

Accenture: Empowering Women - Women's Programmes & Initiatives

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 270,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments.

“Diversity makes Accenture a better company on every dimension. Our unique ability to bring together multiple perspectives, backgrounds, cultures and skills - reflecting the clients we serve around the world—is extremely powerful in driving innovation and being relevant to our clients’ needs. This is part of what we call the Accenture Way.”

- Pierre Nanterme, Chairman & CEO Accenture

Overview

Accenture strives to build an environment and culture that empowers women to define their personal approach to success. Their gender diversity programme focuses on finding the best people for the job, grooming them for a global career and exceeding their expectations through their visionary culture.

Since 2002, Accenture has established a formal commitment to being a diverse employer. However, it has always had a strong commitment to building a workplace which provides equal opportunities based on qualifications, merit and business need.

Objectives



Building an environment and culture that empowers women.

Accenture’s Global Inclusion & Diversity policy sets the overall diversity strategy around the world. At the core of the strategy is finding the best people with the right skills, different experiences and backgrounds in order to bring diverse perspectives into the business, thereby giving clients a broader spectrum of ideas and solutions.

In March 2012, Accenture introduced a new global women’s theme – Defining success. Your way. – which reflects

Accenture’s commitment to supporting women’s professional goals and aspirations. The theme is central to the company’s culture and is embedded in the different facets of their business practices:

- Training
- Recruitment
- Work-life Balance
- Interaction with Clients
- Supplier Diversity

- Community
- Team Interaction

Initiatives



International Women's Day

Leadership support from the early stages of implementation has been fundamental to the success of the company's programmes. Accenture believes that responsibility begins with senior leaders communicating and driving the message that diversity is a business imperative. Through this, the Global Inclusion & Diversity unit was established together with two global governance bodies to champion diversity throughout the business:

- Accenture Diversity Council
Senior leaders who make decisions regarding inclusion & diversity.
- Accenture Diversity Forum
Leaders who recommend innovative solutions to inclusion and diversity challenges.

With the support of the leadership team, the company is able to utilise an integrated approach to develop women through mentoring programmes, training and networking with the ultimate aim of increasing women representation in senior roles. These programmes are designed as a result of extensive studies on where the business aspires to be, understanding the current capability level of their female workforce and defining the gaps between the two.

Over the years, these programmes have evolved to align both the needs of the business and women employees. Currently the company focuses its efforts on the following women development programmes:

Women's Mentoring

Pairs female executives with Managing Director mentors. Employees can take advantage of virtual workshops and networking tips to help guide their careers at Accenture.

Accenture Women's Network

A global internal website connects women across the company with one another. It also provides resources such as the personal experiences of other Accenture women, education and tools to help women define their visions of success.

Women's Employee Resource Groups

Drive initiatives and programmes to support women locally and help them build strong networks, both within Accenture and with the broader community.

International Women's Day

The event is celebrated in over 197 locations where Accenture people come together to learn about the positive impact women are having on Accenture and the world. Participants enjoy exchanging ideas about women, inclusion and their impact on the global economy.

Defining Success Forums

Held quarterly by region, participants are given the opportunity to listen to leaders share their personal approaches to managing their career journey.

Leadership Programmes

- **Developing High Performing Women:** Targeting top-performing managers, the training focuses on progression towards leadership roles. Managers are supported by female role models to evaluate their aspirations and plan the next steps in their career. More than 1,000 women from 45 countries have participated in the programme.
- **Women and Client Centricity:** Provide women leaders the information, tools, practice opportunities and self-confidence to become client-centric leaders and more effective managers.
- **Women and Negotiation:** Focuses on how to build strategies to help women maximise their effectiveness in their negotiation interactions.
- **Maximising Performance — Women in Leadership:** Equips new women leaders with the knowledge of skills and behaviours needed to succeed in their careers.

Accenture believes that building an inclusive and diverse culture entails reinforcing and cascading the company's values through all employees and holding leaders accountable in driving diversity initiatives.

Diversity Awareness

Core inclusion and diversity training for employees are delivered through customised training and education programmes on-site, online and in teams. Examples of diversity awareness and management programmes include "Unleashing the Benefits of Gender Diversity", "Enabling Diversity at Work" and "Leading a Diverse Workforce".

Measuring Progress

Accountability mechanisms and performance objectives are set at a senior level throughout the year to accelerate progress and diversity goals. Accenture assigns Managing Directors with specific performance objectives that include retaining people to drive the business, sponsor inclusion and diversity initiatives as well as championing flexible work practices within project teams or country.

Accenture also utilises diversity metrics to track and report the diversity progress which is published to all country Inclusion & Diversity leads on a quarterly basis. At the start of the financial year, the company sets targets for all metrics based on performance in the last few years and future growth plans. The metrics include measuring gender mix, attrition gap, recruitment, promotion yield gap and engagement gap. As performance is tracked quarterly, leaders who are below target are requested to analyse the reasons and agree on actions to improve the situation.

Outcome



Accenture is successful at leveraging the value of diversity.

Through their commitment of being an equal opportunities and diverse employer as well as recognising that each employee has a responsibility to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive environment, Accenture has been successful at leveraging the value of diversity and translating these values into positive business outcomes as outlined below.

- Accenture employs more than 90,000 women, constituting 36% of the workforce, making it one of the leading inclusion and diversity advocates.
- Women comprise more than 17 percent of Accenture leadership.
- Nearly 40 percent of new hires are women.
- 25% of Accenture's Global Management Committee, primary governance group, are women.
- 3 out of 10 of Accenture's external board of directors are women.

With diversity initiatives and principles ingrained in the culture, the focus for the business moving forward is to ensure there is a robust pipeline of women leaders ready to assume leadership roles and propel the business forward. Currently Accenture has identified 25 women in their succession plan to grow and develop into the future leaders of the business.

Success Factors

- Strategy & Objectives
 - Establishing Clear Diversity & Inclusion Metrics
- Leadership
 - Tone from the Top
- Organisation Alignment
 - Embedded Culture of Trust and Integrity
 - Robust Policies & Procedures
 - Targeted Engagement with Line Managers

- Training & Awareness
- Market Place Connection
 - Accolades and External Recognition
 - Contribution to Societal Development

AWARDS

- 2013 - 2012: “Top 50 Employers for Women” (UK), The Times
- 2013: “Canada’s Best Diversity Employer”, The Globe & Mail
- 2012: “35 Women Under 35”, Management Today (UK)
- 2012: #9 “Top 50 Companies for Diversity” DiversityInc (US)
- 2011 - 2012: National Association of Female Executives “Top Companies for Executive Women”
- 2011: “Top 50 Companies for Women”, Forbes Magazine
- 2009: STPI Karnataka: Recognised by STPI Karnataka (Software Technology Parks of India) for employing the highest percentage of women of any company in the IT industry (2009)
- 2006 - 2013: “Top 100 Employers”, Stonewall (UK) (Workplace Equality Index)
- 2003 - 2013: Working Mother Magazine “100 Best Companies for Working Mothers” has included Accenture for the past ten years

WEBSITE

www.accenture.com/inclusionanddiversity

OTHER PRACTICES

Global

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements

More than 80% of Accenture employees indicate that achieving work-life balance is important. Recognising the importance of balancing work and personal lives, Accenture leverages on technological innovations from laptops, wireless phones and internet access to e-mail to enable employees to adopt a flexible work practice. Currently Accenture has the following flexible work arrangements in more than 30 countries around the world:

- Flex-time
- Part-time
- Telecommuting / Work from Home
- Compressed work week
- Job sharing
- Leave of absence policy to allow employees to take unpaid leave to pursue activities outside of the working environment

In ASEAN, the FWA utilisation is at 34% as at FY2012.

Fly-Backs

The company offers employees fly-backs to their home location, the option to fly someone to their project site and the option to fly to an alternate location in lieu of a trip home.

FlexLeave

This is a voluntary sabbatical programme which the company offers where there is a recognised business need. This programme is typically a 6-18 month partially paid opportunity for employees to pursue their interests (for example, travel, charity work, non-company sponsored study, work in a different field). It is not a continuous programme but can be rolled out for appropriate periods.

Work-Life Benefits

Maternity Leave

Accenture offers 6-8 weeks paid maternity leave based on workforce and tenure.

Maternity Returners Programme

This programme helps ease the transition back into the workforce by providing career guidance and support for finding ideal re-entry roles into Accenture.

Nursing Mother's Programme

New moms can obtain educational resources about nursing as well as a \$50 breast pump subsidy.

Backup Dependent Care

Provides employees with 40 hours of backup dependent care per year when their usual arrangements fail unexpectedly. The programme also assists employees to locate qualified care provider for their dependents which includes children, elders, spouses or domestic partner.

Bring your Child to Work Programme

This programme is usually a one day programme that encourages parents to bring their children to their workplace.

International Woman'Day Celebration

Annual celebration is part of the company's ongoing commitment to maintaining a diverse workforce and in building confident individuals.

Training

Training programmes focusing on Inclusion and Diversity for different target audience depending on the country needs (hiring managers, top management, high performing women).

Mentoring

Accenture offers a mentoring programme to support the advancement of women.

Recruitment Initiative

Conducts various women training and women related programmes with targeted university.

Networking

Accenture provides the opportunity for employees to be a part of both internal and external networking events aim to support women and parents at work.

Malaysia

Supplementary Policy - Flexible Work Arrangements

The purpose of this supplement is to provide explanation to employees regarding flexible work arrangements (FWAs).

1. Introduction

Accenture recognizes that employees have personal responsibilities and aspirations outside of work. Therefore it aims to help employees achieve work/life effectiveness by enabling flexibility in relation to their working arrangements.

Eligibility

All full time employees are eligible.

Types of FWA

- Flextime
- Telecommuting
- Part-time Job-sharing
- Ad-hoc Flexibilities
- Other alternative schedules not covered in the above options:
 - Full weekends at home
 - Extended weekends in home location
 - Extended client/home location
- All FWAs must support the Accenture's business needs and be suitable to the circumstances of each individual situation.
- All employees on FWAs are accountable for working with their team and supervisor to ensure continued standard of delivery at all times.

2. Application & Approval Process

All applications must follow a formal approval process that takes into consideration:

- Employee's job responsibilities
- Impact to the business
- Setting of clear expectations
- Impact on employee's salary (if any)

Employee's application should include:

- The type of FWA requested
- The start and end dates of the FWA
- Reasons supporting approval of the FWA

- Potential challenges that he/she may face working under the FWA and recommendations to overcome these challenges (e.g. network connectivity)
- A recommended timeframe to review the FWA

The FWA Approvals table below outlines the general guideline of approvals required for each type of FWA.

FWA Approvals Table

Nature of FWA	Relevant Types of FWAs	Application & Approval Process	Approvers
Recurring and on-going FWAs that do not impact an employee's total rewards	Flextime	Formal approval process required if an FWA is recurring for a specified period of time.	Manager/Supervisor
	Telecommuting Alternative schedule for employees on out-of-own assignments		Copy application to: HR
Recurring and on-going FWAs that impact an employee's total rewards	Part-time	Formal approval process is required.	Manager/Supervisor, Head of Department & Director
	Job-share		Copy application to: HR
Occasional requests for flexibility	Flextime	Formal approval process is not required for the occasional accommodation of requests for flexibility in work schedule or location. Employees requesting the occasional flexibility, however, must seek agreement from their supervisor in advance.	Manager/Supervisor & Head of Department
	Telecommuting		Copy application to: HR
	Alternative schedule for employees posted outside of the home office		
	Make-up time		
Time off in-lieu			

All approver must ensure that the following criteria are met before approving an FWA application:

- The FWA must fulfill business needs and is aligned with local business practices, the type of work and the employee roles and responsibilities.
- The FWA should NOT adversely impact the employee's role, team or quality of deliverables.
- The requesting employee must understand and accept that Accenture reserves the right to discontinue or change the FWA at any time without prior notification.
- Client requirements and expectations will continue to be met, and client consent has been obtained if it is appropriate.

Other areas to be considered include:

- Continued standard of delivery and productivity.
- Availability to the business and/or client when needed.
- Office work ethics and cultural norm.
- Phase or stage of project life cycle.
- Facilities and logistics.

- Cost to the Company.

3. FWA Review & Expiration

All FWAs must regularly be reviewed to determine if they continue to meet the needs of employee and Company.

- Employee and supervisor must agree on a review timeframe.
- FWA terms may be extended or revised at each review. It may be discontinued if it is deemed no longer meeting business needs.
- FWAs automatically expire when project-based employees end their assignments, in which case employees may then submit a request for an FWA to their new supervisor.
- The FWA application will then be reviewed in light of the new project assignment.
- Similarly, FWAs automatically expire when employees in position-based roles change roles. The employee must discuss the new request for an FWA with his/her supervisor.

4. Performance Management & Total Reward

Total Reward

Employees should reach out to the relevant HR personnel to understand how a particular type of FWA may affect their benefits and total reward.

Performance Management

Accenture's standard performance management processes, practices and schedules will continue to apply to employees working under FWAs. The supervisor will need to clearly assign work and communicate quality, quantity and schedule expectations for deliverables. In instances where the types of FWAs result in the employee working separately (time and/or location) from the supervisor, assessment of performance may be even more dependent on results and quality of deliverables.

5. Career Progression

Career progression is based on several factors including contribution, performance, capability and business need. Employees working under an FWA must meet Accenture's criteria to be considered for promotion to the next career level. Working under an FWA will not prevent an employee from being considered for promotion. However, some types of FWAs may impact the rate at which he/she develops or demonstrates skills and competency levels.



Interview with Nellie Borrero, Managing Director of Global Inclusion and Diversity in Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 270,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments.

As the Managing Director, Global Inclusion & Diversity (I&D), Nellie leads Accenture's global diversity initiatives, development and advancement of women globally. Nellie has become an advocate in championing women and minorities in the workplace and in the world, receiving a number of recognitions including 2000 National Society of Hispanic MBA's Individual Corporate Executive Award; 1999 National Management Consulting Diversity Achievement Award; 1999 ASPIRA Circle of Achievers Award. She also served as the Chairperson for the ASPIRA Mentoring Programme.

We spoke with Nellie to gain insight on her experiences in implementing I&D programmes in Accenture as well as her experience advising clients implementing similar initiatives. She shares some of the common challenges faced by many organisations embarking on I&D initiatives and provides her recommendations on how they can move forward.

1. What would you recommend are the critical steps in implementing and I&D programme specifically within the area of gender diversity?

First and foremost, the leadership at CEO and senior levels need to agree that I&D is a business imperative and once they recognise that diversity adds value to the business they need to communicate this message to the business. Focus must also be placed on understanding the business landscape and the current capability of women in the business, where they are most prominent, where they drop off, the timeframe in which they are ready to be promoted and compare this to where the business aspires to be. The approach should focus on closing this gap through various programmes.

The next step is determining the metrics in which these initiatives are to be measured against in the form of a scorecard that needs to be approved at the CEO level. These metrics can include attrition, engagement and recruitment rates. To ensure that year on year the business is moving in the right direction. With insight on the gaps and business goals, the company can then focus on creating programmes such as the women's network, resource group, training programmes to build the skill set needed to minimise these gaps. Companies should undertake a strategic approach and focus on programmes with 5 year timelines and map the milestones each year.

Lastly, the company should consider the positioning of the organisation internally and externally. Internally, the focus is how to market these programmes successfully to employees. Externally, this goes back to the company branding and employee value proposition, which needs to send the message that the business is an employer of choice for women.

2. Throughout your experience, what are some of the challenges that you've encountered in implementing I&D programmes and what interventions would you recommend organisations facing similar challenges to overcome these issues?

There have been a few challenges that I've encountered in my experience. In the initial implementation phase for the I&D programme in Accenture, the first key challenge was to influence our leadership team to view I&D as a business need which forms part of the strategic thinking of the business. If the leaders position I&D as a business agenda, implementation challenges are easier to overcome.

The second challenge is to promote the use of metrics to track the progress of these initiatives. Many companies are reluctant to set I&D targets because they do not want to sacrifice quality for quantity or be committed to a quota. It's not about quotas, it's about understanding what objectives you are trying to achieve and putting in place an aspirational target where in some

instances the company may meet its target and in some instances they won't. It is crucial for the HR business partners or diversity advocates to work closely with the legal team to identify who in the organisation can have a view of these targets. In Accenture, we take a conservative approach and restrict view of these targets to only top leadership and selected HR business partners to avoid instances where employees may hold the company accountable if they are not progressing as quickly as aspired.

Many will also experience pushback from managers and other employees groups who was to position their agendas. Managers may have concerns that they are now accountable for achieving I&D objectives. It is important that the diversity leadership, the HR leadership and the committee put in place resources such as headcount and budget to empower business managers to achieve these targets. Employees on the other hand may believe that the organisation is positively discriminating their people. What I tell my clients is that it's not positive discrimination because we are not excluding anyone. With gender diversity, it is a business issue, a business need and a market demand but there is a gap. And like any other gaps in the business, the business needs initiatives that bridge that gap.

3. How would you respond to a CEO or business leader who believes that their company already operates on a merit-based structure regardless of gender and therefore does not view gender diversity as a business priority?

It's about hiring the best talent. A company will not be able to attract the best talent if they do not have a gender balance in the work force. Secondly, it's about the different styles of thinking. Research from universities around the world concludes that when you have differences in the organisation, your business operates more efficiently and effectively. If a company wants to cultivate different thinking styles, they need to look at individuals who come from different backgrounds whether it's culturally, socio-economic, gender, etc.

4. What has been the most prominent achievement throughout your career?

Personally, my biggest impact is being able to see how far Accenture has come. When I started with this programme, I believe we had close to 8,000 women working with us globally. We now have 90,000 women working for us. We had very few senior women in leadership roles and we not have a significant representation of women at the Managing Director level. It's about having the confidence, determination and aggressive style to push agendas when they were not popular, challenging leaders when they did not want to be challenged and convincing them to position I&D as a personal commitment. It's been a journey of personal satisfaction to see the progress we have made and the opportunities that we have positioned for people of different backgrounds.

5. What's the direction for Accenture?

We will continue to focus on our development programmes but the biggest focus is to position more women into leadership positions. We've grown our women into leaders and I want to see more women positioned to regional and global leadership roles. We have identified 25 women that we meet on a quarterly basis who we believe have the capability and skills to be positioned for business leadership roles.

6. What would be your recommendation for companies that are starting to develop I&D programmes?

I'd counsel a client to focus effort on influencing the top leaders to embrace diversity initiatives and communicate their vision to employees of how diversity can add value to their business. You will get a different result if the message is from your leaders as opposed to a message from HR or diversity advocates. HR or the diversity advocates need to be ready to follow up from their leader's message and meet with the business to discuss the programme. Once that is in place, companies can conduct focus groups or use surveys to obtain feedback from employees.