

Uncertainty Persists; Long-term Demand Continues to Remain Strong

Accenture's reported Q3FY24 results stood below street expectations on all financial and operational terms. Revenue for the quarter stood at \$16.5 Bn, registering a de-growth of 1% YoY (in US\$ terms) but growth of 1.4% YoY in local currency. It registered GAAP EPS of \$3.04 for the quarter while adjusted EPS stood at \$3.13, reporting 3% YoY de-growth. The company's new bookings stood at \$21.1 Bn, Managed Services book/bill was at \$11.8 Bn, and Consulting Business bookings stood at \$9.3 Bn. Overall Q3FY24 bookings have been resilient, indicating robust demand despite prevailing uncertainties. The company has robust client relationships, which is reflected in the top 30 clients with quarterly bookings of ~ \$100 Mn. The company continues to witness strong demand for Gen AI – the great accelerator of reinvention – with over \$600 Mn in new bookings.

Management Guidance: The management guided for Q4FY24 revenue of \$16.05-\$16.65 Bn, implying a growth of 2% to 6% YoY in CC terms. The management retained its FY24 revenue growth guidance at 1.5% to 2.5%, indicating tepid growth in FY24 (1% to 3% previously), aided by uncertainty in macroeconomic conditions and spending delays. Accenture expects GAAP operating margin for FY24 to be in the range of 14.8%, remained same compared to its previous estimates of 14.8%, indicating pricing pressure. This is despite easing supply-side constraints. The company's adjusted operating margin, which excludes an estimated \$450 Mn for business optimization costs in FY24 and \$1.1 Bn in FY23, stood at 15.5%, an expansion of 10bps over FY23 numbers.

Verticals Performance: Communications, Media & Technology: Revenue for the vertical stood at \$2.76 Bn, reporting a decrease of 4% YoY. **Financial Services:** Revenue for the vertical stood at \$2.89 Bn, a decrease of 8% YoY. **Health & Public Service:** Revenue for the vertical stood at \$3.52 Bn, up 8% YoY. **Products:** Revenue for the vertical stood at \$4.98 Bn, posting an increase of 2% YoY. **Resources:** Revenue for the vertical stood at \$2.31 Bn, delivering an increase of 3% on a YoY basis.

Outlook: IT services are definitely facing near-term challenges on account of rising inflation rates and potential slowdowns. However, the dovish stance from the Fed indicated an infusion of liquidity, which will lead to a quicker recovery. Hence, **the medium to long-term outlook still remains intact, which is likely to be led by massive technological shifts and rising dependence on the systems.** The company continues to see **growing demand for Cloud Migration, ERP moderation, and Generative AI.** **Enterprise's need for implementing digital transformation and under-penetration in those areas are the company's levers for long-term growth.**

Impact on Indian IT Services Companies

We believe strong investments in new edge technologies such as Digital Technologies, Cloud Transformation, IoT, Generative AI, and Machine Learning across verticals will support and accelerate the company's revenue growth moving forward. However, near-term macroeconomic headwinds may impact the automation spend across verticals. On a vertical front, the BFSI vertical witnessed a stronger impact due to a fall in the rural banking sector from North America. On the other hand, the **Manufacturing, Automobile, Retail, Pharmaceutical, and Healthcare industries are witnessing strong traction across geographies.** IT services companies in India are receiving strong deal bookings despite near-term challenges. **While we remain optimistic about the long-term prospects of IT services companies in India, near-term challenges may impact their earnings growth momentum.**

Our picks from Largecaps: **HCL Tech; TCS**

Our picks from Midcaps: **Coforge; Persistent Systems; and Cyient**

Our picks from Largecaps: **HCL Tech; TCS**

Our picks from Midcaps: **Coforge; Persistent Systems; and Cyient**

Omkar Tanksale

Research Analyst

Email: Omkar.tanksale@axissecurities.in

About the analyst**Analyst:** Omkar Tanksale**Contact Details:** omkar.tanksale@axissecurities.in**Sector:** IT Services**Analyst Bio:** Omkar Tanksale is BE (Computer) and MBA (Finance) with over 8 years of research experience in the IT sector**Disclosures:**

The following Disclosures are being made in compliance with the SEBI Research Analyst Regulations 2014 (herein after referred to as the Regulations).

1. Axis Securities Ltd. (ASL) is a SEBI Registered Research Analyst having registration no. INH000000297. ASL, the Research Entity (RE) as defined in the Regulations, is engaged in the business of providing Stock broking services, Depository participant services & distribution of various financial products. ASL is a subsidiary company of Axis Bank Ltd. Axis Bank Ltd. is a listed public company and one of India's largest private sector bank and has its various subsidiaries engaged in businesses of Asset management, NBFC, Merchant Banking, Trusteeship, Venture Capital, Stock Broking, the details in respect of which are available on www.axisbank.com.
2. ASL is registered with the Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for its stock broking & Depository participant business activities and with the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI) for distribution of financial products and also registered with IRDA as a corporate agent for insurance business activity.
3. ASL has no material adverse disciplinary history as on the date of publication of this report.
4. I/We, Omkar Tanksale, MBA (Finance), author/s and the name/s subscribed to this report, hereby certify that all of the views expressed in this research report accurately reflect my/our views about the subject issuer(s) or securities. I/We (Research Analyst) also certify that no part of my/our compensation was, is, or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendation(s) or view(s) in this report. I/we or my/our relative or ASL does not have any financial interest in the subject company. Also I/we or my/our relative or ASL or its Associates may have beneficial ownership of 1% or more in the subject company at the end of the month immediately preceding the date of publication of the Research Report. Since associates of ASL are engaged in various financial service businesses, they might have financial interests or beneficial ownership in various companies including the subject company/companies mentioned in this report. I/we or my/our relative or ASL or its associate does not have any material conflict of interest. I/we have not served as director / officer, etc. in the subject company in the last 12-month period. Any holding in stock – No
5. ASL has not received any compensation from the subject company in the past twelve months. ASL has not been engaged in market making activity for the subject company.
6. In the last 12-month period ending on the last day of the month immediately preceding the date of publication of this research report, ASL or any of its associates may have:

Received compensation for investment banking, merchant banking or stock broking services or for any other services from the subject company of this research report and / or;

Managed or co-managed public offering of the securities from the subject company of this research report and / or;

Received compensation for products or services other than investment banking, merchant banking or stock broking services from the subject company of this research report;

ASL or any of its associates have not received compensation or other benefits from the subject company of this research report or any other third-party in connection with this report.

Term& Conditions:

This report has been prepared by ASL and is meant for sole use by the recipient and not for circulation. The report and information contained herein is strictly confidential and may not be altered in any way, transmitted to, copied or distributed, in part or in whole, to any other person or to the media or reproduced in any form, without prior written consent of ASL. The report is based on the facts, figures and information that are considered true, correct, reliable and accurate. The intent of this report is not recommendatory in nature. The information is obtained from publicly available media or other sources believed to be reliable. Such information has not been independently verified and no guaranty, representation of warranty, express or implied, is made as to its accuracy, completeness or correctness. All such information and opinions are subject to change without notice. The report is prepared solely for informational purpose and does not constitute an offer document or solicitation of offer to buy or sell or subscribe for securities or other financial instruments for the clients. Though disseminated to all the customers simultaneously, not all customers may receive this report at the same time. ASL will not treat recipients as customers by virtue of their receiving this report.

DEFINITION OF RATINGS	
Ratings	Expected absolute returns over 12-18 months
BUY	More than 10%
HOLD	Between 10% and -10%
SELL	Less than -10%
NOT RATED	We have forward looking estimates for the stock but we refrain from assigning valuation and recommendation
UNDER REVIEW	We will revisit our recommendation, valuation and estimates on the stock following recent events
NO STANCE	We do not have any forward looking estimates, valuation or recommendation for the stock

Disclaimer:

Nothing in this report constitutes investment, legal, accounting and tax advice or a representation that any investment or strategy is suitable or appropriate to the recipient's specific circumstances. The securities and strategies discussed and opinions expressed, if any, in this report may not be suitable for all investors, who must make their own investment decisions, based on their own investment objectives, financial positions and needs of specific recipient.

This report may not be taken in substitution for the exercise of independent judgment by any recipient. Each recipient of this report should make such investigations as it deems necessary to arrive at an independent evaluation of an investment in the securities of companies referred to in this report (including the merits and risks involved), and should consult its own advisors to determine the merits and risks of such an investment. Certain transactions, including those involving futures, options and other derivatives as well as non-investment grade securities involve substantial risk and are not suitable for all investors. ASL, its directors, analysts or employees do not take any responsibility, financial or otherwise, of the losses or the damages sustained due to the investments made or any action taken on basis of this report, including but not restricted to, fluctuation in the prices of shares and bonds, changes in the currency rates, diminution in the NAVs, reduction in the dividend or income, etc. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Investors are advised to see Risk Disclosure Document to understand the risks associated before investing in the securities markets. Actual results may differ materially from those set forth in projections. Forward-looking statements are not predictions and may be subject to change without notice.

ASL and its affiliated companies, their directors and employees may; (a) from time to time, have long or short position(s) in, and buy or sell the securities of the company(ies) mentioned herein or (b) be engaged in any other transaction involving such securities or earn brokerage or other compensation or act as a market maker in the financial instruments of the company(ies) discussed herein or act as an advisor or investment banker, lender/borrower to such company(ies) or may have any other potential conflict of interests with respect to any recommendation and other related information and opinions. Each of these entities functions as a separate, distinct and independent of each other. The recipient should take this into account before interpreting this document.

ASL and / or its affiliates do and seek to do business including investment banking with companies covered in its research reports. As a result, the recipients of this report should be aware that ASL may have a potential conflict of interest that may affect the objectivity of this report. Compensation of Research Analysts is not based on any specific merchant banking, investment banking or brokerage service transactions. ASL may have issued other reports that are inconsistent with and reach different conclusion from the information presented in this report. The Research reports are also available & published on AxisDirect website.

Neither this report nor any copy of it may be taken or transmitted into the United State (to U.S. Persons), Canada, or Japan or distributed, directly or indirectly, in the United States or Canada or distributed or redistributed in Japan or to any resident thereof. If this report is inadvertently sent or has reached any individual in such country, especially, USA, the same may be ignored and brought to the attention of the sender. This report is not directed or intended for distribution to, or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or other jurisdiction, where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law, regulation or which would subject ASL to any registration or licensing requirement within such jurisdiction. The securities described herein may or may not be eligible for sale in all jurisdictions or to certain category of investors.

The Disclosures of Interest Statement incorporated in this document is provided solely to enhance the transparency and should not be treated as endorsement of the views expressed in the report. The Company reserves the right to make modifications and alternations to this document as may be required from time to time without any prior notice. The views expressed are those of the analyst(s) and the Company may or may not subscribe to all the views expressed therein.

Copyright in this document vests with Axis Securities Limited.

Axis Securities Limited, SEBI Single Reg. No.- NSE, BSE & MSEI – INZ000161633, ARN No. 64610, CDSL-IN-DP-CDSL-693-2013, SEBI-Research Analyst Reg. No. INH 000000297, SEBI Portfolio Manager Reg. No.- INP000000654, Main/Dealing off.- Axis Securities Ltd, Unit No.1001, 10th Floor, Level-6, Q2 Building, Aurum, Q Parc, Plot No. 4/1, TTC, Thane – Belapur Road, Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai. – 400 710., Regd. off.- Axis House,8th Floor, Wadia International Centre, PandurangBudhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai – 400 025. Compliance Officer: Jatin Sanghani, Email: compliance.officer@axisdirect.in, Tel No: 022-49212706.