

Reinvention Through Innovation

An Interview with Shiv Iyer, Market Unit Lead – U.S. Midwest, Accenture

EDITORS' NOTE Shiv Iyer is Accenture's market unit lead for the U.S. Midwest and is responsible for clients, people, offices, community involvement, and financial performance across the Midwest. He is a member of Accenture's Global Management Committee and the North America Leadership Team. Iyer also serves as the Client Account Lead for a global consumer products company, where he leads several digital transformation initiatives.



Shiv Iyer

Previously, as Accenture's Midwest Strategy and Consulting lead, he was responsible for overseeing the company's Strategy, Consulting and Data and Analytics practices. Prior to that, he co-led the creation of Accenture's Competitive Agility center of excellence and led Accenture's Consumer Products, Retail and Life Sciences consulting practices for North America. A regular contributor to the Consumer Brand Association, Iyer convenes conversations with CEOs and influencers from around the world and across industries. He began his consulting career at A.T. Kearney, where he spent a decade progressing to various leadership roles and joined Accenture in 2010 as a Managing Director. He serves on the Chicago board of Pratham USA, an organization whose mission is to ensure that every child is in school and learning well. Iyer earned both his bachelor's degree in instrumentation engineering and his master's degree in management sciences at the University of Mumbai; he earned an MBA from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business.

COMPANY BRIEF Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments, and other organizations build their digital core, optimize their operations, accelerate revenue growth, and enhance citizen services—creating tangible value at speed and scale. Accenture (accenture.com) is a talent- and innovation-led company with approximately 743,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and Accenture is

one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change.

How do you describe Accenture's culture and values?

At Accenture, we deliver 360° value, across six vital dimensions: clients, experience, talent, inclusion and diversity, sustainability, and financial. We help our clients use technology to drive enterprise-wide transformation through a strong digital core, moving to the cloud, leveraging data and AI, integrating custom applications and platforms, and embedding security; and optimizing operations, digitizing faster, accessing digital talent, and reducing costs.

We create meaningful experiences for our clients, people, and partners designed to build trust and strengthen our relationships, our work, and impact in our communities. In the case of talent, we anticipate our talent needs through skills data and signals from the market, allowing us to proactively identify the skills we need today

and tomorrow. We also have the agility to source talent internally to meet our clients' needs and to give our people new opportunities to grow vibrant careers. By bringing together people with technology, data, and AI, we can access talent at the speed of business and at scale.

Our intention: to create a culture and a workplace in which all our people feel a sense of belonging and are respected and empowered to do their best work and to create 360° value for all our stakeholders.

Also, we help our clients advance their environmental, social, and governance goals by connecting sustainability to their transformations; operate our business with a strong commitment to the environment, ethics, and human rights; and work to create value in communities around the world. Finally, in fiscal 2023, we achieved another strong year of financial performance, driving shareholder value. These results allow us to create 360° value for all our stakeholders.

What have been the keys to Accenture's industry leadership?

Talent is at the top of the list. As a company, we are laser focused on preparing people to work with new technologies. That is why, for example, we are doubling our AI talent to 80,000 people, and equipping more than 250,000 people with skills to use new AI tools equitably, sustainably and without bias. And we just launched Accenture LearnVantage to provide our clients with comprehensive technology learning and training services that will help them reskill and upskill their people in technology, data, and AI to reinvent their organizations and achieve greater business value.

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How critical is innovation to Accenture’s business?

Organizations across industries are navigating complex challenges, creating a greater sense of urgency to accelerate business transformation and reinvention. All strategies continue to lead to technology, particularly cloud, data, AI, and security. We have a proven approach to help our clients reinvent through innovation. We embed innovation in what we do, working with our clients across the world to imagine their future, including at our network of more than 100 innovation hubs. Building on 35 years of innovation, our Accenture Labs continue to incubate new concepts and apply the latest technologies to deliver breakthrough solutions for business and society. In fiscal 2023, for example, we invested \$1.3 billion in research and development (R&D).

Will you highlight the strength and leadership of Accenture’s U.S. Midwest market?

The U.S. Midwest market is home to a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, agriculture, technology, healthcare, and transportation. This diversity offers opportunities for businesses to tap into various sectors; to capture the significant business value, technology is key. For our clients, we offer the opportunity to collaborate and test drive ideas onsite at the Gen AI Studios at Accenture Tower, as well as in cities throughout North America and beyond.

Will you discuss Accenture’s focus on smart manufacturing and its partnership with Purdue University to establish the Accenture Smart Factory?

Smart manufacturing uses digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, the cloud, robotics, and 5G to build products. At Accenture, we believe that we are currently in Industry X. While Industry 4.0 focused on the adoption of new technologies, Industry X companies are driving operational intelligence through technology. Industry X connects engineering and manufacturing operations every step of the way to reimagine how products and services are designed and engineered, sourced and supplied, manufactured, and renewed.

There is an unquestioned need moving forward for a workforce with core knowledge and skills in this field – in fact, the need is outpacing the supply of qualified workers. This need drove our partnership with Purdue University to fund the Accenture Smart Factory, providing the school’s College of Engineering and Purdue Polytechnic Institute with instructional labs and design studios. Accenture is also granting student scholarships for the equivalent of four years of in-state tuition at Purdue. The program will include a Women in Manufacturing scholarship fund with the goal of promoting diversity, something that is in Accenture’s DNA.

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

Keys for effective leadership start with continuous learning and building great teams. In today’s fast-paced and evolving business environment, leaders need to dive in and have a deep understanding of industry trends, technological advancements, and market dynamics. Continuous learning enables leaders to adapt

to changes effectively, making informed decisions to drive performance. Importantly, learning fosters innovation and creativity within an organization. When leaders prioritize learning, they encourage a culture of curiosity and experimentation among their teams, leading to the development of new ideas, products, and solutions.

In the case of the great teams, to achieve that goal I focus on diversity which drives innovation. This is essential to cultivate a culture of collaboration, where team members support and complement each other’s strengths, resulting in increased productivity and efficiency.

How critical is it for Accenture to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of its clients and the communities it serves?

As part of our talent strategy, we hire and develop people who have different backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences. These differences ensure that we have and attract the cognitive diversity to deliver a variety of perspectives, observations, and insights which are essential to drive the innovation needed to reinvent companies. We treat inclusion and diversity like every other business priority. We share the progress toward our goals because we believe transparency builds trust.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

The advice I offer to young people is what I’d say to my younger self: Take more risks by getting out of your comfort zone. Don’t be afraid to fail. When that happens, pick yourself back up. Be fearless – just go for it. ●

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