



BUILT FOR CHANGE: DEALBOOK SPECIAL EPISODE

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

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Elise: Diversity, inclusion, digital transformation

THEME IN

Worker well-being. These concepts have been at the heart of the dialogue about work and business since the pandemic began.

Josh: And they're also top of mind for the leaders who are figuring out what the future of work is gonna look like.

Elise: I'm Elise Hu.

Josh: And I'm Josh Klein.

Elise: And this is Built for Change, a podcast from Accenture. Today, we're doing something a little different.

Josh: That's right. We're revisiting a conversation that took place during a session sponsored by Accenture at the New York Times DealBook online summit.

Elise: Yeah. DealBook was so much fun. It virtually brought together some super influential minds across business politics and culture. Lots of conversations about the rapid evolution of our world. And more importantly, what lies ahead.

Josh: And we got to speak to three experts, Leena Nair, Jack Azagury, and Christie Smith about tips for navigating the skills economy, the power of the cloud...

Elise: And we also talked about how COVID-19 altered where and how we work as well as the fabric of company culture and purpose. Now, since

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we had this conversation, Leena Nair has taken her talents to Chanel, but when we spoke to her, she was leading incredible people initiatives at Unilever with lessons that any company could draw from. We'll be playing highlights from that conversation now. Enjoy.

THEME OUT

Elise: Our first guest is Unilever's chief human resources officer Leena Nair. Leena is the first female first Asian and youngest ever CHRO in company history. In this role, she's responsible for the more than 150,000 people that drive Unilever. And she's working hard to ensure that everyone in the company is able to thrive and do their best work. Since Leena took on the role as CHRO, Unilever has achieved a 50, 50 gender balance across global leadership, a milestone the company achieved ahead of target. She also plays an instrumental role in Unilever's new social commitments, which focus on raising living standards across the value chain, creating opportunities through inclusivity and preparing people for the future of work. She's

02:00

the perfect guest to help kick off our



conversation about how the workplace and workforce are constantly evolving. Leena, welcome.

Leena Nair: Delighted to be here.

Elise: Well, let's start with the big question first, which is which workforce trends do you think have COVID accelerated that are now here to stay?

Leena: I am so excited that this is a moment of reimagination and reinvention for all of us. So, let me talk a bit about the trends. The first trend is digitization. We all knew that digitization is coming, it's come, but it has just accelerated in the last 18, 20 months when we are living our lives online. Work, entertainment, everything is online. The second is traditional models of employment have gotten challenged in a big way. Every single one of us over the last 18, 20 months has asked ourselves, is there a different way of working? Do we have to wake up every morning, commute for a couple of hours, get into

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a train, bus, whatever, get to work, work for 8 or 10 hours and do this for 40 years, 50 years, retire. We are challenging the traditional models of employment. The third trend is a real focus on meaning and purpose. Environmental and social commitments have come to the central business because people have seen that you've got to be a business that focuses on all stakeholders. The fourth trend that I see is that health and wellbeing has come to the top of every board table and executive leadership table. You know, we have stand up meetings every day. And through this crisis, we've had stand up meetings as executive leadership. The number one topic always was the health and wellbeing of our people. How many of our people are sick? How many of our people need help and support, et cetera, et cetera. And the fifth trend I see, which I'm excited about, is the importance of the front line worker, yeah? We're suddenly realizing, oh my God, the world runs on supply chains, and the world runs delivery people, and the world

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runs on nurses and doctors and stuff. So it's fabulous to see the focus coming on frontline employees. Are we paying them properly? Are we looking after them? What's their health and wellbeing status? These conversations have come to the center of our tables.

Elise: I love hearing the growing conversations about purpose and meaning as you discussed and also wellbeing. So I'm curious, Leena, what does workforce wellbeing mean in this new environment?

Leena: Workforce wellbeing is to enhance the quality of life of all our people. This is holistic health. It's physical, mental, emotional, purposeful, all of it coming together. It is... you know, no longer can companies say, you know, you come to work, you go off, you look after your own health. It's not my problem. That's no longer true. You've got to as an employer think, what am I doing for physical wellbeing of my people? What am I doing for the mental wellbeing of my people? So I do think well-being has become central in conversations in the business.

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You can't solve for physical wellbeing without thinking about somebody's mental wellbeing and so on and so forth. So it's become holistic. It's become integrated. It's asking for big investments, it's become digitized, which helps. Having digital tools that empower people to do to get healthier, but it's importantly about adding quality years to our people's lives. We want our people to be healthier for longer to have a quality of life that's fantastic all through their working life and beyond, and it doesn't finish at the doors of our office, of the doors of our factories. We've got to think about it holistically beyond the whole person approach, not just for the 10 hours they come to work or 8 hours they come to work.

Elise: And because workers are making so many more sort of reconsiderations of our lives and



our wellbeing, that's obviously leading to what's being called the great resignation or the great reshuffle. And so, I want to talk about talent. How are leading companies approaching talent now? Not only to

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sort of recruit the best talent, but also keep and retain the best talent.

Leena: I do think this period has caused a lot of people across the world to reevaluate their choices and say, hey, how do I want to work? How do I want to make work and life work for me? I've tasted a different way. I've tasted something called hybrid, a little bit of physical, a little bit of virtual, maybe I need to make it work. So I'm going to talk about three things to implore employers everywhere to think about how they're attracting, retaining talent. The first theme is all around purpose and meaning. I think people have become even more conscious saying, I want to do meaningful work. I want to do work that fulfills me. I want to do work that makes a difference in this world. It's not okay for me to just go up and do something that doesn't excite me. I want to do things that make my heart sing. So the focus on the ESG will only go up. I mean, in our business, for example, we've put 150,000 people through discovery of purpose workshops and people say, what's this fluffy thing, discovery of purpose workshops. But actually

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it's so important because people say, now I know what anchors me, because I know my purpose. I know what gets me out of bed everyday. And therefore it anchors people more. So double down on purpose. If you want to keep your people and attract your people, you know. We are number one employer of choice in 52 of the 75 countries we recruit in, number one employer of choice. And the number one reason people come to join us is because they think Unilever is a force for good in the world, Unilever has its heart at the right place and wants to do the right things. The second big theme is

flexibility and choice. We as employers have to provide flexibility and choice to people. It's not okay to say we all return back to working exactly the same way we were working in 2019. The whole word return return return is wrong. Return to this, return that. No, return to office. No, we're not returning, we're going forward to combine the best of both worlds to providing flexibility and choice for people to work in different ways. You know at Unilever for example we are pioneering whole amount of new employment models. We have a

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40 working week experiment in New Zealand. We have something called you work we are rolling out in UK where people need to work only six weeks or up to six months with Unilever and can do other things for the rest of their time. So these are the times to provide flexibility and choice to people. And the third theme is about inclusion and psychological safety. I think people will stay at a workplace where they feel, not just included, but they feel like they belong because they feel their voice is heard and where they feel there's enough psychological safety for them to feel free, to speak their mind. And that's how innovation happens in a company. So if we want to attract, retain and develop talent in this new world, we've got a double down on purpose. We've got to provide flexibility and choice to people, and we've got to provide the psychological safety for true inclusion to happen.

Elise: Okay. Before we let you go, Leena, I want to ask about digitization, um, how are businesses using technology to harness

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human potential, because you talked at the top of this conversation about the importance of tech and tech tools. I want to see how it's communicating or, um, linking to humans and their potential, or um linking to humans and their potential.

Leena: You know, uh, one of the things we've



done this digitized end to end our employee experience, and I feel so good that we did that before COVID struck so we could use many of these tools and many of these things we've put into place. So for example, we have huge amount of investment in online learning, which has become so important during COVID. We've digitized all our recruitment processes. So we have 2 million people who apply to us every year across the world and we're able to use digital technologies to do this at scale, and you know shop these people at scale and meet them at scale. We have our chatbots. You know Una is our human resource chatbot, which handles almost 7 million transactions a year. So, you know, solving simple queries for people, we have, you know, digitized tools for employee safety wellbeing

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and assistance, you know, so that no person is more than one, one click, one chat away from feeling well. So digitization allows us to do things at scale and provide support at scale and allows us also, therefore to gather a lot of data and be able to give customized segmented solutions. And let me give you an example. Because everyone's working online, we have so much data on workplace analytics. You know, how many hours that people working what's going on, who's what, and we discovered so many things. For example, we discovered cohorts of employees who were working 60, 70 hour weeks without a break. So we took a segmented approach to say, hey guys, are you taking your leave? Are you, what can we do to support you differently so that you don't have to create work you know crazy amount of hours during COVID. We found that in Asia in particular, a lot of women were feeling stretched between the ages of 30 and 45 because all of the caring responsibilities were being done by them and all the work and everything was blurring. So we put solutions in place

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to see how we could support them. One of the

things we saw was there were a few, 5% of people were not engaging as much online. And we did some searches to see what was happening. Loneliness, not feeling good. So what data does because when you digitize, you get data at scale and when you get data at scale, you can glean it for better insights. And when you get better insights, you can put solutions in place that are customized and personalized for the right segment of employees. So I'm a big believer in digitize end to end everything you can do to make the employee's life better, use the data and use a combination of fabulous data and fabulous leadership to make a difference to our people.

Elise: You all heard it from Leena Nair, listen to the data and listen to your people. I think that's a beautiful note to end on Leena Nair, thank you so much.

Leena: Super.

Josh: Our next guest is Jack Azagury. Jack is Accenture's market unit lead for the U S Northeast leading the integration of Accenture's services

12:00

to solve client's most complex problems. In this role he's responsible for clients, people, offices, community involvement, and financial performance across the entire Northeast. And that's a pretty big remit with a lot of moving pieces. So he's no stranger to implementing large-scale transformation. Before taking on his current role, he led various resource and utility businesses at Accenture, where he advised on cost reduction programs, smart grid programs, mergers, and acquisitions, and corporate and business unit strategies. So basically he's an expert in cutting through the complex and finding ways for businesses to thrive in the midst of constant change. Jack. Welcome.

Jack Azagury: Thank you for having me today.

Josh: So we've been talking a lot about digital



transformation. Why is this more of a business imperative now than ever?

Jack: It's interesting. In 2013, we published a technology, uh, visions report. We publish it every year. And we said in 2015, every business is a digital business. And a lot of people thought

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it was hype. Didn't believe us, laughed at the statement. And here we're in 2021 and it's unquestionably a priority number one. A matter of fact, we interviewed 3,200 C-suite executives across 15 countries, and they said digital transformation with cloud and data is priority number one, in their board discussions. We also did a lot of research that shows that digital transformation actually translates to results. So we looked at digital capabilities across a large number of organizations, and we did the research in 2019, and we found that the top 10% of digital organizations had two X, the revenue growth of the bottom 25% the laggards. When we hit COVID, we redid the research in 2021. And we had a hunch that maybe digital was now even more important as we went through COVID. And in fact, that gap of two X revenue growth, that gap widened to five X. And so the financial results show that digital

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fluency and digital capabilities and that need to transform is more important than ever. And we've seen that throughout COVID, as companies migrated to online channels, migrated to build all their digital capability, to serve consumers with a different experience in a new way, digital transformation is more important than ever. It translates into results and translates to capabilities and translates into customer and employee experience really critical, more so than ever.

Josh: So what is cloud strategy and how does that lead to more productivity?

Jack: So, let me cover a few things that a cloud

strategy is not. First of all, it's not an IT project and it's not simply a movement of taking your computing workloads and moving them to the cloud. That's not a cloud strategy. A cloud strategy is an end to end review of the business and it starts with what business capabilities do you need to engage your customers to engage your employees, to change the experience, to lower your cost structure, to get better analytics

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and insights and help predict where your business is going. So it starts with the business vision. It then looks at your data. Data is extremely important and it is really at the core of any cloud strategy. It then looks at your application, the software you run, where are you going to run it? Are you going to run in the public cloud and the private cloud, in hybrid, you know, where is that software going? It then looks at your infrastructure, your networks, first of all, that are going to enable that. And then the actual compute and storage infrastructure. And then around that, it looks at all your capabilities, your talent, how you're going to train people to work in an agile manner, using dev ops capabilities, you know, rapid decision-making, that ability to do trial and error and experiment and innovate. So when you look at a cloud strategy, you look have to look at all those components. A lot of companies focus on dollars and cents. What's the savings that the cloud strategy is going to generate? And that's a component, but it's not sufficient. The cloud strategy

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has to deliver on customer experience, on revenue growth, on employee experience, operational experience, sustainability, what is the sustainability impact of moving to the cloud? So you really have to look at this 360 view of what benefits is this cloud strategy gonna develop. So it is business plus technology. It's an end to end set of capabilities. And it's looking at all those results, end to end, you know, how is value going to be delivered from multiple what we call 360 perspectives?



Josh: And with company culture and workplaces shifting so much, how will businesses need to change in order to galvanize employees around transformation?

Jack: That's a very important question because any transformation succeeds, if the employees are engaged in that program. And so the buy-in from the employees all the way from leadership to the frontline is critical. Now there are a few things that stand the test of what we've been doing transformations for decades. Well the

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ones that stand the test of time are leadership, engagement and alignment. You need most of your C-suite. Our research shows that at least 80% of the C-suite has to be engaged and bought in and actually active in the transformation. The need to communicate, communicate, communicate. Absolutely critical. The need to really look at the benefits and making sure you're tracking those. The need to have a purpose and vision around the transformation, why are we doing it. What, where do we get to on the other end, once we're transformed. So having a purpose and vision is critical.

Josh: Jack, thank you. This has been extremely insightful. We really appreciate your time.

Jack: Thank you very much for having me. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Elise: Now it's time to speak with Christie Smith, who is a senior managing director in Accenture strategy and consulting. She leads talent and organization and human potential for Accenture globally. In this role, she works very closely with CEOs, C-suites and boards on the complex transformation issues we've talked

18:00

a lot about today and throughout Built for Change. And I'm going to ask her to share some of her insights into these change management

systems today. Christie also brings a unique people lens to her work at Accenture having previously been the global vice president for inclusion and diversity at Apple. She's frequently sought after, as a speaker on leadership strategy, I and D and people analytics. And I'm so excited to have the chance to speak with her now. Christie. Welcome.

Christie: Thanks Elise. It's great to be with you today.

Elise: Well, let's just start by asking, there have obviously been just so many changes in the way we work. Have we reached a steady place?

Christie: I think it's a great question. And the simple answer is no, I don't think we will ever have a steady state again. I think that change is constant and it's accelerating and I think companies really need to define, uh, what steady means to them. And

19:00

it typically is, you know, agility. Are organizations agile enough to meet the demands of not only the market, but the social issues, the sociopolitical issues, and of a changing market in and of itself.

Elise: It strikes me Christie, that this then places such a burden on leaders of organizations, but also managers who might not have had to flex so much and so quickly previously. So how do leaders need to adapt in order to keep up with this rapid pace of change?

Christie: Yeah, I think it's a great question. You know, we've been talking about this rapid pace of changed in, in the concept of compressed transformation. What used to take years for a company to transform, whether that it was a digital transformation, a growth transformation now takes just a matter of months. And if you look at what

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has happened, even in this last year, in the US alone, we've seen \$3.6 trillion spent on merger and acquisition activity. That's incredible. And what's more is 95% of workers are looking at changing jobs in this kind of market. And 92% say, hey, I'm willing to change careers altogether. So you're right. There is a burden on leadership and on management. And I think leaders have to do four things in order to adapt and keep pace with this change. One is consider the future of work, right? Reimagine your work model. What will that look like? Be intentional about whether or not you are going to have a hybrid model or you're going to require people to be in the office, or frankly, by definition of their job, they have to be on the shop floor, right? Think about culture. And what does

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that mean today? Ways of working, skills, talent for the future. I think the second area that leaders need to really focus on is employee experiences and employee engagement. It has completely changed. We think about this in the context of being omni-connected. We used to be so singularly minded in organizations and think of it like an omni-channel to market, right? Well, now it's really about creating that connection. And how do you connect with your employees and layer in experiences that give them a sense that they're contributing, based on what is best for them. So that might look like if I'm being asked to come into the office, I'm not coming into my office and sitting in a cubicle and just answering email. I have a distinct purpose for coming into the office to work with a team and

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to be engaged in a different way. The third thing is highly dependent. Uh, the first two are highly dependent upon, and that is this notion of investing in digital fluency. Workers need to access digital tools and training like they never have before. And we see that when organizations are not just digitally literate but actually fluent that organizations are two, almost three times more likely to have experienced

higher revenue, meaning over 20% growth over the last three years. And then I think the fourth point is a really particularly important one and that is creating sustainable organizations. Purpose led businesses, which inspire their people and their partners to deliver lasting not only financial performance, but equitable impact and societal value

23:00

is what organizations and leaders, CEOs in particular, must do to earn and retain the trust of not only their employees, but all stakeholders.

Elise: Is that a tough balance to strike not only being financially, you know, growth oriented, but also sustainable and think about sort of these ideas that are so important for the future. Not only, you know, planetary sustainability, but also inclusion and diversity and all of these big ideas that, um, have really been a centerpiece over the last few years.

Christie: I absolutely think it's difficult to do. And I think that this is what has fundamentally changed in terms of the role of the CEO. The CEO is now more responsible than they have ever been for the care of their people. And the you know pandemic has really forced CEOs to develop different muscles if you will. And we

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did a piece of research on modern CEOs where they know themselves that they must develop skills around empathy, transparency and trustworthiness with their employees. You know, a CEO said to me as we were having lunch several months ago and I, we simply sat down and I said, so how are you doing? And he replied to me with boy, I didn't sign up for this. And that was an expression of not only, I mean, his desire to step into the role, but that the world had changed so dramatically and the needs of his employees and his key stakeholders and shareholders, what they needed from him was something much different than the rules of the game pre-pandemic.



Elise: So it's not just CEO's though of course. Right Christie? So as the way we work changes dramatically, as we've been talking about, how do we know what

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kind of skills people need, not just CEOs, but frontline workers and board members and mid-level managers. How do we learn what sort of new skills people need? It seems like empathy is a huge one across the board, but besides that, what skills do they need? And then how do organizations help get them those skills?

Christie: Yeah, this is what I'm most excited about. Um, today is really talking about what we call a skills economy. We're committed to helping organizations get the skills that they need to meet their business and employee demands. And it really is both. You know, as a result of COVID, we know that more than half of employees out there are seeking to learn more skills. And when we look at skills, we, we ask four really basic questions. What skills do people have today? What skills will they need in the future? What's the gap? And then how do we

26:00

close that gap most effectively and efficiently? Now what's really exciting about this and there's going to be an explosion around the skills economy. Is that 48% of the global labor economies, the skills that sit within those are already, that information is in the public domain and within the very near future 52%, the remaining 52% will come online. So think about that. If our goal is to connect this \$6 trillion economy with the right people and the right skills that they need for the future, if companies are ahead of that game and investing in the skills economy. Well, I think that nothing will stop them from reaching their goals to move to the front.

Elise: Alright Christie Smith, there's so much more, I want to ask you, but obviously we are limited on time. Thank you so

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much for sharing all of this.

Christie: It was great to be with you. Thank you.

Elise: Lots of actionable insights from these leaders, right? Josh?

Josh: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, this is the stage where we heard from these three leaders, Tim Cook, and so many other luminaries. It was amazing to hear that level of expertise.

Elise: Yeah. And so if you want to learn more about the trends we discussed today, check out more insights on the future of work at [accenture.com slash built for change](https://www.accenture.com/built-for-change).

Josh: Special thanks to Leena Nair, Jack Azagury and Christie Smith for sharing their expertise with us

Elise: Built for Change is a podcast from Accenture.

Josh: More episodes are coming soon. Follow, subscribe. And if you like what you hear, drop us a rating or leave us a review.

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