

Making the World Better

An Interview with Martin “Marty” Rodgers,
Office Managing Director, Washington, D.C. Metro, Accenture

EDITORS’ NOTE *With nearly two decades of federal, commercial, and nonprofit experience, Marty Rodgers currently leads Accenture’s Metro Washington D.C. office as well as the company’s Nonprofit Group. Prior to Accenture, he served as a leader in the national and community service and workforce skills fields, helping to craft numerous pieces of legislation ranging from significant amendments in work-study and service-learning to notable laws including the King Holiday & Service Act, National & Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1993.*



Martin “Marty” Rodgers

COMPANY BRIEF *Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology, and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 373,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.*

Would you talk about your role at Accenture and how you focus your efforts?

I have a great career at one of the world’s best companies. I currently lead our Washington, D.C. Metro office; help direct a set of amazing nonprofit and international public sector clients who are doing great things to change the world; advocate and advance corporate citizenship and giving back to our local communities, including serving on the Board of our Accenture Foundation; and champion Accenture’s deep commitment to inclusion and diversity.

My career at Accenture also has been shaped greatly by our company culture – what I consider the pivotal set of ties that binds us together. Culture is imbued from day one. We live and breathe our core values: Stewardship, Best People, Client Value Creation, One Global Network, Respect for the Individual, and Integrity. Anyone at Accenture, at any level, can recite these because they define us. For our people, our culture influences who we are and how we do what we do. It’s what has allowed

us to thrive in the marketplace, attract the best people, and keep on growing.

Is it more difficult as you grow to maintain that culture?

Growth helps fuel our culture and this is especially true for a unique organization like Accenture. In a professional services environment, growth creates opportunity and provides a chance for impact at all levels, so it’s very much a virtuous cycle. The great thing about Accenture is that all of us have this sense of ownership, which propels us to leave a legacy and help our company, people, communities, clients, and the broader world achieve greatness.

Although we are a global company, Accenture feels closely connected and familiar at the same time. This is because of how we organize different industry and expertise-specific communities of practice, including our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) at the local level to bring people together. Our ERGs are organized around common interests or experiences, help foster a sense of community and provide a forum for sharing positive experiences and challenges. Groups like these are a great way to stay involved with our diverse recruiting, increase retention, improve our corporate citizenship efforts, and build cultural awareness across the company and among our clients.

How critical is corporate responsibility to your culture? How much of this is a part of business strategy today?

The two are becoming one in the same. We aspire to be one of the world’s great companies and to change the way the world works and lives. We talk not just about shareholder value but about stakeholder value, and that includes corporate citizenship and social responsibility. More specifically, we seek to be a part of the fabric of our communities. This is rooted in our core value of stewardship, and brought to life through our flagship global corporate citizenship initiative Skills to Succeed, which aims to advance employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for individuals around the globe. We believe very strongly and passionately that having the right skills to open doors to meaningful, lasting employment or business ownership is critical.

At Accenture, I think there has always been a call to serve, but I find that millennials specifically have a much more defined sense of purpose. A large portion of our workforce is millennials and, for them, it’s about integrating work, life, and

community together – they don’t want to wait until they’re older to give back; they want the company they work for to help facilitate that on-demand. In our case, there is a commitment to corporate citizenship from the newest person joining our firm, up through our senior leaders. If we can be part of the process of making the world better – especially as it relates to skills, jobs, and entrepreneurship – then we start setting conditions for a vibrant and growing economy, and that’s a great thing across the board.

Does philanthropy need to align with the business?

No, not always, but I think when you’re in the business of improving the world, there’s a natural connection. For example, during Accenture’s MLK Day of Service – one of the largest corporate efforts in the U.S. – thousands of Accenture employees volunteer at more than 85 projects in the Metro D.C. area alone, supporting education, veterans, the homeless, and family services. The day celebrates action, not apathy, and creates the opportunity for our company to demonstrate our core business values of contributing to the community and supporting the people and places where we work and live. Our people and the organizations we serve on this day all benefit from working together to achieve a common goal. It gives us a chance to bring our employees and clients together, to roll up our sleeves regardless of race, creed, or socioeconomic status, and work on common problems and get to know each other.

How critical is the top-down commitment from the senior leaders?

It is incredibly important. At Accenture, our commitment to inclusion and diversity starts at the top. Our people represent a tremendous variety of cultures, ethnicities, beliefs, backgrounds, and languages, so we strive to create an environment where our people can feel comfortable, be themselves, and contribute. As a part of this, we made a strong commitment to gender equality – including our goal to grow our percentage of women new hires to at least 40 percent worldwide by 2017. We also recently reported, for the first time, the demographics of our U.S. workforce for gender, ethnicity, persons with disabilities, and veterans and we intend to report annually on our progress across these areas of diversity.

None of this would be possible if we lacked a commitment from the top – it is critical to have that in place. At Accenture, our leadership has a strong understanding about the connection between being transparent, being authentic, and building trust. ●