TQ Enterprise Platforms

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TQ Enterprise Platforms Preshow

Emma McGuigan here, and welcome to the Enterprise Platforms TQ Topic. I'm so excited to bring this enterprise platforms topic to you through TQ. Why? Well, because enterprise platforms are an important topic that touches our daily lives, whether you are client facing or not. So what is an enterprise platform? In our context, platforms are sets of enterprise software, tools, and architecture to run and grow a business. Think about it like a framework. It supports transactions, processes, customer experiences, data, and insights all for a business. Did you know that if you log a tech support ticket through CIO, you are using one of our enterprise platform vendor servers now? Or when you log your time in myTimeandExpenses, this runs on a platform as well and feeds into SAP as our financials platform. And if you have an HR request like a PTO approval or a change in a career counselor or people lead, well, you're again using another of our enterprise platforms, which, by the way, we're in the process of moving to Workday. And today organizations across the world are grappling with risk and uncertainty, whether that's coming from the pandemic, oil price fluctuations, cyber attacks, data challenges, IP, or many other directions. These challenges have magnified the impact of technology on the world, and our clients are now looking to use technology in new ways, not only to build resilience for today's challenges but also to build a competitive advantage for the future. And an enterprise platform can help build that resilience and stability for a business. An enterprise platform is the heart of the business functions that our clients perform. It's not just the processes the software runs. It's all the things that the software connects to. It manages workflow. It

is the primary user interface touch point. It is a data repository. And it acts as an automation layer. It delivers information and data across a business instantly so the business is all connected and, more importantly, can draw any insights it needs in order to change and manage their business. Hence resiliency and stability. An enterprise platform is the center of gravity that runs a process but also connects almost everything else in a business to increase value. Most companies use more than one platform just as we do, given the examples I just shared. There are literally thousands of enterprise platform vendors that a company can choose from. But how do businesses know which is the right platform or group of platform vendors to choose? That is where Accenture and specifically our Intelligent Platform Services business comes in. IPS, Intelligent Platform Services. It's Accenture's term for this robust and complex enterprise platforms business. Within this group, we have deep relationships with key platform partners. We have tens of thousands of people certified across these platform vendors. And we are working strategically with these partners to influence their business and roadmaps. We also have strong relationships and skills with other growth and emerging platform vendors. In this space, we help our clients strategically decide on which enterprise platform or Platforms will best align with their business goals. Then, of course, we also can help with the implementation, change management, and ongoing operations and governance of these platforms for our clients. Now over to Simon to explain a bit more about what we mean by enterprise platforms. Then join me back at the TQ HQ to talk about what enterprise platforms mean for Accenture. And, remember, TQ and you--just one of the ways we are powering change. Happy learning.

Enterprise Platforms: Executive Briefing

Introduction

When we talk about any technology, and not just in business, but in our personal lives and even casual conversation, a lot of the words and terms we use exist because they add clarity. If you say you're looking for a USB Type-C cable, there's no debate about this. Something either is or isn't a USB Type-C cable. Or something either is or isn't a CPU, or an SSD drive. Or with software, if I told you I've just installed a new web browser, then just from that phrase you can imagine at least the basic features and capabilities you'd expect any web browser to have. It's the same if I'd said "email application" or "spreadsheet" or "database." These terms all add a lot of meaning. They help make things more straightforward and clear. But then we also have words like "platform." Unlike the previous terms, this one really does not add a lot of clarity. By itself, the word "platform" tells you very little about what it does or who it's for, and you hear it all the time. I mean, you could be at a typical corporate convention and pick a random person out of the crowd and say, tell me what platforms your organization currently uses. If the person you chose was a software developer, then you might get an answer like, oh, we develop on the Microsoft Azure platform or the AWS platform. They might say they work on mobile platforms like

iOS and Android or desktop platforms like Windows. But if that random person you'd picked was, say, the chief operations officer at the same company, then they might say, Salesforce is our CRM platform, and we use Workday as our platform for human capital management, or SAP, or Oracle. So you'd get totally different answers, and they're all correct, because so many things are described as platforms. This word gets used again and again to describe an incredible variety of very different products and solutions. Which leads to the question, what does this actually mean? Is "platform" a useful term in itself? Or is it some overused, generic, meaningless, filler buzzword? Well, I'm going to say there is a lot of value in the word and the idea of a platform, but it's worth diving a little deeper. There's no one-size-fits-all definition, no one sentence I could give you that fully describes what a platform should represent. But it's not because it's vague, and it's not even because it's complex. It's neither of those things. And in fact, platforms become easier to understand if you think about how we use this word, even when it's nothing to do with computers, so let's begin there.

Real World Platforms vs Technology Platforms

We've always been able to use this word "platform" to describe an incredible variety of physical, real-world items. There are painting platforms and diving platforms, launch platforms, and oil platforms. We can sleep in a platform bed and wear platform shoes as we walk along the train platform pushing a platform trolley. We know this word says nothing about size. Some platforms are large; some are small. Some platforms are simple, and others are complex. Some platforms are more generic, and other platforms are very, very specific. But even when this word is used across all these unrelated things, it still has something in common, because the point of any platform is not just to be a platform; it's to be a platform for something. There's always a context, a situation, a specific use case. But even then, the other thing about platforms is, by themselves they don't fix a problem. They're always an assist. A platform can help you do something. It doesn't do that thing. We could construct the most innovative, complicated, expensive launch platform in the world, but by itself it fixes nothing unless we bring the rocket to it. So any platform is a support structure. Sometimes a basic, simple, inexpensive support structure, and a sometimes a very complicated, very expensive one. And it's the same in computing and technology, that any technology platform is also a support structure. It can help you achieve something. It can accelerate your ability to do that thing. It can save you a lot of money and time. And a good support structure can make what you're doing more secure, more reliable, more resilient. But still, by itself, the platform won't fix the problem. You still have to bring something to it, your people, your data. But beyond that, you have to do some planning, configuration, you have to build on that platform, make it your own, extend it, customize it, integrate it with the rest of your business before it can become useful. Now, if this all still sounds a little vague, well, let's see some examples of technology platforms in business.

From Applications To Platforms

So I'll say again, every platform is a platform for something. There's a reason behind it, an intention. And with technology platforms, that often means you'll see websites that say we provide a marketing platform, or we're a

customer support platform, or a billing and purchasing platform, or a supply chain management platform, where they specialize in a particular business use case with the argument that if they can assist and support you in some common business need, you can spend less time and resource on that and more on whatever makes your business unique. So if you think about a few of the common business requirements, things like payroll, finance and accounting, customer support, marketing, managing sales, perhaps inventory, ordering and fulfillment, these are all incredibly important. But usually functionality you want from these things isn't particularly unusual or unique. And sure, this will depend on the type and size of your organization, and it's worth pointing out this course is titled Enterprise Platforms, not just platforms. But really all this means is, I'm going to take the perspective of working with larger-size organizations and the kinds of problems they have, where platforms can help. However, if you're in a small- to medium-sized business, all of this still applies, the principles, the ideas, the various business problems, the approach. It's just that some of the scenarios we'll explore might be a little over-engineered for you. Just as an example, if you're in a brand-new startup and there's just two or three employees, then there's some business problems you don't have yet. You probably don't need a formal system to keep track of your hiring and recruitment efforts or handle physical asset tracking or manage IT helpdesk requests. But if you're in a 2000- or a 200,000-person company or trying to become one of those, you will need those things. So in general, the larger an organization gets, there's more potential places for platforms to help. So we're going to take that perspective, and where it doesn't apply to you, just dial it back a little. But we're going to begin with one of the business functions that applies to almost every business, which is having some way to store, manage, and maintain customer information to track business opportunities, sales leads and pipeline, and be able to get reporting and insights about all of this. And yes, some organizations will decide to build their own custom software systems for this, and if you have the time and the budget and the staff to do that, fantastic. But although every business has slightly different needs for storing customer data, there's certainly enough common features and typical requirements here. You can expect that somebody's already written software to help with this. And yes, of course, and we've been able to by customer relationship management, or CRM software, for decades. There's been applications like GoldMine and Act! here since the 1980s. But for most of that time, to purchase a CRM application, that meant you were buying a box with CDs or floppy disks in it. You'd install the software on your own machine. You'd take care of the data, you'd take care of keeping it safe and keeping it backed up, and you'd have to figure out how to share that information within your organization and who to share it with. But also, this software is whatever it is, and hopefully this was what you wanted, because this wasn't customizable in any significant way. You just needed to use what you'd bought off the shelf. But these days, instead of asking what's a popular CRM application, if you ask what's a popular CRM platform, well, the first name you'll hear is likely to be Salesforce. There are other players, like Microsoft Dynamics, Oracle, SAP, HubSpot, but Salesforce is the market leader. It's a good example to begin with here. Now I'm not going to go through the features of this or any CRM, but there's a few aspects of this I do want to point out, because they apply to any platform. First, Salesforce isn't going to send you a box with CDs or floppy disks in it. Everything's in the cloud. It's stored and runs on their servers. You don't need to install anything on your machines. They'll take care of the data, keeping it safe, keeping it backed up. They'll take care of the software, updating it, fixing bugs,

adding new features. It's all delivered to you over the web. It's all running in the cloud. Now, if you're then thinking, is that all a platform is, an application delivered over the web? Well, no, because while that's part of it, it leads us to the next important point. One of the things we expect of any platform is that it's customizable. It is extensible. We can change it. We can add onto it. Now some of this customization might be done without code. You may find drag-and-drop editors where you can change and rearrange screens and build what's important to you. But for anything more complex or custom, you can also have your software developers writing new code that can be uploaded to the platform and provide you with those additional unique features you need. So a huge part of using Salesforce, or indeed any platform, is this idea of extensibility and customization. And it's not that customization is allowed; it's expected. And what that leads to is that with any platform, making the buying decision is never the end of the story, unlike, say, when you go to the app store and purchase an application. You choose it, you buy it, you download it, you use it. Well, when you decide to purchase the use of a platform and you cut a check or, okay, punch in a credit card, you're not done. The job isn't over. There is always some level of planning, configuration, customization that is fully expected before this can become useful. Now even if you look at the initial marketing content of the Salesforce website, they'll try and set some expectations about this, even though it might only take me a minute to create an account and sign up. Still, an actual implementation, or what they'll describe as a quick and flexible implementation, is likely to be within weeks. It's not instant because it needs to be tailored to your business. Customization isn't just permitted; it's fully expected. And they'll provide guided walkthroughs and best practices and recommendations for your first 30, 60, and 90 days, because this platform is substantial enough to need some level of education in how to use it. So there's always a certain amount of work you have to do for this or for any platform to be implemented successfully in an organization.

Sidebar – Platforms That Don't Call Themselves Platforms

A quick sidebar. When you look at some of the different vendors, you'll find a few of them don't always use the word "platform" all the time. If I'm on the homepage of Salesforce or, let's say, Workday, this is a popular platform for human resources, planning, and finance needs, well, I may not see the word platform here. They might describe what they provide as a "system" or a "solution," or even talk about having a "suite of products." But other companies like Microsoft may use this word "platform" again and again and again. We have the Microsoft Edge platform, the Microsoft Data platform, the Microsoft Power Platform, and so on. And there's a few vendors who use the term, but sparingly. They may restrict their own use of the word platform to just the part of that system that is extensible and customizable and allows developers to create new features and functionality. But here we're going to focus on the kinds of solutions that are typically described as platforms and the characteristics of those, whether the vendor themselves always uses the word "platform" or not. So next, we're going to widen our view and take a look at other types of technology platforms. End sidebar.

Platform Categories

Because there are so many different vendors who describe what they sell as some kind of platform, there's hundreds, thousands of them, it's useful to have at least a broad set of categories to group them into. It makes them easier to talk about and think about, and also because, as you'll see, there are likely to be entire categories of technology platforms you just don't care about. But I'll begin by saying there's no one shared official list of categories for technology platforms, and you can find articles online that will talk about the three types of technology platforms, or the 11 types of platforms, or the 16 types of platforms. I'm going to group them here roughly into 6 major categories, and where I'm going to cover the first 3 categories in the next 90 seconds and then push them to the side as being not particularly interesting for us here. First, the easiest one, operating system platforms. We have mobile platforms like iOS and Android, desktop platforms like macOS, Linux, Windows. Yes, these are platforms. We can add onto them, we can customize them, we can add new applications, we can bring our own data. But for our purposes here, the basic choice of an operating system, that is not the business value we're focused on. So onto the next one, social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. These are cloud based. They offer some level of customization and extensibility. If I'm a software developer, I can write third-party applications that can talk to Facebook or Instagram. I could write applications that will interact with Twitter, and so on. Now it's true that many of the options for these kinds of platforms are very oriented around marketing and advertising. But again, for an executive briefing like this, our focus is not going to be on the consumer-oriented social platforms. So onto the next one, the platforms I'll describe as marketplace or commerce platforms. These would include sites like Airbnb, Etsy, eBay, business-oriented sites like Shopify and Amazon. Now again, this might not be what you first think about when you think about platforms, but they do meet the demands of this. They are cloud based, they support customization and extensibility, and they provide an API, or application programming interface, to make it easier for a developer to write custom code. But yet again, as with the social platforms, the scope of these is reasonably limited. So even though they're popular as websites, I am not focusing on these marketplace platforms here. So let's take these first three categories and gently push them to the side. Our main focus here will be on first, business-focused software-as-a service platforms, which we've already started to explore, and on the more flexible large-scale computing and infrastructure platforms. And there'll be one more category will get to in just a few minutes.

SaaS Platforms

We took a short look at Salesforce, and this is often described as a software-as-a service, or SaaS, company. Now, whenever you see the is SaaS abbreviation, it's basically telling you, what are we actually interested in from this company? What is the service we would be paying for. If you were doing due diligence, say you were evaluating a few potential CRM platforms, you might be looking at Salesforce, but also at Microsoft Dynamics CRM, or Oracle CX, SAP Customer Experience, or any of the others. Well, we might be reading about their incredible datacenters full of top-of-the-line computers and thousands of hard drives and amazing networking infrastructure to support all of this. And that's interesting, but fundamentally, that is not what we care about. Here what we're looking for is the software. We want that CRM application that will be delivered over the web

that will also allow us significant customization options so we can change and add onto it to provide the unique features we need for our business. But essentially, it's the software as the service we are paying for. Now if we step away from CRM platforms and look at something else, well, you'll find several platforms that specialize in the human resources functionality or the bigger picture of it, not just HR, but what's often called human capital management, or HCM. So these platforms can provide functionality to cover everything from payroll and benefits, logistical issues like requests for time off. But they can oversee the entire talent lifecycle, recruiting, hiring, vetting candidates, onboarding those candidates, the ongoing career development and training, and everything else this entails. Some of the platforms here include Workday, Oracle HCM, SAP SuccessFactors, and there are others. But again, what we're interested in is the software, not the hardware that that software is running on. We also have SaaS platforms that focus on customer service, like ServiceNow and Zendesk. We have SaaS platforms that support various aspects of content management, others that focus on marketing, others that look at finance and accounting, from small to medium businesses, all the way up to enterprise resource planning, or ERP. Now there's simply too many subcategories to cover them all here. But just assume that if you're looking at some aspect of common business operations and wondering, is there a platform that can help with this? Then, yes, probably. But with all of them, with all of these examples, what we want is the software. Sure, we'd like to know that they have this great computing infrastructure behind the scenes to keep everything reliable and up and running, but it is the software that's important to us here. So if I'm describing all these things as SaaS platforms, where what we're paying for is the software, you might wonder, if you were to read about some new product and see that it's described as software as a service, does that mean it's a platform? Well, no. See, just because an application can be delivered over the web and be software as a service, if all that's doing is delivering that application but the software itself has no flexibility, it can't be customized, it can be extended, well, it might be software as a service, but it's not a platform. We're not going to call anything a platform without at least some level of customization and extensibility. So a platform falls into this SaaS category if what we're fundamentally most interested in is the software, not about the datacenter and the computing hardware that software is running on. However, there are other platforms where that datacenter and computing infrastructure part, that's exactly what we care about.

Infrastructure And Computing Platforms

We also have platforms that don't focus on supporting one specific business function, like sales or marketing or customer support, but instead exist to be a much more general platform for computing and software development and whatever that means for you. Examples here would be the major cloud service providers like Microsoft Azure, Amazon AWS, Google Cloud Platform, Alibaba Cloud. They all provide this modular building block approach where you can pick and choose from a collection of pay-as-you-go hosted options for computing infrastructure and software development. So I could log onto any of these sites, create an account, add a payment method, and instantly start configuring the computing resources I want, whether I want 1 server or 5 or 10, I can say exactly how much RAM I need, how fast the CPU should be, and even choose the location of

it from multiple datacenters around the world. And when a cloud service provider offers this kind of option, allowing you to replicate the kind of hardware infrastructure I might have had in my own premises, but instead do it in the cloud, we call this infrastructure as a service, or IaaS. However, if I am a software developer, I may not actually want to work at that level of specificity, where I have to name the number of servers and the amount of RAM and the CPU. I might just be looking at these platforms to provide me a preconfigured software development environment, where it can be automatically set up and ready for me to build websites or mobile application back ends or work with artificial intelligence or machine learning, whatever I need at the time, and where the cloud service provider can automatically take care of things like operating system updates and security fixes and even allocate changing amounts of computing resources based on however much I need at the time. Now, when we have that kind of setup, it's often referred to as platform as a service, or PaaS. Now, you might then wonder, so if we're talking about platforms here, you're saying we can have software-as-a service platforms and platform-as-a service platforms and infrastructure-as-a-service platforms? Well, yes, that's exactly what we have, because it's all about the aim of this. And what they all have in common, regardless of what we want to call them, is this idea of the support structure, support structure for what? We're still working with a hosted, cloud-based solution where the vendor can take care of a lot of what's going on behind the scenes, and we always need to do some level of customization for any of them, whether it's basic customization so we can start using the software, or whether it's an enormous amount of software development and infrastructure that could take months. If I need a common business function, I may first look at software-as-a-service platforms to see if anybody's already provided the functionality I'm looking for. Whereas if I'm more interested in creating my own unique software applications, I'll be looking at platform as a service. And if I really need to get down to the level of replicating individual machines and configuring memory, storage, and networking, then I'm going to look at infrastructure as a service. But they're still all platforms. Now we have one more category to go, but is a quick side note, if you did want to dive a little deeper into these terms like software as a service and platform as a service, then take a look at the Cloud: Executive Briefing, which takes a little more time to explore these ideas and the technologies behind them.

Utility And Integration Platforms

One of the things you have to think about when evaluating any platforms is how they might integrate with your current business and also integrate with any other platforms you may have chosen. And if anyone's wondering, well, is it okay to use more than one platform? Well, the answer isn't just yes; the answer is, well, you probably use more than one platform already .If you consider that even most individuals already used multiple third-party platforms and services for everything from email or document creation, document sharing, selling online, streaming video. Well, when you scale this up to an enterprise-level organization, most estimations are that a typical Fortune 500-level business already has dozens, if not hundreds, of different platforms and cloud services in use and not always officially approved, either. Now, these weren't all company-wide platforms. Some things might be used on a team-by-team basis. Others might even be individual SaaS services maybe used by a few

people in the company. And some platforms are mainly used behind the scenes, so they'll be invisible to a lot of day-to-day end users, and you may not even be aware of all the platforms you're touching every day. But still, yes, it is already common, and it's becoming more common for a business to use multiple platforms. So this final category I'm going to cover here is the platforms that don't deal with a specific preexisting business function, but rather platforms that exist to help with other platforms to deal with integration and workflow. Examples here would be companies like Workato, MuleSoft Anypoint, Boomi, and elastic.io. These all specialize in this integration story, and if you'll allow me one more acronym, they're sometimes referred to as iPaaS, or integration platform as a service. Now sometimes that means they're sending data between different third-party platforms or between a platform and your own in-house computer systems. But also these allow you to define workflow and automations across your team and your organization. So let's say, create a new entry in your CRM system. That platform could automatically cause an entry to appear in your instant messaging platform, which will then send an email to your email platform and create a reminder on your iPhone, and a so on. But there's additional logistic concerns when you have multiple third-party platforms. You see, nobody wants to have to sign on to a dozen different systems a day, so we could also find platform vendors that help with authentication and identity management services. Log on once, this idea of a single sign-on on, and then be automatically authenticated across all the other multiple platforms your business uses. And while we're thinking about the data that is stored and generated by any platform, we can understand that there is some level of risk here. But, yes, vendors want you to join their platform. They want you to stay on it, and they need to avoid any perception of intentional lock-in, where once you start using a platform, you can't leave. Now, that's a risk to think about, and there are some other ones to talk about, so it's time we looked at that.

Risk Mitigation

There are challenges and risks when adopting and implementing any platform, and these risks should be evaluated, but not just by themselves on a standalone basis, but against the full picture of any potential benefits in time, money, and additional features if you're choosing an existing platform. Now sometimes the benefit and the risk actually have the same cause, particularly when you're using these software-as-a-service platforms. It's often touted as a big benefit that the platform vendor will continually make updates and ship new features to you. But this also has some risk. You have this shifting sands idea, that the application you're all using this week might look or behave differently a month from now or 6 months from now. And these changes can be substantial. Salesforce, for example, generally releases three major updates each year in spring, summer, and winter. I'm recording this in early 2021, and here I can see the documentation, the release notes for the Spring 2021 release. And it says these are brief, high-level descriptions of enhancements and new features. If I download the PDF version of this, it's 600 pages long and there'll be another release in summer, and another in winter. So with many of the larger platforms, it can be genuinely difficult to keep up with all the new features continually being added. Well, we haven't talked a lot about pricing here. Part of any platform evaluation, of course, is cost implications. What happens if you commit to using a platform and the vendor then changes the

specifics of how those features are paid for? But as part of any evaluation, you should be looking at this idea of, what if we wanted to leave this platform? How hard would this be? How hard might it be after a year or two, and not just technically, in terms of can we export data and import somewhere else, but the practical impact on day-to-day operations if people are familiar with and used to a platform? But in addition to this, if you're storing your company's business data, or at least some of it, in a platform in the cloud, what are any compliance and governance obligations? If you're dealing with health care data or financial records, or you're working with education or defense contracts, well, there's often multiple standards and compliance requirements you're going to need to conform to. Now while this was a big issue in the early days of cloud computing, these days, it's such a common request that most of the platform vendors provide very specific information to help with governance and compliance. So SaaS platforms often get very detailed about their compliance certifications and their attestations. The more general computing platforms have very specific guidelines on which of their services should or should not be used in certain circumstances. You have things like the Microsoft Trust center. Amazon have a compliance area, as does Oracle, and you can find things like due diligence checklists for using cloud platforms that can help you identify any gaps in your planning and the things you should make sure you're thinking about around multiple aspects of risk management and legal and compliance issues. Now this is all usually regarded as a shared responsibility task, meaning part of it is their responsibility and what you're paying for. But part of it is your responsibility, and you need to be very clear on who owns each aspect of this.

The Network Effect

When you read about platforms, people often talk about the network effect. This is the idea that any platform should become more useful and more valuable as additional people join and use it. But it is very easy to get the wrong idea about this network effect because it's often explained with examples of social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. And, yeah, it's pretty simple to understand why those kinds of platforms and their business model is entirely dependent on gaining more and more active users. After all, the reason that anyone would choose to put their resume on LinkedIn is because that's where they think the right people are that will see it. It's not even important if you like a platform. You may dislike eBay but still create your auctions there if that's where you think the buyers are going to be. So with any social platform that's built around connecting people, then the number of users on that platform becomes more important than the actual features of the platform. So all of these businesses strive to reach this marketplace tipping point, whereas more people join, the platform becomes more useful, and because it's more useful, more people join, and you have this positive feedback loop purely from the number of users. But this can lead to a misunderstanding here, because if we're looking at business-oriented platforms and evaluating things like customer relationship management software and human capital management or supply chain management platforms, we're often first going to look at the features, not at the user base. And you might even think, well, I don't really care if this platform has 100 users or 100 million, as long as it does what I need. Well, I'm not trying to be connected with all the other uses of it. However, there are substantial, slightly more indirect benefits of this network. effect. First is the basic idea of

economies of scale. Any commercial platform is going to need a certain amount of paying users to make it financially viable. And generally speaking, the more users a platform has, the cheaper it becomes to run on a per-user basis, so we'd hope that at least some of the costs would either be passed back to us as consumers or invested back in the platform. But next, the larger platform gets, then you have more users requesting new features and updates and we can benefit from that, and that with more eyeballs looking at the software than any issues or bugs are found more quickly and hopefully fixed more quickly and more consistently. But perhaps the most important benefit is that when a business-focused platform becomes popular, it will develop a healthy, let's call it an ecosystem, around it, and this is what I mean. We talk a lot about platforms being customizable and extensible. We can add new features and capabilities. So if I'm a developer or a company and I've gone to the effort to create some kind of new import functionality or additional feature, well, beyond just using it myself, I may be able to offer it to other customers of the platform or sell it to them, and many business platforms encourage and support this. They have their own marketplaces of third-party solutions, add-ons, and extensions that weren't created by the platform vendor, but instead by other users of that platform. For example, Salesforce has the AppExchange. Workday has the Workday Marketplace. Amazon AWS has the AWS Marketplace. Microsoft Azure has a marketplace. And we're not talking just a handful of options. Some of these marketplaces have thousands of add-ons and extensions. And in these marketplaces you'll also often see consulting services, individuals and teams offering their services in everything from a two-day proof of concept to some large-scale, multi-month implementation. Because again, any platform requires planning, configuration, customization, and education to successfully implement. And that's the other benefit of a healthy ecosystem, is when you need to find additional personnel who understand how to work with that platform. You can find software developers, database administrators, network engineers who have experience with all of these specific platforms. There are often exams and even professional certifications to allow these professionals to demonstrate their skills in any area. But it's not just in the technical roles. If you're recruiting a bunch of people for your sales team, well, the popularity of these platforms often means that it's not unusual to ask for potential candidates to already have experience with Salesforce or Microsoft Dynamics or HubSpot or SAP or Oracle. And a healthy ecosystem will also lead to supporting a marketplace of books and training courses and user groups and online forums and conventions. So the popularity of a platform can itself become a new additional accelerator for using that platform. And while I'm certainly not saying that you have to choose the most popular platform in any category, it's worth considering that we do still benefit from the network effect, even if we're not trying to directly connect to all the other users of the platform.

Defining Platforms

So let's finish off by taking these ideas back up a level and settling on our own working definition of platforms. What do we usually mean when we talk about platforms? First, a platform is typically using a cloud-based, hosted, pay-as-you-go model, rather than being some software that you've bought, you install it yourself, good luck. And yes, there are exceptions. Some platforms can support being installed on premises using your

organization's own hardware or in a hybrid model where the vendor takes care of some parts of it, and you take responsibility for other parts. But this is a very small percentage of situations. It's always unique to a specific customer and beyond the scope of this introduction. And these days, if I walk into a meeting or conversation and I hear about some new platform, I'll assume we are talking about a managed, cloud-based, hosted service, unless you tell me otherwise. Two, we assume any platform is customizable, it can be extended, and that it supports and encourages this with documentation and samples and support. And just as if you download an app from an app store, you expect that app to have a well thought-out user interface, or UI, to make it easy for a human being to use that software. Well, with a platform, we expect a well thought-out API, or application programming interface, which makes it easy for developers to write code to interact with that software. And we assume that this customization and using the platform, it's all self-service. We don't have to go and pay the vendor to make these customizations just for us. We can make the changes ourselves because they've designed the platform to be customized. And we recognize all platforms require planning, configuration, customization, and often education and training. But just purchasing a platform isn't a fix in itself. They are a support structure. They help you fix a problem. They don't by themselves fix that problem. And at the end of the day, whether you're looking at a platform that focuses on a specific business function, or a platform for general computing and software development, or even a platform that helps integrate other platforms, you're wanting someone to have thought about this problem deeply, that they've worked through the use cases, they've tried to support the most common functionality. And where they understand that it's probably still not perfect for you, maybe it provides 90% of the features you wanted, but you can then customize it, extend it, change it to add that extra unique 10% of functionality, and that their support for doing that is built into the system, built into the platform. So with platforms, if you take the time to evaluate them and implement them well, they can be a great accelerator, improving speed to market, they can save you a lot of time and money. They can even give you features you didn't realize you wanted, allowing you to concentrate on what makes your business unique. But with that, let's wrap up. Hope you found this introduction useful and that we've either gone into some areas you hadn't explored or perhaps expanded or shifted some of the ways you think about the idea and the benefits of platforms. Thanks for joining me. I'll see you next time.

TQ Enterprise Platforms Aftershow

Enterprise Platforms Introduction

Adobe, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP, Workday, and Salesforce. What do all these have in common? Well, among other things, these are the platform partners that make up IPS. But what is IPS and why these six platforms? And, honestly, what is a platform? Well, discover these answers and more coming up right now on the Enterprise

Platforms TQ After-show. Welcome back to our virtual TQ HQ. Today we're talking about enterprise platforms. It's a big topic, but I'm looking forward to learning much more about it. And my cohost for today's discussion is Emma McGuigan, our Intelligent Platform Services global lead. Emma, thanks for cohosting with me today. --Well, thank you for having me, Sarah, and I realized the name of the job title is quite a mouthful. But I'm really excited to be here to discuss enterprise platforms. --I know we're going to learn a lot. And, normally, Paul's my cohost, but, Paul, today you're a guest. How does that feel? --It feels great. I'm looking forward to being part of the panel, and Emma gets all the hard work. So this is fantastic. --Yeah, I bet that is how it feels. Well, we did bring in a third expert because we like to have as many experts as we can on this show. So Rachael Bartles is also joining us today. And, Rachel, you are the lead of enterprise function networks and programs. So welcome to the TQ HQ. --Well, thanks a lot, Sarah. It's great to be here with Emma and Paul as well.

What is Enterprise Platforms?

So, Emma, let's get started. We say enterprise platforms, and that sounds honestly a bit nebulous. So as the global lead of our Intelligent Platform Services, or maybe we just say IPS because that's easier to say, what do you think is the first thing we should know about enterprise platforms? --Well, I think the first thing to know is the thing you're already figuring out, is that platforms can mean a lot of different things. And in the TQ context, we're going to define a platform as a piece of technology that connects people and other technologies together. --Okay. I mean, that sounds easy, but I know there's a lot of different types of platforms. So when we think about even things like Twitter and Facebook, I mean, people call those platforms. Paul, is that right? --Yeah, I think that's a really key thing for everybody to understand is the word platform is used in a lot of different ways. So we're talking today about enterprise platforms, but sometimes people use platforms to refer to social platforms, Facebook, Instagram, all those types of of applications. Sometimes they use it to refer to collaborative digital native apps like Uber, Airbnb, etc. Sometimes those are called platforms, and sometimes they talk about cloud platforms, the MAAGs in our terms, Microsoft, Amazon, Alibaba, Google, and the others. And those are cloud or cloud service provider platforms as well. But today we're talking very distinctly about enterprise platforms, and you'll hear why they're so important to Accenture. This is an area that's over 40% of Accenture's business, and it really is a One Accenture thing that cuts across everything we do. --Well, and if social media is a platform, I guess we're all using platforms every day. So that's an interesting thing to think about. And, Emma, as we think about enterprise platforms, I think people are starting to understand it. But maybe we could talk a little bit more about what we mean by that. --Yeah, well, Paul said it right. We can define an enterprise platform as a piece of technology or the framework that is connecting people, processes, and other technologies together to deliver the strategic goals of the business. Enterprise platforms or intelligent platforms are the heartbeat of the organization. They're supporting the transactions, the processes, the customer experiences, and bringing it all together. And they really help businesses more easily gather data to generate the right insights about their business to allow them to think about the future. --Wow, so they do quite a bit. So when we think about an enterprise platform, Emma, are there specifically components that make up those platforms? --Yeah, I think it's

helpful to think of enterprise platforms broken into three kinds of processes for any business. And the first one I would think about his experience, which is usually the customer or the employee's interaction with the platform. Like when we go on Amazon to buy something, this is our experience, our interaction with the front end or the front door or the customer-facing part of that business. There are enterprise platforms that focus mainly on these types of experiences for business. The second thing to think about is core processing. That's usually comprising of how employees of a company interact and maintain the system of record, the core element of the business, making it possible for that business to fulfill its mission. For example, the core business for a retailer is managing their supply chain. You've made that order on Amazon. But how are the goods going to get from the cellar to the warehouse to back out to you as the consumer? There are enterprise platforms that make it easier for businesses to really interact with their vendors and better manage that entire supply chain. Core processing is all the things that businesses need to do in order to run and operate their business, like hire and train staff, manage finances. I mean, I could go on. And, finally, the third piece of this for any business is their collection and management of data in order to generate those useful insights we talked about earlier. So meaning there are enterprise platforms that really help businesses capture, curate, and consume data to form insights about your data. --Emma, if I could just jump in to add to what you said, I think that's really important the way you framed it up. And that's a perfect way for people to understand enterprise platforms--experience, the core processing, and the data and insights that come about from it. And back to your point, I really wanted to also just expand on your idea of the heartbeat of the organization. The enterprise platforms are the key functions and processes that drive what the business does, the finance and accounting, the HR, the supply chains, etc. And that's why these enterprise platforms really are the heart and soul of the business. They encompass those elements you talk about, and we talk about these as part of our Intelligent Platform Services business because that's how we think about taking the enterprise platforms and packaging them with everything that Accenture does in our One Accenture way, and delivering the value of these enterprise platforms for our clients. --Yeah, I love that. So as a user, we are probably all very familiar with that experience piece of the platform. But there is a whole lot more behind it, and I think Shail Jain would be very excited that we're continuing to talk about data. And when we talk about capture, curate, and consume, the three Cs, data seems to always be a topic that comes up in our after-shows.

Starbucks and Enterprise Platforms

But I'm wondering if we can maybe bring this to life a little bit. And, Rachael, maybe you could help us put all of these pieces together and talk about what that would look like in practice. --Yeah, great, Sarah. And I'm really going to build on what Emma and Paul were actually talking about because I'll use a retail example because at one stage, even if we've all been to a retail store. So let's take Starbucks as an example. They have an app that lets you order your coffee, tea, food online, and you could then pick it up in store. That's the part that you, as the customer, actually see, the ordering process, the interface, and Emma and Paul both spoke about the word 'experience.' But that's just an app. And the real power of that app is in its integration back into the inner

workings of the retail store. So when you walk into the coffee shop, and so those are, and that ties into the core processes that Emma and Pool were both talking about. So when you think about core processes, that's about selling coffee or tea or those pastries that you really don't want to be eating. That includes managing supply chain, right, because that coffee, that tea, the milk, the soy, whatever you take in your coffee, the sugar, your pastries, they all have to arrive at the store. That's part of the supply chain, inventory management, knowing how much you've actually got in the store or in nearby warehouses so that you can actually supply. Then there's payments processing and so on. It also includes processes that help keep the business running day to day, like finance and accounting. Somebody's got to make sure the bills get paid. Somebody needs to make sure that we've actually, we're compliant with all the rules and regulations. And we need to make sure that we're managing talent because you don't really want to walk into a Starbucks and have an awful experience with either an untrained barista or the person taking your money or your card. And so those are all part of the core processes that are underpinned by an enterprise platform. And then, on top of it, a modern business runs on data, and this is what actually helped Starbucks really fine tune what it does because it's the data capture element that allows them to track what customers really like best by their main actions of buying things. You know, it helps them understand when you are most likely to walk into a store and what you're most likely to buy. And then they can really tailor their offerings, their products and services to enticing you back into the store or letting you into the secret handshake that lets you order something that's not on the menu at Starbucks. I'm sure there are a few of you who've actually had that happen to them. So this is, like, really important because that helps them add revenue, and it really helps them drive revenue growth, which is one of the key things our clients are trying to do. They want to grow their business. The second thing it lets them do is actually optimize their operations and manage their cost base effectively. And so having a robust platform really helps them do both of those things.

IPS Intro

Now, in most cases, a business will use more than one platform because different kinds of processes require different enterprise platforms. So the six ones we focus on in IPS are just the ones that you listed right at the beginning, Sarah--SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, Salesforce, Workday, and Adobe. And those are all enterprise platforms. --Yeah, that makes sense, Rachael. And, Emma, that's where we focus on those six major platform vendors. Is that it? Are those the only enterprise platforms we think about. --In the Intelligent Platform Services business, we focus on six major platform vendors and the work we do with them. But there are two things to note here. Intelligent Platform Services is a term that's internal to Accenture. It's meaningful because you've heard about the intelligence in these enterprise platform providers, but it's important we don't focus this foundational understanding based on our own internal organization structure. And the second thing to know is in IPS, we're always looking at the next ones who are coming through. And in supply chain at the moment, we're working, as an example, with some newer partners who are coming through who are part of this whole enterprise platform ecosystem of Accenture's. --And, Emma, we've got it in supply chain, and we're building it out in

finance, for example, because each of the functions have got a smaller set of really important technology partners that we are also focusing on. --And just one other point that I wanted to make. I think that's really interesting the way Emma and Rachael just went through the IPS, platforms and partners that we have. But if you should think about IPS as an evolving growing capability because SAP as a platform, but there's a constellation of other partners that we often work with when we deploy SAP, same for any of the other partners. And our IPS teams are bringing together the expertise in how to deliver around those. And we're also thinking about how to add new platforms like supply chain that we're moving into with new capability of IPS. So it's going to continue to evolve as the enterprise platform space continues to evolve.

A Strategic Decision

Yeah, and that makes sense. So I think I'm getting it. But now my next question, Emma, is how do you choose? So now we have all of these different enterprise platform partners. Do you just pick one? Do you pick multiple? How do you figure that out? It seems pretty complex. --Well, it is complex without a doubt. And I think the first step is to acknowledge the level of choice and complexity that we're looking at. When people hear platforms, many people think deep technology, which, of course, it is. But choosing the right platform or the right collection of platforms that work best for your business is a very strategic decision. And that's where a business needs to start, with their decision about platforms, not at the technical level, but really thinking about their strategic priorities. Where is that value they're trying to unlock? What are the challenges they're facing that they're trying to solve for? And, really, honestly, that's where we've seen many businesses struggle, not making their enterprise platform decisions in a strategic way and a core part of the overall business strategy. And this is why IPS is working so closely with SNC within the functional network space. That's why Rachael and I are here today, and we can talk at length about the partnership we have because we drive this strategic decision making of the enterprise platform by really focusing on the challenges, the challenges that individual client is facing. They really are the heartbeat of any business, which I know is a term we keep using. But it's really what we see and what we believe. --Yeah, and, I mean, it makes sense. Of course, you think about technology first when we're talking about enterprise platforms, but you never want to think about something that big and that significant without thinking about how it fits into your strategy. So that does make sense. So when we think about platform, and we think about using it to run your entire business, I guess, Paul, why wouldn't a company go to an enterprise platform? It seems like an easy choice, right? --Yeah, it's a question of what for?, I guess is the way to think about it and how to use the platform, back to the strategy and such that Rachael and Emma talked about. And you have to look at the history a little bit in context, too. So it started out back when I started with Accenture many years ago, no jokes about that from the panel, we didn't have enterprise platforms. One of my first projects was a custom CRM platform. The next one was a custom finance application. We wrote it in COBOL on mainframes because packages didn't exist. Then in the 1990s, the first wave of enterprise platform packages started to develop, and they were very specific. They were for payroll. They were for some of the first CRM packages, etc. Then in the year 2000, in the 2000s, in that decade, they all consolidated into broad suites of

enterprise capability where they could support multiple functions. It might not just be HR. It might be HR combined with finance and supply chain. So we had suites. And then in the 2010s, that evolved to cloud based. People start moving to Software as a Service led by Salesforce and Workday and the others that were the pioneers in the cloud in the pure cloud model. But that's what everybody is now building on the cloud with the Software as a Service solutions. And that's been the evolution in the industry. So these used to be things you could do, you had to do custom, but now it's typically much more efficient to use the packages. The packages are increasingly industry relevant, and part of the value Accenture adds is the industry expertise and tools we'll talk about in a minute that allow us to really deliver more value faster for clients in bringing that business-specific nature of the platforms to our clients. The one final thing I'd say is that we're at a moment where platforms are more relevant than ever because companies are going through this digital transformation. They've done a lot of the digital things, but most companies haven't done the guts of their businesses. They haven't redone most of their underlying enterprise platforms for digital and cloud and what's ahead, and that transformation of our clients as they redo kind of their plumbing, so to think about it, the core and the heart of their business for digital, it's been a big driver of our IPS business. That's why it's 40% of Accenture that's been growing fast. And that's even more true ahead as more and more companies continue to go down that path. So this is the moment, really, for the enterprise platforms to lead new digital foundations of our clients. --But, Paul, I wonder, something you said there struck my interest. So we used to have custom solutions. So when companies choose an enterprise platform, are they losing some of that customization? Is it less fit for their needs if they choose one of these enterprise platforms? --Great question. And there's always some some tradeoffs that you have to make. If you're writing something custom, you can do it exactly the way you need it for your business. But the reality is the success rate and business value of all those custom projects was very poor because it was so complex and so costly to do everything so customized. So, yes, there are trade-offs to be made, and that's one of the things we're expert in helping our clients see is how do you make the right tradeoffs so you're driving business value and implementing a package in a way that's going to be cost effective and driving value and the right outcomes for the business? So you ask a very good question. That's at the heart of why Accenture is so good at enterprise platforms, why our IPS services are so important. --Yeah, it's interesting. There's a trade-off, but there's huge value in that trade-off.

Standardization Drives Innovation

So, Rachael, maybe you could help bring this to life a little bit more and give us some examples from a functional standpoint. --Look, I mean, it's really interesting that Paul talked about this need for standardization because the reality is standardization is actually the foundation for innovation. And our clients found that when they had totally customized systems and everybody was doing something different and the data wasn't well integrated, that the reality is they couldn't actually innovate. And we've got a long-standing relationship with Dow as a company, and I still remember, I mean, and this is 20 years ago, Dow did a major merger. And there was this big decision about, and they're an SAP, and there was this big question, and, Paul, I'm sure you remember this from

the chemicals days. They made this decision about do they move on to a later version of the software, of SAP, that Union Carbide, which is what the company they were merging with, had, or would they stay on the older version that was fully integrated, fully standardized across Dow? And it linked to all their other systems. And they took the decision to actually take the acquisition and put them back onto what Dow was running because the standardization would allow them to drive more value. And this is a lesson that Dow learned really early on, and a lot of our other clients are still on paths to actually achieving that. And we see it even, later on because Dow and DuPont merged to be a joint chemicals manufacturing company called DowDuPont. And then they split off into three separate organizations. They split into Corteva, which is an agricultural products company, so they make seeds and chemicals that actually support farming. Then there's Dow, which does materials science, and DuPont, which focuses on specialty chemicals. And we were actually asked by DuPont and Corteva to separate all the systems and help them establish their own IT systems, their own platforms that were actually designed to support a different type of business. So this also included their manufacturing execution systems, the ERP. It also included their process historians and the quality management systems, including what for them is a very critical core lab information management system. As you can imagine, the core lab management system was really quite complex, given the conglomerate that they were. So they were running a number of different platforms, again, a theme here, such as SAP and the process historian. They were also using Aspen Tech, and that needed to be integrated as well. And Aspen Tech is part of the team that Emma mentioned earlier around some of the core other systems that we need to be really familiar with as part of our supply chain practice. So we also helped them migrate all of this over to Microsoft Azure's cloud platform. And so through a very carefully planned site-by-site migration, DuPont and Corteva ended up with seamless integration between Azure, as well as their core lab info systems. And this was really important because that's part of their core processes, and they design and develop new products all the time, so they need to actually be tracking that through their lab info system, but also quality control, which is absolutely crucial as they're selling products and services into diverse other industries. And so what this meant for DuPont was that they traded extreme customization for far more transparency and the ability to actually roll out new products much faster, which then, again, drives their revenue growth and helps them actually optimize the cost all through a really secure data exchange process. Again, data is a big theme of this. And now DuPont spends less time chasing bad info, bad data, and fixing quality issues, and they can actually really drive the strategic insights about how they should change their products, what services will be more interesting to their customers, and actually drive growth in their business that way. --Yeah. Dow is a fascinating study. I was actually on the Union Carbide transition, so they have had quite a transformation journey. And, Rachael, I love this idea. Standardization allows for innovation. That is a great concept to think about. And, also, when you gave this example once again talking about Microsoft and Azure, so, again, we're seeing that overlap with our MAAG partners. Paul, what do you think about that? --Yeah, that's a great point. And I'd like to pick up on the standardization drives innovation point. That is really the point. When people were building all these custom systems, the only way to get innovation was to do it all by yourself. When you're on an enterprise platform, particularly in the new world of cloud and Software as a Service, you're getting new innovations every quarter typically. You're getting new capabilities, and you're benefiting from the platform.

Again, it's the platform effect that we talked about with enterprise platforms and the other types of platforms. And that's, Rachael makes a fundamental point, which is why enterprise platforms that move to the cloud in particular, it's so important. And then on your example or the specific question, Sarah, on the MAAGs, yeah, there's a real convergence here because the hyperscalers are driving all this capability, and some of the enterprise platforms, like SAP, are often deployed with the hyperscaler. And these are all typically part of the cloud transformation and digital transformation that our clients are going through.

Benefits of Enterprise Platforms

I mean, these things are all critical, right? But you have to remember that all of our enterprise platforms are going to be cloud based soon. That means it's going to be Software as a Service, platforms that auto-update off-prem. Now if you go back to Rachael's story, that means more and more enterprises will be benefiting from not having to focus on installing updates to their enterprise solutions and actually pulling on the insights to have that quicker turnaround on product development. And it allows clients to unlock a lot of value in other ways through having that cloud-based platform. They benefit from the technology advances that the platform companies make without actually having to worry about making their own technology advances. I like to tell clients that it's not about giving up something, but it's about gaining a whole new world of possibilities and a whole new world of value. --So, yeah, it seems pretty straightforward then: A good enterprise platform is going to mean good business, right? --It definitely, definitely can. But it is not a given. When an enterprise platform innovates, it pushes the client to innovate and move off their legacy systems. Changes in the platform mean changes for the business, and that can be a very good thing. Once you realize that your platform can be your innovation partner, it can become the beating heart of your business, and you can tap into a lot more possibilities for the future, but you have to take that step to move to that enterprise platform and migrate from those legacy systems. --Yeah, and I imagine that introduces a lot of change for the company, for the business, for the people working in that company and changing to that new enterprise platform. But as you said, Emma, when you make that change, there's a ton of possibilities. So could you expand a little bit on that? Tell us about what some of these possibilities might be. --Well, what I'd like to do is explore three ways in which a good platform partnership can open up for the future. And, first of all, it can help the business tap into new sources of growth. And Rachael's already taken us to this new source of growth somewhat with her story about the greater possibility to move much more rapidly in their different organizations around new product development. The second thing a good platform can give us is the ability to unleash the full potential of what the business has already. There are lots of ways in which a resilient and powered-up platform can boost a business's untapped capabilities and take advantages of the resources it already controls. And the enterprise platform just helps you do that faster. And, thirdly, a solid platform can radically transform the way a business works, driving automation through all of those data insights, helping its employees, its people, or its customers have different experiences and be more efficient. And that makes it much more efficient for the enterprise, and it can allow the enterprise to be much more responsive than it was before. --Okay, so I like how you broke that down, Emma. Three things that we need

to think about. It allows companies to tap into new sources of growth that it might not really know about or think about, unleash that full potential of what the business already has, and then, finally, transform the way the business works.

Pandora, Vodafone, NHS

Let's start with you, Paul. Tell us a little bit more about how you think a platform can do really help a business tap into a new source of growth. --I'll just give you an example to make it really simple. And an example is Pandora, and this is the jewelry Pandora, not the music Pandora. And their challenge, it aligns perfectly with what Emma just said. Their challenge was their complex environment of many different vendors, hundreds of applications from dozens and scores of vendors, thousands of servers meant that the business was too slow in introducing new products and services to their customers, particularly the digital and online services that they needed to offer. So they needed to go through a transformation of that heart and soul of how they interacted with their customers. And that's what they did. And they went through an 18-month transition working with Accenture on Microsoft Azure consolidating other enterprise platforms. And as a result of that, they really simplified the environment. They got their new digital heartbeat in place with their new enterprise platforms, and they're now driving new sources of growth by agility and moving faster. They can now do new products in weeks rather than months to over a year before. And that's at the heart of what we're trying to deliver and what our clients need. --Well, I think anything that helps deliver jewelry faster has got to be a great thing. So thanks for that example, Paul. Rachael, maybe you could talk us through the next one. How does an enterprise platform really help a company unleash their full potential, what they already have? --Look, that's a really great question, Sarah. I mean, as Emma mentioned, there're lots of ways that a resilient and powered-up platform can boost a business's capabilities and really take advantage of resources it already controls. The reality is all of the functions in a business, whether it's the supply chain, the finance department, HR, the IT department, the front-end sales, marketing, R&D, all of those functions are going through a massive change in how they do things and what they can actually drive, and that's driven from data availability, those new algorithms, the automation, etc. So there are some really big trends, including sustainability and responsible business that are really causing all these functions to pivot. And what we're now finding is that our clients are really looking at their functions and their platforms to say, How does this help me pivot faster? So one particular example is we worked with Vodafone who are a big telco giant. Some of you may be using their services if you have a mobile phone. And we actually helped them conduct SAP's largest ever migration. They wanted to revamp their finance operation because what they wanted to do was pivot finance from being just a bunch of people who were counting things to people who are really driving insight to the business, so helping the business manage performance and provide insight. And so what we helped them do was move to SAP S/4HANA and actually revamped their entire finance operation. So we actually created a new and better user experience and actually looked to improve the work lives of the employees in their finance division. And they needed their global finance system to actually stay functional throughout the entire process. So we help them through that migration. The points being made

earlier about change management are absolutely crucial. We managed to do it with no disruption to their business. But the real success was actually in the process efficiencies and evolutionary potential they actually gained. So they could take away non-value added tasks from their finance employees, upskill them to actually be more in the business partner area. And that actually boosted the speed and agility of the finance division. And it actually freed up those employees. --That's a great example. I mean, Vodafone really did unleash their full potential of something they already had, their employees, so that people can work on other, more likely human-type needed work. So great example. Thank you, Rachael. And I think we've got one more example then. Emma, if you can talk about that third piece that you mentioned where enterprise platforms allow companies to transform the way their business works. Could you give us an example of that? --Definitely. And if we go all the way back to the start of the pandemic last March, I have an example right here in the UK about how Accenture acted very quickly in response to the outbreak of Covid-19. We helped transform the way the UK's national health care provider, the National Health Service, or the NHS, worked and collaborated. And, in fact, we took several roles to help them do that. But the one I want to talk about today is how we worked with the UK charity called Help Force, who needed to quickly match donations that they were receiving for all 78 NHS trusts, and with our help in only two weeks, Help Force scaled its service with a new Salesforce service cloud platform. And what that allowed them to do, all these donations that were coming in of personal protection equipment, all sorts of things coming in, we were able to automate that input via a website and improved visualization and reporting, employees could more efficiently capture, allocate, manage, and track requests and donations. If you like, it was like a super-matching service. The platform helped make employee collaboration easier. It recorded notes and tasks, as well as providing a clear view on who was working on what. That gave employees time back to focus on healthcare patients versus managing donations and data. The work was pivotal in unlocking that much needed support businesses could offer to an already stretched NHS, and the helpful assist program facilitated over £1.8 million worth of goods and services to frontline and NHS staff. --Wow! I mean, that is a radical transformation, and to think that they did it in the middle of the pandemic. That is an amazing story in how Accenture really partnered with them so they could get back to their number one priority, patient care. What a really powerful example.

Why Accenture?

So these examples have been wonderful, really bringing to life what companies can do with an enterprise platform. But I think it also has highlighted that it's a lot to figure out. I mean, it's not an easy decision. There are a lot of choices. And so, Emma, I'm going to guess this is what we, at Accenture, do really well is partnering with our business to help them work through that. And I'm guessing that's what IPS is. --You're absolutely correct, Sarah. IPS works most closely with the six major platform service providers or partners. They help to bring everything we've been talking about to life for our clients. As an Accenture business, we have decided to develop deep partnerships with these six major platform businesses, and we're nurturing some smaller ones along the way. But it's SAP, Oracle, Salesforce, Microsoft, Adobe, and its Workday. We believe that these six

businesses are vitally important to our clients given their position in the market. They lead the market and are essentially the industry standards. Of course, we have many other platforms' relationships as well, and we've talked about some of them. But these six are where we take an active investment in our time and people and our relationship with each of these partner organizations. We treat them like they're our clients because we go to market with them to deliver the value for our own clients. For example, we skill entire workforces of our own people to be certified experts in these platforms, and we co-develop, co-innovate, and co-invest with these partners to bring more innovative solutions for our clients within a given industry or within a given function. --The other thing that's important for everybody on this call to recognize is the market position that we have with each of the IPS partners. We are a leader and really the leader with almost every one of the platforms in terms of the size of our business, the talent, and certifications, and expertise that we bring, the delivery quality that we bring, the way that we work with our partners' largest clients and projects to deliver the really transformational outcomes. So we are really number one in all these platforms, and we're extending our lead in being number one by continuing to focus on the new areas with all the partners and continuing to innovate as they innovate in the new capabilities and new solutions that they have. So a really important takeaway is for all of us to understand that that's a key advantage that we have in positioning ourselves with our clients going forward and continuing the leading relationships with the partners. --Yeah, and Paul, the other thing I think about is we, as Accenture, have implemented almost all of these platforms ourselves. And so what a great testament when we say, Look at what we've done within Accenture based on the breadth and the depth and the scale and the scope that we have in Accenture. That story often resonates really well with our clients as well when we can say, We've done it. Let us tell you our story as well. So it's a great addition to that story. --And just one add to that is that it's not almost all, we use all of these projects in Accenture as part of running our business, the most recent being the Workday implementation that many people would be familiar with, which has really transformed our talent and employee experience. --Yes, thank you. And so we talk about the technology and the partnerships, and all of that is really critical. But, Rachael, I think you would say there's more than just technology, right? This is where we also think about what Accenture can bring to the table when we think about our deep industry and functional expertise. So tell us a little bit more about that. --Look, Sarah, it's a great point because the reality is time and time again, if we just go with technology, we get beaten by our competitors. And the power of Accenture is our ability to actually marry deep technical knowledge and insight with deep industry and functional context because the technology operates within that context. And if you don't understand that context, the technology will not deliver on what you actually want it to do as a business. --So we need to deliver, Rachael, in other words, on the promise of human ingenuity and technology. --To coin a phrase, Paul, most certainly, yes. So, for example, Santander is one of the largest banks in Europe. They have a workforce of about 200,000 people across 24 different countries. And each country had its own solution and its own technology, which fragmented all the processes, prevented a unified workforce experience, and made it really difficult for them to actually manage the workforce. And this use of different tools stifled internal collaboration. Remember, standardization provides the platform for innovation and was really contrary to the company's global vision and their corporate values of simple, personal, and fair. And so we partnered with Santander to deploy, just like we did for ourselves, a single

Workday solution hosted in the cloud. And this actually, just like our own desire to have a unified positive workforce experience, meant we could actually deliver an integrated approach which put their people at the heart of their business transformation. So workers became their own managers, freed up their HR department to focus on really talent development and workforce planning. So we used Workday to actually simplify, standardize, and automate the company's HR practices. So they're functional processes were underpinned by the technology. We were able to do this successfully not just because we have Workday certified experts, which is really, really important, don't get me wrong. But we really understood the banking industry. And we really understood the core banking processes and functions that the workforce needed to do. And that really helped Santander to figure out what were the key things they needed to do during this migration and implementation. And it allowed us to speak in a language, in this case, banking, that really meant Santander could understand it and really facilitated the change management process. So think of our industry and functional experts as translators for the business and the processes that need to be executed. So, Paul, how's that one for delivering on the promise of human ingenuity and technology? --I think you nailed it. --I think that was great, Rachael, and I love that, the translators to the business. I mean, we talk about how important technology is, and it is, like you said. But having that deep industry and functional knowledge is what really then drives the value for the business. So thank you for that example.

myConcerto

Okay, so I'm going to use this aftershow as I usually do as a way to get more information about something that I've been wondering about. And, Paul, I'm going to admit, I should know more about this, but I'm hoping you can talk to us a little bit more about myConcerto. I've heard of it. I kind of know what it is. I think it's related with platforms, but I'm hoping you can tell us more about it. --It's a really important topic, so I think it is important we get into this a little bit here in the aftershow. So myConcerto is something everyone involved in any aspect of our enterprise platforms and IPS should know about. It's really our core tool in really accelerating the delivery of value for clients in a very profound way. It helps us get the vision right, get the solution right, get the delivery right, and make sure that we really maximize the delivery of value to meet the client's objective. So, it's a really essential tool. It's a differentiator. It's very highly rated by our clients and the industry analysts who follow us. And it's a market-leading capability that we're continuing to invest in to drive an advantage for us as we move forward. --Interesting. Okay, so let me see if I have this. So it sounds like you could put into myConcerto a particular business need or goal. So let's say HR. We need to fill critical roles, and they're taking too long to hire or the attrition is too high. So then would myConcerto tell me what I could do to overcome these challenges and give me a suggestion for a platform to solve that problem? --Even better. The beauty of myConcerto is that it's a tool powered by data and analytics and real deep industry and function insight. So we've got the benchmarks for industries and functional processes, and so we can tell a client what best looks like, what does best practice look like. We have a process library. We understand what are the right processes to use to deliver on your objectives. And then that's all mapped together with all the other data and insight on the platforms themselves.

Specific accelerators help our clients deliver value faster once they select a platform. So it's everything from helping the client with the journey and frame it based on their goal of being the best at what they do. So we start with that. And then it's picking the best solution. Then it's implementing it to drive in a faster, more effective way to drive more value. And that's really what myConcerto is all about. And the beauty of it is it's not PowerPoint. The state of the art about everything I just described used to be the PowerPoint presentations on which people capture a lot of information. This is a tool powered by data and analytics, where we use the tool to iterate through and tailor the solution and the answer for the client and to deliver. And that's really important. And it's really the way of working in the future. --I love it. And, Rachael, when we think about myConcerto, how does that fit in with the functional side of the house? --Look, I adore myConcerto. I've been using it in client work for many years when Phil Hazen started driving it in the first place, and we pioneered a lot of this stuff in the chemical sector. But for me, we're using myConcerto as a repository for all of the functional insight and the industry insight so that every time we get new narratives and new points of view about functional transformation, we put it back into myConcerto so that it is live, and really people can use that as the framework. And so then we update the business case materials that are in there. We update the process details so that every time we're actually building a wealth of knowledge that allows our clients to see really up close and personal how, when they change their processes using a software tool like SAP or Oracle or Microsoft, that they can actually see what that does to their business and how it allows them to go, back to the point, grow their business, how it allows them to actually optimize their costs or manage some of the other things they need to do to be a responsible business. And so I'm a huge fan of myConcerto, and it's a great asset. And as Paul said, it's not PowerPoint. --Well, I am never more amazed when I get on these shows, and I really hear about how creative and innovative we are. So myConcerto sounds like we bring all of the experts together, and with a few clicks of a button, we get the expertise, the guidance, the inputs, the strategy on how to help our clients. But we're doing it all virtually where and when we need it. And we don't actually have to get a bunch of people together in a room. I think I've got it, Paul. --There's more also, and I'll just put a quick plug in for a few other things. We're going to have a future TQ coming up on automation where we're going to get into a lot of our tools more, and we'll go back to myConcerto a bit. We'll also talk about myNav, which is our tool for the cloud journey which comes into play here as we help our clients go to the cloud as part of this. We have myWizard, which is our market leading tool for AIOps and automating all the things we do around delivering our services and running our business. And we've got myIndustry, which is a tool, kind of think of it as a sibling to myConcerto, that's taking industry-specific transformations that work often in industries that do have a little bit more custom to them. So it's kind of a sibling to myConcerto. And then, finally, the one I want to mention is SynOps because nobody runs enterprise processes better than Accenture operations. And Accenture operations has something called SynOps, which is their tool, which is amazing, for driving really the vision of intelligent operations and the most effective processes for our clients. That's a great tool. And everyone should know that we're integrating all these tools together. It's often multiple of them involved in any specific client project we have, and that's why we're going to have a future TQ to go into just this topic more deeply. --That would be great. It is amazing how many of these

innovative tools that we brought to life, and they're really driving value for our clients and helping them make those strategic decisions and bringing it all together with human ingenuity of course.

Key Takeaways

Okay, well, I think we could continue to talk about enterprise platforms forever, but we probably need to wrap up the aftershow. So we talked about a lot today. I think the two key things that stood out for me are that we're helping our clients choose the right platform in a strategic direction, so thinking about their business strategy, and then, obviously, harnessing the power of our humans to make that technology even more powerful. So as we always do, let's wrap the show with getting a few key takeaways from each of you so that as people leave the aftershow, they have something to go away with. So, Rachael, let's start with you. What would be your one key takeaway you want people to leave the show with? --So my key takeaway is that the whole enterprise platform space is a bit like inclusion and diversity. You need to hang out with people who aren't like you. So if you understand platforms from a tech perspective, then make sure you're hanging out with somebody in strategy and consulting who actually really understands the processes and functions, and learn a bit more about how the processes and functions role in this particular space. And, again, if you're in strategy and consulting, you need to understand the technology enough so that you can link the two together and be a translator. And that goes for operations and interactive. So, remember, if you're not showing up at your client with somebody who comes from a different part of the practice, you're doing yourself and our clients a massive disservice. Anyway. --Love it. Yes. I mean, we have a lot to learn from each other and always take someone with you that knows something you don't know. I think that's a great takeaway. Paul, what about you? --My big takeaway is I love that Emma's team captain of this topic. I think we have to use this formula in TQ a little bit more. But two points that I'd make, one is what Rachael just made. She said it much better than I could, but I was going to say One Accenture, but she just gave a very eloquent description of why we need to be One Accenture with IPS and with our enterprise platforms. The other thing, I would say is this is the future. We're just getting started with IPS enterprise platforms. It's over 40% of the business. We're the market leader. We have incredible differentiation and innovation. And this is going to be a big driver for our clients and for us for all the reasons we talked about. So it's an area to stay tuned to, learn more about, and a great area to build a career in as well. --Great. And don't worry, Paul, you're going to be my cohost again soon. You don't get out of it that easily. But, Emma, over to you. What would be your key takeaway? --So my key takeaway is that our partners are our best friends, and we do it better when we turn up at our clients with them in the same meeting, not just because we agreed a client was going to be a priority. And when we really do the co-creation, when we co-invest, when we co-present, that's when we really drive real differentiation. And only Accenture has the breadth and the relationships to do what we do. So whilst this is a complex subject, you need to take your friends, have that I&D view that Rachel talked about. You need to take your partner mates with you and just come and be part of the whole IPS network that we have because I do think, as Paul just said, it's a great place to build a career. --Awesome! I think that is a great point to end on. So that is a wrap for our enterprise platforms TQ aftershow. I know I learned a ton. I hope all of you did as

well. Huge thank you to Emma, Paul, and Rachel. I appreciate all of the insights and expertise that you gave us, and this is just the beginning. And I think that's one thing we learned in this space. There's going to be a lot more to learn, so make sure that you're looking for more information. You can go to the TQ home page. There are case stories. There's a study guide. There are links to a lot more resources. So continue your learning and make sure you join in again soon for our next topic. There's always more to learn. This is Sarah Dugan signing off from our virtual TQ HQ.

Enterprise Platforms In Review

What are Enterprise Platforms?

What our Enterprise Platforms? Imagine standing center stage at a big award ceremony. It's the best spot in the house to see and connect with everyone around you. Likewise, an enterprise platform for business is the best framework and foundation to connect people, products, systems, and applications so they can operate as a single cohesive unit. Platforms are sets of enterprise software, tools, and architecture designed to run and grow a business. That's it. They are frameworks that support transactions, processes, customer experiences, data, and insights. You've probably heard of them before. SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, Salesforce, Workday, and Adobe are all enterprise platforms. Some platforms help you manage HR, others handle your finances, and others help you sell your goods and services. Most businesses use a combination of enterprise platforms to take advantage of each platform's unique capabilities. Platforms run processes, usually one of three kinds. Core processes manage day-to-day business activities, internal operations, and back-office activities, like IT or accounting. Experience processes focus on users, both customers and employees. They ensure that systems like CRM are easy to use, engaging, and enable collaboration. And then data and insights processes collect and manage data in order to generate valuable insights for their business. Enterprise platforms are the heartbeat of a business. They enable stakeholders to smoothly work with data, other systems, and each other.

What do Enterprise Platforms do?

What do Enterprise Platforms do? Platforms run processes, usually one of three kinds. Core processes manage day-to-day business activities, internal operations, and back-office activities, like IT or accounting. Experience processes focus on users, both customers and employees. They ensure that systems like CRM are easy to use, engaging, and enable collaboration. And then, data and insights processes collect and manage data in order to generate valuable insights for the business. Enterprise platforms are the heartbeat of a business. They enable people to smoothly work with data, systems, and each other. Let's look at platforms in action. All companies have to pay their employees. That's why it's important to record the time we spend at work accurately, and enterprise platforms help us do that. When you enter your time into your company's timecard platform each pay period,

you are using the front-end interface. This is an experience process. Core processes occur when your time is billed to a client or project. The WBS element, or work breakdown structure, you use determines who is billed for your time and how much. The company then uses that data to track chargeability across teams, geographies, and business units. This provides them with data and insights that influence their recruitment strategy. Do they need to hire more people? Do they need to distribute them differently? Think of enterprise platforms as a workflow, a way to integrate applications, functions, and databases across an entire organization. They create a seamless experience for both customers and employees. Honestly, what don't they do?

Why do Enterprise Platforms matter?

Why do Enterprise Platforms matter? Choosing an enterprise platform can be life or death for an enterprise. A company needs to choose a platform partner or partners that will help realize its potential in alignment with strategy and goals to think beyond the now and embrace a platform that releases the full capability of what a cloud-based solution can provide. There are two ways a business can take advantage of cloud-based enterprise platforms, through optimization or transformation. Optimization. A business can benefit from cloud-based platforms through increased productivity and optimization, leading to predictable outcomes and lower costs. Transformation. A company can create growth by using cloud-based platforms to help connect to more data and technology than they could with their legacy on-site systems. Cloud-based platforms also fuel business innovation, uncovering new opportunities, making better use of technology and focusing employees on more strategic work. Choosing the right cloud-based platform for a business is a strategic decision that can lead to future growth and benefits. Without it, a company can struggle to grow and get left behind because the competition strategically implements intelligent cloud-based platforms that help them fuel innovation, create opportunities, increase productivity, and lower costs. Platforms power success.

How are Enterprise Platforms applied?

How are Enterprise Platforms applied? Enterprise platforms are the heartbeat of all aspects of a company's business. It's data, tools, teams, and processes. They are applied widely to help customers achieve their goals. But it's not simple or easy to integrate enterprise platforms into a business. It can be difficult and complex to transition to a platform-based system. Each platform has to be carefully balanced within the enterprise to be successful. In order to be successful, the platform must do five things. Number 1, it has to provide continuous global accessibility. Platforms have taken the weight of society's need for information, allowing us to stay connected, work, operate businesses, and stay entertained. Number 2, it needs to enable changing behaviors. As our digital behaviors rapidly evolve, it's necessary for platforms to be flexible and innovative enough to keep up with them. Number 3, the platform must support building long-term customer relationships. Platforms can rekindle customer confidence by providing stability, enabling normalcy, and demonstrating responsible behavior toward information and people. Number 4, a platform has to provide trusted information and combat against bad actors. Because platforms manage and disseminate large amounts of data and information, they must be

secure and rigorously governed. And number 5, it must enable a rapid return to growth. Because of the rapidly changing technology landscape, companies will turn to platforms for their resiliency, scale, cost effectiveness, enterprise services, and audience. If any one of these elements is out of balance, it can lead to skyrocketing costs, poor decision-making, and inhibits the ability to react quickly to changing needs of the enterprise and the market. Correct platform application is the key to business success.

How do Enterprise Platforms work?

How do Enterprise Platforms work? Enterprise platforms improve the quality of your experiences with the business. They run the processes that keep the business going. They optimize the balance between supply and demand, and they provide insights about how to improve the business in the future. But how does that work in real life? Let's find out. You are about to wrap your son's birthday present, a new remote control car. But oops, you forgot the batteries. You need them right away, but you're also in the middle of setting up for his party and a dozen little rug rats are going to arrive at your house in a few hours. Amazon Prime now can save the day. Let's track how that happens step by step. You open the app, find the batteries you want, and add them to the cart. Amazon Prime now uses a CRM, or customer relationship management platform, in the background to make sure that you had an enjoyable, efficient shopping experience. It's so seamless, you don't even notice how much work is going on behind the scenes. This is an experience process. Once you click Buy now and place the order, Amazon Prime now indicates the movement of funds from your account to Amazon's account. This is a core process. Amazon Prime now uses an ERP, enterprise resource planning platform, to plan their tasks, manage their supply chain, and determine how many delivery drivers they will need. Your order gets processed, and a nearby fulfillment center is notified. The ERP runs a lot of logistical processes to make sure that the batteries are reserved for you. The stock is adjusted. It calculates the shopping time, gives you a delivery estimate, and creates a tracking number. These are all core processes too. Somewhere very near your house, a local warehouse packages up your batteries and calls one of its many delivery contractors to transport your package. Amazon uses an HCM, or human capital management platform, to manage their pool of drivers and keep tabs on their job performance. You've guessed it, a core process. As soon as the driver is out the door, Amazon Prime now is already using the data it collected, curated, and consumed about your purchase to predict buying trends and improve their inventory planning. This is a data and insights process. A couple of hours later, the batteries are delivered to your house, just in time. Your son loves his gift, and he can play with it right away. Thanks enterprise platforms.

What is Accenture's role in Enterprise Platforms?

What is Accenture's role in Enterprise Platforms? Part of our business is dedicated solely to enterprise platforms. It is intelligent platform services, or IPS. Our goal is to deliver value to our clients in the fastest ways possible. By employing a unique combination of capabilities that we have developed over many years in the platform space, we have the most advanced skills in the market with over 107,000 people and 84,000 certifications across 6

platforms deployed to 54 countries, the deepest, most trusted relationships with platform partners who share our vision, practical know how, commitment to functionality, and the industry experience, the most powerful insights into the way industries work and how functions are evolving. We partner with client leaders to support them through their transformational journeys. The best cutting-edge proprietary tools, like Accenture's MyConcerto, which are used to co-create transformational enterprise solutions. We use the client's data and insights combined with the best thinking from our experts, tools, and technology to deliver technology platform transformation and value. Together, all of these capabilities help us deliver forward-thinking outcomes for our clients, develop proprietary assets that help our clients differentiate themselves in the marketplace, and create technological solutions that push the boundaries of what is possible.

How do Enterprise Platforms combine with other technologies?

How do Enterprise Platforms combined with other technologies? When platforms connect with other technologies, tools, and data, it results in a huge value to companies driving innovation. Let's see how. Platforms & Cloud. Platforms are the cloud. There is no way to harness the value of cloud without having platforms involved somehow. Businesses cannot take advantage of all that the cloud has to offer without platforms. Data, storage, analytics,etc., it all requires a platform to bring all of it together for a business and deploy it. Otherwise, all you're doing is storing your files off-site. Platforms and Security. As customers engage with platforms to conduct business in their daily lives, security is paramount to ensure customer confidence and trust. For businesses, this is an increasingly complex business problem. Each interaction is an opportunity for platforms to validate and reward the trust that is being placed on them or to damage it. That's why security must always be a top priority with any enterprise transformation. Platforms and Data. Today's platforms enable companies to access and use real-time data to personalize a customer experience. Data-driven companies require data-driven platforms that are flexible and scalable. That's how they can capture data from a variety of sources, process it, and then put it to use. The data itself defines the blueprint for the best platforms to meet the business's needs, what it needs, why, when, and how. Platforms and Platforms. Yes, that's what I said. Platforms work with other platforms to harness the multiplier effect. Companies grow by embracing multi-platform integrations to better meet customer needs, create new revenue streams, and build a more competitive position in the market. Platforms. They don't just combine with one technology. They combine with all of them.

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accenture **Accenture**

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