

# The Promise of Technology and Human Ingenuity

An Interview with Laura Peterson, Senior Managing Director and Office Managing Director - New York, Accenture

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Laura Peterson is a senior managing director at Accenture and the office managing director for New York Metro. In this role, she is responsible for Accenture's 7,000+ people aligned to the region, clients and local business strategy, and community-related efforts. Furthermore, Peterson leads the Communications, Media and Technology (CMT) business in the Northeast market unit. She is accountable for Accenture's strategy, talent development, growth, and delivery for the firm's CMT clients in the region. She oversees a team of 3,000+ practitioners, including client account leaders and directors responsible for connecting Accenture's solutions with clients' business priorities. In addition, she helps C-suite executives solve for the challenges facing their companies through both operating model and digital transformation, shared services solutions and driving excellence in customer experience. Peterson earned a BS in business administration, economics and international business at the University of Colorado Boulder.*



Laura Peterson

for growing our footprint with a focus on innovation and driving impact for our clients. It's such an honor to be a part of defining Accenture's future in this incredible city and region we get to call home at a pivotal time when New York City is driving towards economic recovery.

Accenture's new flagship North America innovation hub at One Manhattan West is another source of pride and a labor of love as I was fortunate enough to lead the design and buildout for the space. It's so

exciting as we work to establish the location as the destination where our people, clients, partners, and community come to grow, collaborate, celebrate, and innovate, and most importantly, belong.

**Will you highlight Accenture's long and deep commitment to New York?**

Accenture has an established commitment to creating a workforce that represents the communities where we work and live, including New York, where some of the best and brightest

minds in the world reside. Like the rest of those who consider New York home, the Accenture team is very passionate about where we live. Our commitment to New York shows up in a number of ways. We collaborate closely with business, education, and community leaders through the New York Jobs CEO Council and OneTen to prepare New Yorkers in diverse, low-income communities for the future of work and to help meet employer needs. Through these initiatives, Accenture is a part of collective efforts to hire 100,000 New Yorkers over the next decade, with a focus on low-income people and those from Black, Latinx, and Asian communities.

We also are committed to New York through our Accenture Apprenticeship Program, which is a learn-and-earn model with benefits that provides a pathway to a full-time role with Accenture after a typically 12-month-long apprenticeship. We also support the EverUp Micro-Credential Program, which are free, 100-hour online intensive courses that certify City University of New York (CUNY) students in associate and bachelor's degree programs in

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Accenture (accenture.com) is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud, and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, the company offers Strategy and Consulting, Technology, and Operations services and Accenture Song – all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. The company's 710,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. Accenture embraces the power of change to create value and shared success for its clients, people, shareholders, partners, and communities.*

**Will you discuss your new role as New York office lead and how you will focus your efforts in the role?**

As the office managing director, I have the privilege of leading our New York Metro-based Accenture people, clients, and community-related efforts. The New York Metro office is one of the biggest in North America – with more than 7,000 people – and I am responsible

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skills and competencies. CUNY students who complete the micro-credential program are then eligible to apply for an eight-week paid internship through the EverUp Summer Internship Program. These are programs that we are both proud of and I believe can make a difference.

Finally, our people are incredibly active across the New York Metro community both through our formal corporate citizenship programs and organically with volunteering. I see this every day as I talk to our people who are passionate about so many topics that mirror Accenture’s priorities: sustainability and climate, driving equality, improving education, addressing homelessness and mental wellness, and generally improving the lives of New Yorkers, especially youth.

**How do you describe Accenture’s culture and purpose?**

At Accenture, we truly believe our people make this place what it is. Our purpose, our shared success, it’s all up to us. That’s why one of our core values, which is central to how we work every day, is respect for the individual – the core belief that each one of us has the power to make a positive impact in every single interaction. When we are compassionate, support each other and are committed to each other’s success, both professionally and personally, our actions create the ideal environment for us to carry out our purpose – to deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity.

**What have been the keys to Accenture’s industry leadership and how do you define the Accenture advantage?**

First, our people are our greatest asset – and pivotal to our advantage. We are always thinking about how our people can succeed personally and professionally. We support our people with care and provide opportunities to learn. We

invest nearly \$1 billion each year to help our people develop skills that help them stay relevant and advance meaningful careers. Second, the relationships we have with our clients, long-term, grounded in trust and shared success, allow us to drive transformation together in meaningful and impactful ways. Third, the breadth of what we can offer in terms of capacity is key. When I work with a client, I’m able to work with them from strategy, through implementation and to run, addressing not just the operating model, process, core technology, and people, but the AI, data, insights, physical and digital devices, and experiences required to really change their business and drive the compressed transformation needed in today’s world.

**How critical is it for Accenture to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when addressing client needs?**

Accenture puts inclusion and diversity at the heart of the way we work. Similar to New York, our people come from diverse cultures and backgrounds, and we embrace that at the core of who we are. Those perspectives and the richness of thought are key to driving the creativity and innovative thinking we need to drive outcomes for our clients – part of that is driving inclusive growth in the workforce. We focus on creating opportunities for employment and advancement for our people from under-represented communities through mentoring programs, leadership conferences, and development programs, as well as gender-based learning and development opportunities.

**Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?**

Absolutely – and at Accenture, we consider a culture of equality critical to success. A culture

of equality is not only the right thing to do, but a business imperative. If people feel a sense of belonging and are valued by their teams for their unique contributions, perspectives, and circumstances, they will feel empowered to innovate more, and everyone will rise.

Gender-balanced leadership teams are also a key part of driving culture. In fact, our own Accenture research, “The Hidden Value of Culture Makers,” shows that gender diversity is critical to building an inclusive culture where everyone thrives. It even shapes the way people view their organizations.

**What do you see as the responsibility that leading companies have to be engaged in the communities they serve and to be a force for good in society?**

Accenture’s position as a partner to many of the world’s leading businesses, organizations and governments affords us both an extraordinary opportunity and a tremendous responsibility to make a difference. Stewardship is an Accenture core value and something our people are passionate about. I, along with many of the local leaders I talk with daily, feel a personal responsibility to engage in this space and feel fortunate to be in the position to do so. We measure our impact in part by the benefit we bring our people, partners and communities, so we are always looking at how we can harness the power of Accenture to make positive change.

**What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?**

Accenture’s Truly Human approach – caring deeply for ourselves and each other and fostering an environment to help each other achieve our aspirations and become the best version of ourselves professionally and personally – serves as a north star when it comes to my management style. I firmly believe in leading with empathy and maintaining that sense of curiosity that comes with a continuous learning mindset.

In practice, this means ensuring our New York Metro people feel supported to do their best wherever they are – regardless of their location – and making sure that our flagship innovation hub at One Manhattan West offers a warm, supportive, people-centric user experience our people can count on to help them stay connected beyond “spaces and places.”

**What advice do you offer young people beginning their careers during this unprecedented time?**

I’d encourage everyone to build a support system – their tribe. The friends, mentors, and colleagues you build over time are key on so many levels and often become “family.” They can become your biggest cheerleaders and advocates – but also the ones who will mention your name in a room full of opportunities.

Don’t be afraid to fail. Take risks. Some of the best stories come from those risks and failures and what you learn from them. Believe and know that you’ll get back up.

Finally, it’s a marathon – pace yourself. Prioritize your family, friends, and your mental and physical wellness. Take your vacation. ●