Responsible Business

**An Interview with Laurence Morvan,
Corporate Social Responsibility Officer, Accenture**

EDITORS' NOTE *Laurence Morvan is the Chief of Staff to Accenture's CEO as well as Accenture's Corporate Social Responsibility Officer. She is a member of the company's Global Management Committee. As CSR Officer, she has management oversight of Accenture's Corporate Citizenship initiatives, which advance Accenture's digital responsibility with programs around skilling for the digital age and innovating for society. Morvan also serves as the executive sponsor for Accenture's relationship with the B20, an international forum that brings thought leadership and business policy recommendations to the G20 heads of state, with a focus on entrepreneurship, future skills and innovation. Additionally, she teaches Strategic Human Resources Management at Sciences Po, a leading French business school. Morvan holds an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and an M.S. degree in management from ESSEC Business School (École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales) in Paris.*

Laurence Morvan

COMPANY BRIEF *Accenture (accenture.com) 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 477,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. The company has been recognized on Corporate Knights' Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World, featured on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for 14 consecutive years and recently ranked number one on the Thomson Reuters Diversity & Inclusion Index.*

How critical is purpose to Accenture's culture and how do you define Accenture's purpose?

For many years, I worked side-by-side with our former Chairman & CEO Pierre Nanterme, an extraordinary person and leader, who was driven by a strong sense of purpose to make this world better. He once said, "What's the point of having the best technologies – and living in the world we are living in – if we are not joining forces to make this world better." This was a part of his vision, for our company and for the world, and it reflects our strong sense of purpose at Accenture.

Purpose, at its core, is ignited by passion and is what drives people and companies to succeed – to think outside the box, make something better or create something new, and ultimately, to achieve a vision. At Accenture, it is our passion and ambition to improve the way the world works and lives – our credo since day one.

This is critically important because, as a company, we ourselves are a unit of society. We have an obligation, the same as every organization and every individual, to participate.

How has Accenture's commitment to corporate citizenship evolved?

From the very beginning, we have focused our corporate citizenship efforts on the intersection of what we have to offer – our resources, expertise and capabilities – and wider societal issues. This has positioned us to not only ensure we are relevant to our business, but to more strategically pinpoint where we allocate resources and efforts to make the greatest contribution.

If you take a look back, corporate citizenship at Accenture has always focused on issues of employment and entrepreneurship. Nearly a decade ago, we launched our Skills to Succeed initiative, which aimed to use our expertise – the talent of our people and capabilities in learning and development – to address the global need to close skills gaps and help people find jobs or build businesses. This was a defining step for us, as it set a meaningful precedent for our company and for our people – a commitment to taking the best of Accenture and applying it strategically to complex social challenges. It has been a fantastic vehicle to provide skilling opportunities at scale for underprivileged populations and, to date, we have equipped more than 2.8 million people around the world with the skills needed to secure lasting employment.

Today, Skills to Succeed remains a major pillar of our efforts. Just last year we committed more than $200 million over three years to further advance this initiative and have expanded our focus to account for opportunities and challenges created by the digital age – for example, doing more to raise awareness of digital skills with younger people, while doing more to support workers in mid-career transitions. As our broader corporate citizenship efforts continue to evolve, we are also addressing a variety of societal challenges, including sustainability, human rights and inclusion. Our commitment to making a measurable difference in these areas is underpinned by an acute focus on innovating responsibly, acting ethically with our clients, partners and suppliers, and reducing our environmental impact, all while exploring more ways to leverage the power of intelligent technologies.

Will you elaborate on the meaning of responsible business?

I recently attended the World Economic Forum at Davos, where responsible business was a key topic of conversation. The pace of innovation is driving this renewed focus and now more than ever, businesses have both an opportunity and a responsibility to demonstrate ethical leadership and make a meaningful difference.

Intelligent technology carries enormous potential as well as consequences, both positive and negative. As a result, business leaders are facing new issues around business responsibility, including removing bias from AI, addressing the impact of automation on their workforce, ensuring the responsible collection and use of workforce data and ensuring resiliency to cyber-attacks.

Leading companies are beginning to consider the impact their technologies and operations are having on the wider society. At its core, responsible business means addressing two fundamental questions: how do we innovate ethically and how can we help to promote inclusive growth?

Think of corporate citizenship as an investment in driving the responsible business agenda forward and finding win-wins for both business and society.

How does Accenture demonstrate responsible business through corporate citizenship?

Responsible business is inherently a part of our DNA – and always has been. For Accenture, this means ethically, proactively and continuously assessing the consequences of innovation while creating trust with our clients, our people and society.

Our corporate citizenship initiatives combine our people's expertise and passion with our understanding of technology and its impact on people to develop inclusive, responsible and sustainable solutions. A few examples of what this looks like in practice are:

1. Creating new skilling pathways for an inclusive future of work in which all workers have the motivation, means and opportunity to adapt to and thrive in the digital economy.

2. Working with our clients to navigate an exciting but uncertain future with artificial intelligence, with transparency and accountability at the core.

3. Taking our environmental strategy to the next level by developing responsible solutions for further sustainable growth. ●