ORACLE STORIES FROM THE CLOUD PODCAST – SAMIA TARRAF

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

MICHAEL HICKINS:
Hi, everyone, and welcome to Stories from the Cloud. I'm Michael Hickins, formerly of the Wall Street Journal, and with me is Barb Darrow, formerly of Fortune. With us today is Samia Tarraf, who's the North America, Oracle Business Group Lead, Accenture. Thank you very much for being with us today, Samia.

SAMIA TARRAF:
Thank you for having me.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
I wanted to start by asking you about some of the research that you guys have done. You have something called the Accenture Tech Vision Research Report, and I'd love to know something about what you found, that you found interesting and new about things like AI, and innovation, all the topics that I'm talking about now. But I think that we've sort of reached a point where we've heard those terms so much, and it'd be really nice to hear if there's anything new to be said.

SAMIA TARRAF:
You got it. Well, let me give it a shot. Well, let me take a step back, Michael. I'm going to just frame a little bit about what the Tech vision is for your listeners, because it's something that we're really proud of. Accenture has been publishing the vision for about 20 years, and the intention of it really is to identify emerging technology trends that are going to impact our market. Right? Companies, governments, healthcare

organizations, all of it.
And generally, we look at three to five years out. But in the wake of COVID, we are seeing an incredible pace of technological change that's impacting all the trends that we're going to talk about, and just a brief bit on it. It is hundreds of views around the globe from luminaries, Accenture leaders, our client leaders. We are trying to look at our external advisory boards, professors, venture capitalist and entrepreneurial companies, so we get a nice range, and we can look at it from all dimensions.

And so it's published every single year, and we use it to set our own vision. And then what we do within our Oracle business, is we look how Oracle, and what they're doing with their platform and their cloud, how they're bringing that to life. So as a little teaser trailer, we're going be launching the Accenture Tech Vision for Oracle next month, which is-- let me say that one more time. The Accenture Tech Vision for Oracle, which is titled: Lighting The Way, The Rise of the Tech Powered Date Driven Change Leaders. And here's the thing to start to get to your question.

We found in the Tech vision this year that the world is hungry for a new kind of leadership. That's the truth. A new kind of leadership. It was an incredible 2020. We were at a pivotal moment of both technology and history, and our ability to adapt is going to sort of be critical in our client's ability to adapt, and then ours is going to be critical in our ability to move forward.

Two truths became evident, I would say, if we took kind of bubbled it all the way up.

The first is more companies have embraced that axiom that every business is a technology business, which that awareness is important. And then exponential transformation is going to reshape industries and the human experience, which is critical. So with that, I would say that four realities emerged from the trends this year. The human experience, sustainability, technology.

You'll often hear Julie, our CEO, talking about Cloud, and compressed transformation. And then the future of work, really, which is that what we're dealing with in the wake of COVID. As it relates to artificial intelligence. What we've seen, is that only a fraction of businesses are really leveraging all of their AI potential. Right? If we looked at some numbers I wrote down here, were 84% of executives believe they won't achieve their growth objectives unless they scale their AI, and 75% of executives believe they are at risk in their own business because they are not scaling their AI.

For those that are using it successfully, we actually believe that they are going to lead the next generation of business because they're going to have the platform already to imagine what's possible. I think everybody listening hopefully knows, Oracle released AI embedded in their Cloud in release 13. I actually love telling our clients, you know you've bought AI, right? And the power of what that can do against a business case, or around how you can reshape your business is fantastic.
And I could if you want me to. I can go into some of the stuff we've done with some of our clients, but I think that is sort of the power of what AI can do today.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
I do think it's funny that a lot of people don't know that they have AI.
About one thing that you talked about. You mentioned the future of work. Where do you think-- I mean, where do you think we're headed? We have, in the United States at least, opened up a lot over the last few weeks, and I think there's a lot of companies that, maybe six months ago, thought Oh, I don't know if we'll

ever go back to work. And now all of a sudden, you have Jamie Diamond saying, we're all going back to work on Thursday. And you have a lot of companies that are suddenly thinking about going back, as opposed to, we're going to stay hybrid, or maybe we'll never go back. And I'm just wondering, what do you see out there?

SAMIA TARRAF:
I'm going to say two things. I love this question. I'm going to say something with a little bit more candor, and then I'm going to talk a little bit about my sort of COVID-19 perspective. With candor, I think that two things have happened. One, we had to quickly see and adjust the way that we work, and what we thought was possible, we could even do even more. Can you imagine what we just went through without technology, right? It was so fast. And our own company, we deployed 200,000 laptops in six days to make sure that our clients' back office systems were still running. Right? It was unprecedented what we dealt with.

And I think from a cost perspective, from what the possibilities are perspective, that was tremendous. And it changed the way you look at work. I will also say, though, that the power and importance of human connection can't be minimized. I don't think that people are affected full time not connected to one another, not connected with their teams or their clients. So I do think that we will see a change in how we work. I don't think for us, and like the consulting world, for example, I don't think we will go to back to where it was, where it's every week we're traveling somewhere. I think we will see a bit of a hybrid model, but I do think that the importance of human connection, and what it's like to be in a room with somebody, and be able to see their face, and partner with them when they work is critical. And that's the stuff I say to my team.

BARB DARROW:
So first of all, I just want to ask, how many laptops did you say? 200,000?

SAMIA TARRAF:
Mhm. 200,000.

BARB DARROW:
Oh my God. OK. So AI is a term that gets thrown around a lot. It's tortured and bent out of shape, and as a former reporter, I used to think there's a lot of there's a lot of hyping this. So I would love to get either a concrete example of either how Accenture uses AI, or a customer, and truly why it's AI and not-- a lot of things get called AI that aren't really AI.

SAMIA TARRAF:
There's two ways you could look at it, actually. So we've done-- if you look at somebody's finance processes, right? If you look at somebody's finance processes, and we did this with the largest hotel chain in the world, which is now live. If you look at that, and you look at where and how you can optimize, and we often see AI in partnership with machine learning, which is fantastic. But that also requires a beautiful look at your data.

When those three are in line, you can see levels of efficiency drawn and gained that were not previously able to be done, and I would say, also, Barbara, the second piece of that, and this isn't in here, but you'll see it on our Tech Vision-- is when you look at digital twins. Right? When you can match that, and you can look at full scale imagery and processing of organizations-- this one is a hotel. When you can look at a digital twin, and you can look at how they might be able to operate more efficiently with Oracle Cloud using AI and machine learning, you're able to mirror that without the level of work is the word that's coming to mind, but the level of work. And you're able to apply that to our client's working environment.

And we've done that in the hotel industry, we've done that in the utilities industry. Utilities is where we've done it the heaviest, and we're now looking at how we do it in health. So those are kind of three examples.

BARB DARROW:
So in the hotel example, though, what does that mean? So that means if a guest comes in, you see what they've liked in the past, and you predict other things they might like in the future? I'm just trying to get like a nuts and bolts example, if possible.

SAMIA TARRAF:
Yeah. I mean, I'll use one of AI and IOT. If you are in a hotel room, and your fridge stops working, actually having that fridge send a message-- this does not require a human interaction, right? A back office message to the supplier saying this bridge is broken, and actually having that trigger an alert to say, hey, supplier. Go fix fridge and room 2A. Before, that required a lot of human intervention, but when you get that process right in the background, that can happen all without human intervention until that person shows up at your door to fix the fridge.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
So, I guess that implies that there's also some connectivity between the back office and the front office, so that while all of that is going on in the background, someone at the hotel can call your name, call your room and say, hey, we know your fridge is on the fritz, and it'll be fixed within whatever time frame. And in the meantime, we can bring you a new one, or whatever the case may be, right?

SAMIA TARRAF:
And that's one, and then I also, Barbara, if you're talking about direct customer service, we deployed-- at some of these hotel chains, it's almost like a mini robot. And I think his thing was Jibo. AI and machine learning to understand the most frequently asked questions of the customers, what was near in the area that they might want to go, places they want to have dinner, and you could have a human and machine, which was our Tech Vision I think two or three years ago now, interacting. And that machine is learning, and then all the Jibo's and all of the rooms were communicating with one another, much like we use our own technology on our phones.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
So I need to just interrupt to pay the bills here, because we have a sponsor who needs to be mentioned. This podcast is part of a series called 'Designed for change with Oracle Cloud. Make the Cloud and data the engine of business agility.' So Samia, you were talking about data. And the interaction between humans and robots which is, I think, a really interesting topic. Is that part of a new wave of

how people are starting to use data, not just, OK. Data, analytics, crunch, crunch, crunch. Here's some potential things you could do in light of this data? That there's sort of a new paradigm being built?

SAMIA TARRAF:
So I think of data in two ways. There's what I think you were describing, Michael, which is the security storage and management of volumes of data. Right? And there's that whole piece of it, where we really look, and what Oracle can do there with their autonomous Cloud is second to none. The second part of that though, on the front side is how do you use your data to drive insights? Data is the new oil, is what I always used to say. And every transformation is a data transformation.

And I would say that most, if not all of Accenture's clients are looking at how to improve the management of that data to make sure they're getting value out of it. And that could mean creating new analytics to buy back a lot of data, automating what was previously requiring human intervention, or tailoring offering specific things around utilities and industries, for example. And I would say that as you're migrating to the Cloud, it's actually providing an opportunity to transform how you manage data.

So I'm going to give you a couple examples of how we've done it. One that I'm very proud of is AWARE. So in the wake of all of the racial injustice last year, in building on the belief, really, that diversity is our strength, and that talent has many faces, which I'll say all the time, we created something on Oracle Cloud HCM and analytics. It's called the Accenture Workplace Accountability Resource Experience, and it is a place where you can derive insights and metrics, and then we say accountability to drive a more diverse and equitable workforce. So you can use discovery, comparative, and predictive analytics to look at your diversity goals, whatever they might be, and then measure them. Right? Because what you measure, you can improve. And the technology itself is actually compatible with other HR solutions. So HR Cloud, even Workday, PeopleSoft & SAP. That's one big thing.

There are optimizers in AWARE that can identify savings through the accounts payable process, or this is similar to AWARE. Excuse me. So this is the second example. Provide visibility into leakage like payment terms, missed early payment discounts, off contract procurement. There are assets we've been able to optimize for our client's capital, that save millions of dollars. So we just went live at one of our largest oil and gas companies, and we identified close to $500 million in year over year savings, just by using that data.

BARB DARROW:
I love the HCM example. I don't know if this is included in that, but I attended a conference pre-pandemic, and one of the things I picked up that I never thought about before, was how the way job descriptions are worded in ads leads to-- what is the word I'm looking for? Leads to non-diverse people applying.

SAMIA TARRAF:
That's exactly true.
So looking at ethical systems and ethical leaders is critical to make sure that we are building into what we're doing, gender diversity, of all types of diversity, and abilities. And that we are being mindful and very intentional about how we are solving those problems. So I'm passionate about that, Barbara, so I'm with you.

BARB DARROW:
So when you first go into a new account, I'm just curious. What are the first two or three questions you get from-- I don't know if it's the CEO, or the CIO that you go-- I'm just curious what's top of mind for people these days in these accounts.

SAMIA TARRAF:
That's interesting. So—

BARB DARROW:
That can be across everything. Technology.

 SAMIA TARRAF:
The truth is it depends on the level. Right? It depends on the level that you're speaking to. When I have-- I had the true privilege of interviewing Julie Sweet, Accenture CEO and Safra Catz Oracle CEO in January. And I asked that question. I said, what are the conversations

that you are having in your conversations with your peer group? The world leaders? And it was sort of those. It was very like, what are the solutions that are going to help us drive our market? How are we going to look at the future of talent? It is a war on talent, and I always use this example.

We had a CFO of a Motor Company say, I'm not competing with other motor companies. I'm meeting with Google, and Facebook, and these really cool places that people want to work. So the future of talent is one. Industry is another big one, because now that we are in a world where technology is-- if the pace of its moving, it's how do we verticalize that and make it specific for our industry? And then for me, I hear a lot of multi-cloud discussions. Like what are we going to look at? And how are we going to live in this world where we've got multiple Clouds? And how is that going to look?

So it's everything from big business discussion and solutions, all the way to big tech questions, and then I would say as you start to get clicked down into Senate, kind of your C-suite on the business side, versus the C-suite on the technology side, you hear different things, right? You hear more, how am I going to enable my business through technology in this new world? And on the technology side, it's how do we stay at the forefront? How do we drive cost out of operating this business so we can better support our business partners? I could go on forever, Barbara.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
But I just wanted to circle back for a minute, because you talked about the war for talent. And we talked earlier about remote work, and I remember talking of a few years ago to the CIO of a big manufacturing company based in the Midwest, and he was saying that this problem is kind of what you were saying, but people are going to the coasts, because that's where the jobs are. I'm wondering whether this remote work the people have suddenly discovered-- and it's funny because Barb and I have been working remotely in Oracle since we joined here well before the pandemic, but for a lot of companies, this is a total discovery.

Is this remote capability a way of leveling the playing field for old industry versus Facebook, Google, blah, blah, blah?

SAMIA TARRAF:
Yes, Michael, Is the short answer. It is leveling it, because we can get access to people we've never had before. And we can figure out, and be more accommodating truthfully, for people who have skill sets that we need that might not be in a location that we want. Now, I will pepper that with I truly do believe that-- I always go back to human connection, right? I'm like, there is an element of needing to have people develop-- when you're developing your culture, as an organization or clients, or Oracle, having a way to do that in person will be critical. It's not going to probably look the same, but developing that culture is still very critical.

And I'll tell you right now, we're hiring at an unprecedented rate at Accenture. And that's a conversation I'm having every day with my team. We've got something that we've called the culture maker club because I want to make sure that as we are bringing in New human beings in the business, we are both embracing them so that they feel like they're showing up for work as their best self, right? And they can give everything they've got. Also, that we're bringing down that culture, that culture of excellence and how we deliver for our clients, right? That can go away because we're all remote.

BARB DARROW:
So my last question, and it's an obsession with me. So our company is looking at multiple Clouds, and tell us why.

SAMIA TARRAF:
So a couple of different answers. Yes. Yes is the short version. Multi-cloud is happening. Multi-cloud is happening, full stops. Our clients and broadly, organizations are now recognizing that a single Cloud strategy, it's not even achievable when you look at an entire application landscape. So that's point number one.

So what we're seeing is, rather than striving for a single Cloud, our clients are evaluating which Clouds are right for their requirements. Right? Which SaaS Cloud is going to fit the necessary

functionality? Which platform solutions are going to provide the right innovation so that they can do any-- we'll call it custom dev, and then what infrastructure is a good fit for their mission critical workloads?

So that's kind of it at the very highest level, and then what I wrote down here too, was while the one Cloud to rule them all myth has been busted, I do think people are seeking strategic opportunities to minimize the transfer of data of Clouds, so there are advantages to aligning applications to avoid latency, and really costly data egress charges as they're looking at that. So that's my portfolio, right?

You're looking at a enterprise capability across SaaS, PaaS, and IaaS, and so that, to me, is why the Oracle Cloud is the one for the enterprise, because you can have it all.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
Wow. You know. I mean, it's funny because inside baseball for our listeners, but we've had to reschedule this call a number of times, and I just want to say that it was worth it.

SAMIA TARRAF:
Thank you.

MICHAEL HICKINS:
That wraps things up for today, and I just wanted to remind our listeners that this podcast is part of a series called, Designed for Change with Oracle Cloud, The Cloud, and Data, Engine of Business Agility. And I wanted to thank Samia so much. Thanks for being with us, and thanks to our listeners.
If you like what you just heard, please find us at Stories from the Cloud, wherever you get your podcasts. Thanks for listening, and I hope to hear you hear us again soon.