

Information Technology

Accenture's Q1FY24: No change in demand; retains FY24 guidance

Sector Report

SECTOR UPDATE

December 20, 2023

NIFTY 50: 21,453

Steady start to the year: Accenture (ACN) reported revenue of USD16.2bn, up 3% YoY (1% in LC) in Q1FY24. Revenue was slightly higher than the mid-point of the company's guidance of -2% to 2% (in LC). 5 of the 13 industries grew in mid-single digits or higher in Q1. Consulting revenue was flat YoY at USD8.46bn (-2% in LC), while revenue from Managed Services/Outsourcing grew 6% YoY to USD7.77bn (+5% in LC). ACN posted very strong double-digit growth in security, strong double-digit growth in Cloud and Industry X, and double-digit growth in Song during Q1. Strategy and Consulting reported a mid-single-digit decline, while Technology posted mid-single-digit growth, and Operations stood flat YoY. New bookings stood at USD18.4bn (up 14% YoY; book-to-bill at 1.1x). Consulting bookings stood at USD8.6bn (up 6.3% YoY; book-to-bill at 1x) and Managed Services bookings stood at USD9.8bn (up 21.2% YoY; book-to-bill at 1.3x). The company reported over USD450mn new bookings in Generative AI. Adjusted operating margin expanded by 20bps YoY to 16.7% in Q1. Quarterly annualized voluntary attrition stood at 11% in Q1 vs. 14% QoQ/13% YoY. Total headcount grew by 10,222 QoQ to 743,041 employees (1.4% QoQ/0.7% YoY).

Weakness in CMT persists: Q1 revenue growth was led by Health and Public Services (12% in LC YoY), Resource (6%), and Products (1%), while Financial Services stood flat YoY. CMT declined sharply by 11% YoY. Geography wise, North America declined by 1% in LC due to the dip in Communication and Media, Software Platforms, and Banking and Capital Markets, partially offset by growth in Public Services. EMEA grew 2%, led by growth in Public Services and Banking and Capital Markets, partially offset by the decline in Communications and Media. Growth Markets grew 5%, led by growth in Chemicals and Natural Resources, Public Services, and Banking and Capital Markets.

FY24 guidance: ACN has retained its LC revenue growth of 2-5% in FY24 (inorganic contribution of more than 2% now from ~2% earlier). The guidance assumes no foreign exchange impact on reported USD revenue. The company also retained its GAAP operating margin guidance of 14.8-15.0%. Adjusted operating margin, which excludes ~USD450mn of business-optimization costs in FY24 and USD1bn in FY23, is expected to expand 10-30bps to 15.5-15.7%. ACN expects Q2FY24 revenue to be USD15.4-16 bn (-2% to 2% LC), assuming a negative 0.5% forex impact. The company expects OCF and FCF to be USD9.3-9.9bn and USD8.7-9.3bn, respectively, in FY24.

Earnings Call KTAs: i) Macro and geopolitical uncertainties have slowed the pace and level of client spending for smaller contracts with a shorter duration, especially for consulting services. ACN is also experiencing reduced demand, particularly in CMT. ii) Growth in H2 is expected to accelerate because of investments made in high-growth areas and anticipated ramp-ups of large deals. iii) The company had 30 clients with quarterly bookings greater than USD100mn, with over half in North America. iv) It closed 12 acquisitions in Q1 for a total of USD788mn in strategic areas across geographies. v) GenAI demand continued to accelerate in Q1 with over USD450mn in new bookings. vi) The pace of spending continued to be impacted by macro uncertainties; however, management believes the industry's fundamentals remain intact. vii) UK remains weak and faced greater challenges than management's expectations. ACN plans to diversify it from higher exposure to Banking and Capital Markets currently and pivot to more growth in other areas, aided by acquisitions. viii) ACN has not built any material improvement in discretionary spending and the macro environment in FY24 revenue growth guidance. Guidance assumes mid-to-high single-digit growth in Managed Services and low-single digit in Consulting. ix) ACN continues to see significant demand in cloud migration and modernization, modern ERP, Data and AI, and platforms and security. It further highlighted that only 40% of the enterprise workloads are in the cloud, of which only 20% are modernized, with huge opportunities there in the market.

Read through for Indian IT peers: ACN's performance and commentary are broadly in sync with its Indian peers, suggesting no material improvement in the demand environment with macro uncertainties persisting. NIFTY IT has rallied ~9% in the last 1M, with the majority of this rally coming after the Fed's dovish stance on rate hikes post easing inflation data and likely trajectory. Stable macros and dovish stance reduces the risk to our/consensus FY25 estimates of high single-digit revenue growth in Tier-1 companies, which builds some improvement in discretionary spending. We believe large caps offer a better risk-reward compared with mid-caps. Our pecking order is INFO, WPRO, TECHM, HCLT, LTIM, and TCS among Tier-1 companies.

Dipesh Mehta

dipeshkumar.mehta@emkayglobal.com

+91 22 6612 1253

Ayush Bansal

ayush.bansal@emkayglobal.com

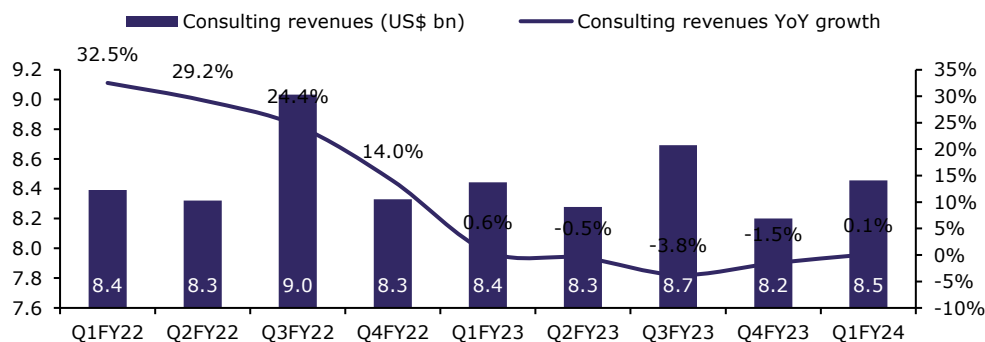
+91 22 6612 1344

Pulkit Chawla

pulkit.chawla@emkayglobal.com

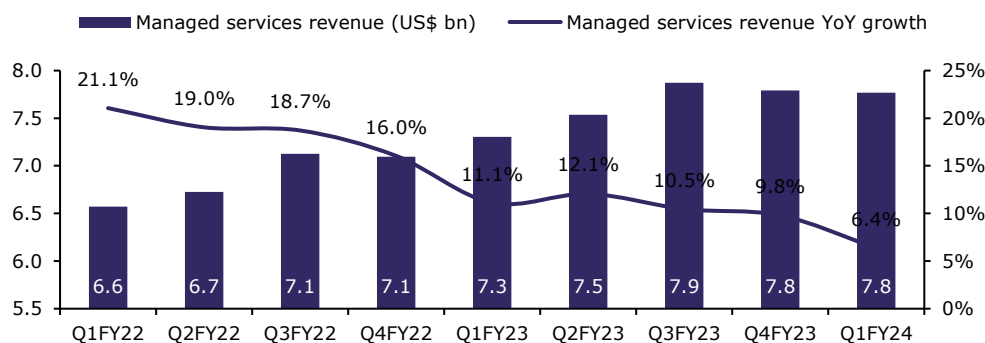
+91 22 6624 2458

Exhibit 1: Consulting revenue growth in LC remains negative for the last three quarters



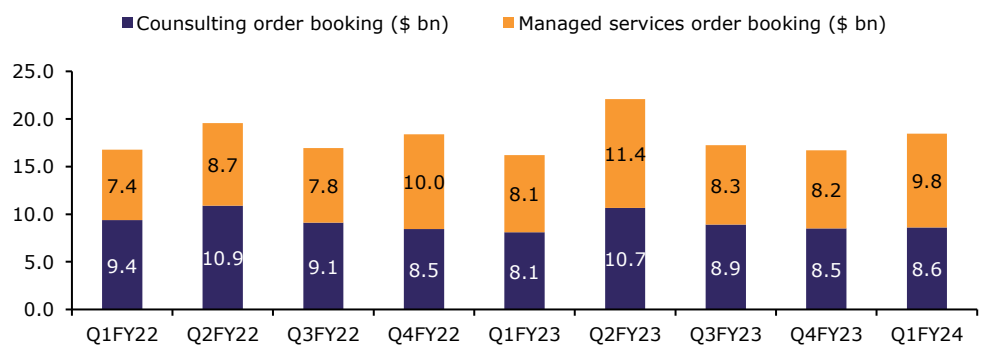
Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 2: Managed services revenue growth moderates further



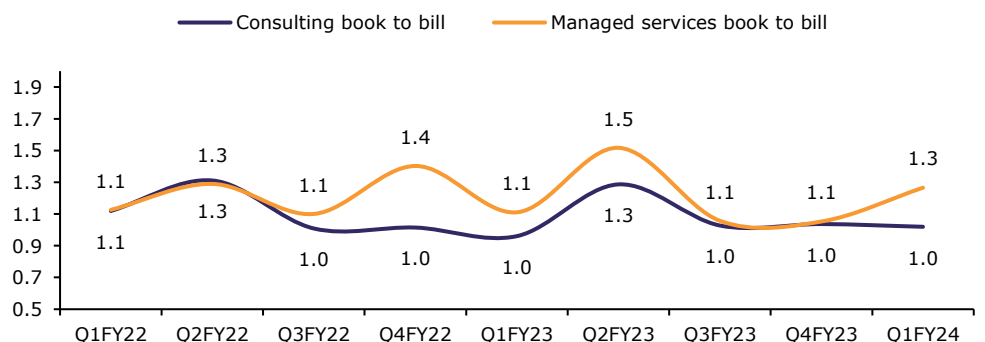
Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 3: Bookings in Q1 grew ~14% YoY (12% LC), with book-to-bill of ~1.1x



Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 4: Managed services book-to-bill (x) inched up to ~1.3x



Source: Company, Emkay Research

GENERAL DISCLOSURE/DISCLAIMER BY EMKAY GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED (EGFSL):

Emkay Global Financial Services Limited (CIN-L67120MH1995PLC084899) and its affiliates are a full-service, brokerage, investment banking, investment management and financing group. Emkay Global Financial Services Limited (EGFSL) along with its affiliates are participants in virtually all securities trading markets in India. EGFSL was established in 1995 and is one of India's leading brokerage and distribution house. EGFSL is a corporate trading member of BSE Limited (BSE), National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE), MCX Stock Exchange Limited (MCX-SX), Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd (MCX) and National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) (hereinafter referred to as "Stock Exchange(s)"). EGFSL along with its [affiliates] offers the most comprehensive avenues for investments and is engaged in the businesses including stock broking (Institutional and retail), merchant banking, commodity broking, depository participant, portfolio management and services rendered in connection with distribution of primary market issues and financial products like mutual funds, fixed deposits. Details of associates are available on our website i.e. www.emkayglobal.com.

EGFSL is registered as Research Analyst with the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI") bearing registration Number INH000000354 as per SEBI (Research Analysts) Regulations, 2014. EGFSL hereby declares that it has not defaulted with any Stock Exchange nor its activities were suspended by any Stock Exchange with whom it is registered in last five years. However, SEBI and Stock Exchanges had conducted their routine inspection and based on their observations have issued advice letters or levied minor penalty on EGFSL for certain operational deviations in ordinary/routine course of business. EGFSL has not been debarred from doing business by any Stock Exchange / SEBI or any other authorities; nor has its certificate of registration been cancelled by SEBI at any point of time.

EGFSL offers research services to its existing clients as well as prospects. The analyst for this report certifies that all of the views expressed in this report accurately reflect his or her personal views about the subject company or companies and its or their securities, and no part of his or her compensation was, is or will be, directly or indirectly related to specific recommendations or views expressed in this report.

This report is based on information obtained from public sources and sources believed to be reliable, but no independent verification has been made nor is its accuracy or completeness guaranteed. This report and information herein is solely for informational purpose and shall not be used or considered as an offer document or solicitation of offer to buy or sell or subscribe for securities or other financial instruments. Though disseminated to all the clients simultaneously, not all clients may receive this report at the same time. The securities discussed and opinions expressed 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.

EGFSL and/or its affiliates may seek investment banking or other business from the company or companies that are the subject of this material. EGFSL may have issued or may issue other reports (on technical or fundamental analysis basis) of the same subject company that are inconsistent with and reach different conclusion from the information, recommendations or information presented in this report or are contrary to those contained in this report. Users of this report may visit www.emkayglobal.com to view all Research Reports of EGFSL. The views and opinions expressed in this document may or may not match or may be contrary with the views, estimates, rating, and target price of the research published by any other analyst or by associate entities of EGFSL; our proprietary trading, investment businesses or other associate entities may make investment decisions that are inconsistent with the recommendations expressed herein. In reviewing these materials, you should be aware that any or all of the foregoing, among other things, may give rise to real or potential conflicts of interest including but not limited to those stated herein. Additionally, other important information regarding our relationships with the company or companies that are the subject of this material is provided herein. All material presented in this report, unless specifically indicated otherwise, is under copyright to Emkay. None of the material, nor its content, nor any copy of it, may be altered in any way, transmitted to, copied or distributed to any other party, without the prior express written permission of EGFSL. All trademarks, service marks and logos used in this report are trademarks or registered trademarks of EGFSL or its affiliates. The information contained herein is not intended for publication or distribution or circulation in any manner whatsoever and any unauthorized reading, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is prohibited unless otherwise expressly authorized. Please ensure that you have read "Risk Disclosure Document for Capital Market and Derivatives Segments" as prescribed by Securities and Exchange Board of India before investing in Indian Securities Market. In so far as this report includes current or historic information, it is believed to be reliable, although its accuracy and completeness cannot be guaranteed.

This report has not been reviewed or authorized by any regulatory authority. There is no planned schedule or frequency for updating research report relating to any issuer/subject company.

Please contact the primary analyst for valuation methodologies and assumptions associated with the covered companies or price targets.

Disclaimer for U.S. persons only: Research report is a product of Emkay Global Financial Services Ltd., under Marco Polo Securities 15a6 chaperone service, which is the employer of the research analyst(s) who has prepared the research report. The research analyst(s) preparing the research report is/are resident outside the United States (U.S.) and are not associated persons of any U.S. regulated broker-dealer and therefore the analyst(s) is/are not subject to supervision by a U.S. broker-dealer, and is/are not required to satisfy the regulatory licensing requirements of Financial Institutions Regulatory Authority (FINRA) or required to otherwise comply with U.S. rules or regulations regarding, among other things, communications with a subject company, public appearances and trading securities held by a research analyst account.

This report is intended for distribution to "Major Institutional Investors" as defined by Rule 15a-6(b)(4) of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Act, 1934 (the Exchange Act) and interpretations thereof by U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in reliance on Rule 15a 6(a)(2). If the recipient of this report is not a Major Institutional Investor as specified above, then it should not act upon this report and return the same to the sender. Further, this report may not be copied, duplicated and/or transmitted onward to any U.S. person, which is not the Major Institutional Investor. In reliance on the exemption from registration provided by Rule 15a-6 of the Exchange Act and interpretations thereof by the SEC in order to conduct certain business with Major Institutional Investors. Emkay Global Financial Services Ltd. has entered into a chaperoning agreement with a U.S. registered broker-dealer, Marco Polo Securities Inc. ("Marco Polo"). Transactions in securities discussed in this research report should be effected through Marco Polo or another U.S. registered broker dealer.

RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION

This report is not directed to, 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 or regulation. Except otherwise restricted by laws or regulations, this report is intended only for qualified, professional, institutional or sophisticated investors as defined in the laws and regulations of such jurisdictions. Specifically, this document does not constitute an offer to or solicitation to any U.S. person for the purchase or sale of any financial instrument or as an official confirmation of any transaction to any U.S. person. Unless otherwise stated, this message should not be construed as official confirmation of any transaction. No part of this document may be distributed in Canada or used by private customers in United Kingdom.

ANALYST CERTIFICATION BY EMKAY GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED (EGFSL)

The research analyst(s) primarily responsible for the content of this research report, in part or in whole, certifies that the views about the companies and their securities expressed in this report accurately reflect his/her personal views. The analyst(s) also certifies that no part of his/her compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to specific recommendations or views expressed in the report. The research analyst (s) primarily responsible of the content of this research report, in part or in whole, certifies that he or his associated persons¹ may have served as an officer, director or employee of the issuer or the new listing applicant (which includes in the case of a real estate investment trust, an officer of the management company of the real estate investment trust; and in the case of any other entity, an officer or its equivalent counterparty of the entity who is responsible for the management of the issuer or the new listing applicant). The research analyst(s) primarily responsible for the content of this research report or his associate may have Financial Interests² in relation to an issuer or a new listing applicant that the analyst reviews. EGFSL has procedures in place to eliminate, avoid and manage any potential conflicts of interests that may arise in connection with the production of research reports. The research analyst(s) responsible for this report operates as part of a separate and independent team to the investment banking function of the EGFSL and procedures are in place to ensure that confidential information held by either the research or investment banking function is handled appropriately. There is no direct link of EGFSL compensation to any specific investment banking function of the EGFSL.

¹ An associated person is defined as (i) who reports directly or indirectly to such a research analyst in connection with the preparation of the reports; or (ii) another person accustomed or obliged to act in accordance with the directions or instructions of the analyst.

² Financial Interest is defined as interest that are commonly known financial interest, such as investment in the securities in respect of an issuer or a new listing applicant, or financial accommodation arrangement between the issuer or the new listing applicant and the firm or analysis. This term does not include commercial lending conducted at the arm's length, or investments in any collective investment scheme other than an issuer or new listing applicant notwithstanding the fact that the scheme has investments in securities in respect of an issuer or a new listing applicant.

COMPANY-SPECIFIC / REGULATORY DISCLOSURES BY EMKAY GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED (EGFSL):

Disclosures by Emkay Global Financial Services Limited (Research Entity) and its Research Analyst under SEBI (Research Analyst) Regulations, 2014 with reference to the subject company(s) covered in this report:-

- EGFSL, its subsidiaries and/or other affiliates and Research Analyst or his/her associate/relative's may have Financial Interest/proprietary positions in the securities recommended in this report as of December 20, 2023
- EGFSL, and/or Research Analyst does not market make in equity securities of the issuer(s) or company(ies) mentioned in this Report
Disclosure of previous investment recommendation produced:
- EGFSL may have published other investment recommendations in respect of the same securities / instruments recommended in this research report during the preceding 12 months. Please contact the primary analyst listed in the first page of this report to view previous investment recommendations published by EGFSL in the preceding 12 months.
- EGFSL, its subsidiaries and/or other affiliates and Research Analyst or his/her relative's may have material conflict of interest in the securities recommended in this report as of December 20, 2023
- EGFSL, its affiliates and Research Analyst or his/her associate/relative's may have actual/beneficial ownership of 1% or more securities of the subject company at the end of the month immediately preceding the December 20, 2023
- EGFSL or its associates may have managed or co-managed public offering of securities for the subject company in the past twelve months.
- EGFSL, its affiliates and Research Analyst or his/her associate may have received compensation in whatever form including compensation for investment banking or merchant banking or brokerage services or for products or services other than investment banking or merchant banking or brokerage services from securities recommended in this report (subject company) in the past 12 months.
- EGFSL, its affiliates and/or and Research Analyst or his/her associate may have received any compensation or other benefits from the subject company or third party in connection with this research report.

Emkay Rating Distribution

Ratings	Expected Return within the next 12-18 months.
BUY	>15% upside
ADD	5-15% upside
REDUCE	5% upside to 15% downside
SELL	<15% downside

Emkay Global Financial Services Ltd.

CIN - L67120MH1995PLC084899

7th Floor, The Ruby, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar - West, Mumbai - 400028. India
Tel: +91 22 66121212 Fax: +91 22 66121299 Web: www.emkayglobal.com

OTHER DISCLAIMERS AND DISCLOSURES:**Other disclosures by Emkay Global Financial Services Limited (Research Entity) and its Research Analyst under SEBI (Research Analyst) Regulations, 2014 with reference to the subject company(s) :-**

EGFSL or its associates may have financial interest in the subject company.

Research Analyst or his/her associate/relative's may have financial interest in the subject company.

EGFSL or its associates and Research Analyst or his/her associate/ relative's may have material conflict of interest in the subject company. The research Analyst or research entity (EGFSL) have not been engaged in market making activity for the subject company.

EGFSL or its associates may have actual/beneficial ownership of 1% or more securities of the subject company at the end of the month immediately preceding the date of public appearance or publication of Research Report.

Research Analyst or his/her associate/relatives may have actual/beneficial ownership of 1% or more securities of the subject company at the end of the month immediately preceding the date of public appearance or publication of Research Report.

Research Analyst may have served as an officer, director or employee of the subject company.

EGFSL or its affiliates may have received any compensation including for investment banking or merchant banking or brokerage services from the subject company in the past 12 months. . Emkay may have issued or may issue other reports that are inconsistent with and reach different conclusion from the information, recommendations or information presented in this report or are contrary to those contained in this report. Emkay Investors may visit www.emkayglobal.com to view all Research Reports. The views and opinions expressed in this document may or may not match or may be contrary with the views, estimates, rating, and target price of the research published by any other analyst or by associate entities of Emkay; our proprietary trading, investment businesses or other associate entities may make investment decisions that are inconsistent with the recommendations expressed herein. EGFSL or its associates may have received compensation for products or services other than investment banking or merchant banking or brokerage services from the subject company in the past 12 months. EGFSL or its associates may have received any compensation or other benefits from the Subject Company or third party in connection with the research report. EGFSL or its associates may have received compensation from the subject company in the past twelve months. Subject Company may have been client of EGFSL or its affiliates during twelve months preceding the date of distribution of the research report and EGFSL or its affiliates may have co-managed public offering of securities for the subject company in the past twelve months.