across the organization, to understand the extent to which people feel included or excluded from opportunity.

And interestingly, the research we've been doing with Alliance Manchester Business School, suggests that agile teams perform better when they're in a culture they perceive to be fair and just for all team members. So it definitely pays in practice. But it's above all, it's about the action to sustain that shifting culture, both at a macro and a micro level. So Bank of America's investment in education, for access to -- and upskilling the black and Latinos has been a fabulous success in terms of creating better career opportunities, and connecting the students to local companies and an action like Bill Winters public commitment to the Paris Agreement, climate goals, not only the Standard Chartered, but for its investment portfolio.

So these are big actions and big public actions that help galvanize the organization behind that belief in, in really inclusion and respect for the individual identity. And I think the challenge for us as leaders is to find the relevant actions at a macro and a micro level, to becoming actively inclusive. So some of these big industry actions to the simplicity of opening up conversations with individual colleagues to understand who they really are and how they really feel. And when people see this commitment in practice, they're more likely to be convinced that the leaders and therefore the organizations are

serious, which means they're more likely to stick around. And then, the other thing just to say was, I think measurement and data are also incredibly helpful because they demonstrate what leaders prioritize in reality. So keeping the diversity inclusion goals and metrics is key, like retention at BHP, for example or the mix of direct reports at Salesforce. So they're actively being reviewed, just as EBITDA, safety or revenues are being tracked by executives. So your goals and measurements matter. But I do believe the most sustainable approach is to change the culture through one conversation at a time.

[14:42 - 16:28] Rebecca Tully: What's great about the examples you gave us Simon, if I can just start in or about how they were real game changing big goals. I think there is a problem Simon sometimes when goals are seem to be just tokenistic. And tokenism is a really difficult topic in this in this space and something I think we've battled with a lot when we've been driving for change in Accenture, you know, to have a big macro goal that you can attain is quite something. But people sometimes can be quite cynical about tokenism. And as listening this morning to Adam Pearson, and it really struck me when he said that some of these conversations are uncomfortable and painful and difficult but being able to talk about them is going through part of the process.

And I think some of this goal attainment piece, it's a bit like, you can't make an omelet without breaking an egg, we have to go through some of this forced difficulty with goals in the short-term to move the needle. But actually, what's more important on the goal attainment piece to avoid having to have that tokenism is actually making long-term change. And by that, I mean, when you set these goals, and I think Simon you mentioned it was strong leadership there, we need leadership to sort of lean in and work with people over a

long period of time to plot career journeys and to lean in. Because that way, what we're all doing is effectively, we're making the next generation ready to stand up. And that in itself, then diversity bubbles up if we go down, we plot and we're very considered or engaged. And effectively that bubbles up for the next generation. And that effectively, tokenism is gone and dilutes. And I think that's why really we need to go for sort of short, medium and long-term resolutions here, because I love the examples. But similarly, we have to get the time horizons right to attain the goals.

[16:31 - 16:53] Simon Eaves: And Rebecca, it's very interesting, what you raised there about tokenism and the hard conversations because it plays to the next question to put yourself which is around allyship? And on what role does that play? Because certainly that's around making sure that groups feel aware and comfortable. So just give me a thought on how, you know the role of allyship in this whole discussion.

[16:54 - 18:08] Rebecca Tully: Yeah, so I mean, I'm a huge advocate for allyship. I could speak about this for hours, I think I mentioned before about the need for self identification and how pretty much every organization is trying to get that self identification right to understand their workforce. I think, you know, this is one of the areas I think we can be quite proud of. I mean, you mentioned our networks, earlier assignment and some of the stats there.

I think our allyship programs, our networks are really what's allowed us to get to know our workforce much better, the depth and color that we've got through those informal networks is far more useful to us and more penetrative than anything that we've got through our sort of personnel and employee data system if you like. And because that's obviously difficult to gather and also quite controversial to

kind of maintain, so I think it's through our allyships that we've really crack that nut. And the way I describe them to others is, I think they're the veins of our sort of beating heart of inclusion, diversity.

And we're really lucky to have Simon Hayward with us today. I mean, he's literally written the book on connected leadership. But I think that allyship for me is just a brilliant example of bottom up and top down leadership, you know, coming together to make change.

[18:10 - 19:03] Simon Eaves: Right. Well, and I agree, I mean, having been on the journey on a number of allies group, the pride with which we have over such visible signals of the lanyards and almost knowing recognition and nod. And I know from some members of those core groups, how it can make a difference, and it's not done yet, but I agree, I love your metaphor of the veins and long may those continue to have the impact. You then were leading into Simon's impact in his area of specialization.

So like a classic game of tennis, I'm going to bring this back over the net to you, Simon. You know, you spend a lot of time thinking about leadership. And I'm particularly interested in your thoughts around where leadership goes on this whole topic. And the importance of leadership and the extent to which they can be rainmakers and symbols and then you just your thoughts on that area.

[19:05 - 23:19] Dr. Simon Hayward: Yeah, thanks, Simon. And as Rebecca said, connected leadership, I think is an inclusive framework. And I'd like to draw on that if I may, just as a draw out some of the micro actions that I think we as leaders can and often are taking to move the agenda forward. Connected leadership has got five factors. So if we just take each of those in turns, so the first is purpose and direction, and this is about us as leaders

agreeing an inclusive team purpose with each and every one in the team, so that everybody in the team is emotionally connected with that. And so we can choose to commit ourselves fully and achieve higher performance together. So sense of purpose is key and emotional connection.

The second point is around authenticity, which has been mentioned a lot, I think in this conference and this is about leaders focusing on empathy as a critical skill. So as we need to have authentic conversations and listen with full attention. And creating -- create for everyone a sense of belonging or being part of the family, which by the way, we have felt over the last three weeks have to say. And this is liberating and it's so drives discretionary effort.

The third area of collective leadership is devolved decision-making. And this, the empowering title of this event is fabulous. So it's about -- this is about leaders empowering their people to make decisions, to coach each of them and build their confidence to take responsibility and sort of assume the authority to achieve their goals together. And this is particularly important for underrepresented groups to build that confidence, which drives quite often colleague and customer experience improvements.

The fourth is around collaborative achievement. And this involves using wiener eye, building diverse teams where differences are truly valued, where disruptive thinking is actually rewarded. And whereas leaders, we genuinely welcome challenges to our ideas, which is a particular one I have issues with, which I'm working on all the time. But it's all drives increased productivity, as well as much greater satisfaction.

And then, the fifth area is around leadership agility, which is about leaders creating an environment of shared psychological safety, where we encourage

experiments and make mistakes from which we can learn and progress that drives innovation beautifully. And something I've learned in the last three weeks from one of our new leaders, Christie Smith, and Erving Goffman is about covering and as a hiding part of us, due to our fear of others reaction. So we seek to be assimilated into the norm. And this sort of tends to have a negative impact on our sense of self. Because it's self doubt and leads to sub optimized contribution. And this is often driven by leader expectations. So what we need our leaders to embrace is his real humanity. So genuine appreciation of the whole person in each person we lead. And we need to develop emotionally mature leaders who can have authentic conversations and whose expectations are individualized and not driven by the norm. And this needs to be reflected in our performance reviews, our hiring and our promotion decisions. So it's taken as seriously as whatever else is on the scorecard.

I was inspired yesterday on this event by David Olusoga, who was also at University of Manchester, talking about racism. He called for us to embrace the unique moment in which we're living, the moment to reimagine the future and take a stand to by being actively anti-racist, rather than passively unracist, which really struck me. And David just have open conversations to make time to understand others and for self examination and these are acts of leadership to catalyze change and to be an ally, for those who feel unequal.

So culture change starts with each individual leader deciding to behave differently. And one of the most rewarding parts of being a leader, as Rebecca mentioned is seeing others flourish, to see careers develop unexpectedly. And to let talent go as it flies higher. And it's through our connections with our colleagues, that we give them confidence to be bold,

confidence to be themselves and confidence to fly.

[23:21 - 23:37] Simon Eaves: Wow! What a great toolkit if we could, if we can embody those few minutes there as each and every one of us. It's a fantastic toolkit. And I'm glad there was a little bit of feedback in there that it's going okay, as well so far Simon that was good to know.

[23:38 - 23:56] Dr. Simon Hayward: I was genuine. I mean, we've been overwhelmed by the collaborative spirit and just the welcome -- the absolute welcome. This just feels genuinely not a political environment, just to genuinely let's collaborate and move on and get stuff done together sort of environment, which is fabulous.

[23:57 - 24:16] Simon Eaves: Fantastic. Fantastic. Well, I'm going to give the last question here to Rebecca, who has I say, has this overall role for us in U.K. Any other thoughts in the context of how you practice and to bring it all together in the T&O space. Your final thoughts, Rebecca, before I wrap up.

[24:17 - 25:48] Rebecca Tully: I've got so many Simon, but I think, I guess really, for me, it's just overarching feeling of hope right now. I feel we're living through this pandemic. And it's clear in so many ways that it sets back on the quest, which is so frustrating for, everything that we've talked about, I mean, that we put years into the graph to try and move the needle and then this comes along and you can feel a little bit blindsided. But then at the same time, when I stop and think about it, I can see some moments here and some elements of what we're living through that are like going to hopefully be a catalyst for change.

And I think what I'm talking about there, if we can build back better and take the good bits, so the flexible working, events like

this. The way that some of us are taking time to prioritize ourselves care and well being if we can keep hold of those, I have a strong like -- true hope and belief that this is a catalyst for change for the next set of leaders coming through and that some of these careers and leadership positions that might have seen unattainable or actually just deeply unattractive before, as an undoable that actually might be seem attractive and seem doable for people. And I think that in itself, the idea and the concept of this, invigorating that talent pool that's going to stimulate greater diversity, and greater innovation. And for me, that's just exciting. So I guess I'm feeling hopeful in spite of everything and I'm desperate to kind of cling on to those best bits, Simon so that we don't lose them as we go forward on this quest.

[25:49 - 29:11] Simon Eaves: Yeah, well, and per my identity early on and my obsession at the moment with neuroscience, it's very clear that if we don't -- hope as a word, if we don't have it, it's not good for our mental well being and our brains and it releases all the right things in our brain. So let us carry on. And if we can't see that it's in trouble. And we need to have that hope that we're going to make it better. I fully agree.

So thank you so much for my panel, I'm going to try and summarize their brilliances as quickly as I can, in the last couple of minutes. We started off by talking around our goals, where we've come from and where we're at. And Rebecca was one who said that they're great, but in effects at the challenge that they're nothing without the associated action. And that's fundamentally at the core of everything we need to talk about. Simon builds upon that, by letting us know that yes, that's fine. But culture, it's the cultural shift, which really embeds these changes and pointed out a combination of really big actions that people are taking now, which are game changing goals

versus say, a standard KPI to make the next round of impact. And that those big goals need to be married with a raft of small actions which need to come within the organization to make the environment right change.

Rebecca had this wonderful metaphor of allyship being the veins to caters to help understand some of the groups but also support those groups, and how they're fundamental to the organization and the essence of allyship. Simon then gave us the blinkist version of his book of Connected Leadership, it was a fantastic overview of purpose, empathy, devolved decision-making, a collaboration, architecture and leadership agility.

And then I love this latest thing that had come through covering and the desire often to sort of park one's own identity and adopt of a group identity being an issue at the center of the essence of what these last couple of days have been around the need to bring the whole person along. And then Rebecca, I couldn't have said it better myself and the need for hope. And despite everything we've been through in the last year, on some of the tumultuous things, we've seen, that we seem to be having a deeper and better conversation and that's really, really fundamental for the next wave. And that yeah, we might have taken one step back, but let's make sure we do two, three forward now in the next year or so together, as we take this whole next wave together.

So we shifted from, the importance of targets to the much broader discussion, it's clear, we believe they got to play a role, but they're not the sole answer. And we're moving to an era that goes above and beyond them, as we seek to continue to show transparency around the goals, but recognize that actually achieving them requires a lot, lot more.

With that, we're going to close out this session and in another moment in another room, we will be closing out the two days and I'll be back. Thank you, Rebecca and Simon and I wish you a great weekend.