America on the Global Stage

How federal agencies can redefine success for mega-events

Accenture Federal Services

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A new spirit of unity

Opportunities to bring "a new spirit of unity" to the world come along rarely.[i]

But for the United States, the next four years will be flush with such opportunities. That's because the U.S. is playing host to an unprecedented lineup of the biggest events on the planet—the 2025 Ryder Cup, the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup, the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 250th anniversary of American independence, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

And few events can bring a spirit of unity to the world quite like these can. They are not just sporting and cultural milestones—they are sure to be defining moments that will shape how the world sees America.

The challenge ahead

The United States has hosted Olympic games before, and it has hosted a FIFA World Cup before.

But it has never hosted this many massive-scale events within such a short timespan. In every respect—logistics, security, public safety, transportation, crowd control, and a fast-evolving threat landscape—the complexity and size of challenges posed by this upcoming slate of mega-events are unprecedented.

To put this into some perspective, consider that a typical modern Super Bowl might pull in 200,000 travelers and generate a billion dollars for the lucky host city.[ii][iii][iv] By contrast, the 2026 World Cup tournament alone, consisting of 104 matches, is projected to draw around 6.5 million spectators and generate $17.2 billion in GDP for the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, which are jointly hosting the games.[v] The U.S.-hosted portion of the tournament is by far the largest, spanning 78 matches across 11 cities.[vi]

As U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem put it: "The 2026 FIFA World Cup is anticipated to be the largest, most complex sporting event in the world—equivalent to a dozen Super Bowls over a single summer."[vii]

6.5 million

Expected total attendance at the 2026 World Cup

FIFA World Cup Socioeconomic Impact Analysis

$7 billion

Estimated cost for LA Olympics

NYT, August 2024

40,000

Number of jobs created by the 2026 World Cup

USA Soccer, February 2018

$46 million

Expected cost to Miami-Dade for hosting FIFA World Cup matches

Miami Herald, May 2024

6 billion

Number of people who will watch the World Cup on television

USA Soccer, February 2018

$5 billion

Expected in economic activity in North America during World Cup

USA Soccer, February 2018

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The federal opportunity

This string of mega-events that the United States is set to host offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the nation—*and* for the many federal agencies mobilizing to support them.

Accenture Federal Services conducted extensive research to develop a clear understanding of the challenges and demands that agencies are facing as they plan for these events. Based on that research, we outline clear steps that federal agencies will need to take in areas such as public safety, security, border protection, and travel. That includes re-imagining the way federal agencies:

- Share and exchange information across jurisdictional silos.
- Process travelers for visas, security, and customs purposes.
- Fuse data and intelligence to create composite and actionable security pictures.
- Communicate to domestic and global audiences.

Pulling these mega-events off successfully presents an opportunity for new ways of working and innovative technology solutions that can transform traveler experiences and highlight American ingenuity. Reinventing the government's management of mega-events will demand seamless coordination across agencies and jurisdictions, security that is effective but not overwhelming, modernized infrastructures and support systems, and a laser focus on public experience and trust. It's a moment for America to shine.

To meet this moment, we need new solutions and approaches. We must learn from tactics that have worked previously, but that alone won't suffice. We'll also need more technology enablement, more proactivity, more centralization, more

visibility and insights, more data-driven decision-making, and more speed to keep pace with today's dynamic threat landscape.

With the advent of technologies such as generative artificial intelligence (AI), agentic AI, machine learning, data mesh, edge computing, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and others, traditional approaches to federal operations can be transformed to better anticipate and handle today's more complex challenges.

Operations spanning homeland security, border protection, consular services, cybersecurity, and law enforcement missions can now be greatly accelerated, automated, data-enhanced, and smartly designed for a better human experience. In fact, we see this already occurring in many parts of the U.S. government as well as at public sector organizations around the world that are tackling similar challenges.

Moreover, the necessary national investments we make today in our digital infrastructure to secure and manage these mega-events must also yield lasting improvements for the security of our homeland well into the future.

With the right vision, leadership, tools, partnerships, and investments, federal agencies can do so much more than succeed—they can build enduring capabilities and transform federal operations involving security, travel, interagency collaboration, and logistics.

By getting this right, these events won't just be safe and successful—they will show the world what America is truly capable of.

Our insights are grouped across five key areas:

1 Coordinating across agencies & jurisdictions

Making any mega event safe, seamless, and successful requires coordinated action across a patchwork of law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions.

Cross-border collaboration

Aligning infrastructure

Scaling workforce readiness

2 Public behavior, perceptions & trust

The way federal agencies communicate, coordinate, and deliver services must reflect commitment to both safety and hospitality.

Balancing security posture

Managing crowd dynamics

Trust as strategic asset

3 Modern tools for mega-event security

Separating the legitimate from the worrisome from the imminently dangerous activities requires gathering and analyzing large amounts of information, the ability to run scenarios, considerable expertise, and a good deal of imagination.

Intelligence and imagination

Getting ahead of threats

Rapid response to emergencies

The cyber-physical nexus

4 Meeting capacity & demand

By investing in infrastructure and service now, capacity challenges can be reimagined as lasting opportunities for modernization, economic growth, and global leadership.

Visa processing timelines

Infrastructure requirements

Workforce augmentation

5 Critical technologies for success

Powerful tools and capabilities that can dramatically improve how agencies prepare for and execute mega-event operations— and dramatically bolster their capabilities, readiness, and resiliency for years ahead.

Data mesh

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Agentic AI

Edge Computing

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR)

"We will partner with law enforcement to give the tools necessary to ensure the safety of fans and cities during the games, while showcasing American greatness on the world stage."

— U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem[viii]

Coordinating across agencies and jurisdictions: Turning complexity into strength

Making any mega event-safe, seamless, and successful requires coordinated action across a patchwork of law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions. When well executed, this coordination isn't just a logistical necessity—it's a powerful multiplier for national security, public safety, and long-term community resilience.

Smart collaboration starts with shared command

In the U.S., public safety responsibilities are dispersed across local, state, federal, and tribal agencies—each with their own systems, processes, and priorities. This can make effective collaboration hard. But mega-events demand a common operating picture and fast, coordinated action.

That's where centralized command centers come in. For the FIFA World Cup, for example, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security plans to create incident command centers in all 11 cities that will host events.[ix]

[Fusion centers](#), [Joint Intelligence Operations and Coordination Centers (JIOCCs)](#), and [Public Center Answering Points (PCAPs)](#) are among the various models of centralized command centers we see in operation and all serve as hubs for managing and sharing critical information.

Centers like the JIOCC in South Florida show what's possible. Staffed by personnel from multiple DHS components—U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and more—the center serves as a unified hub for decision-making and information sharing. It allows agencies to work from the same playbook in real time, avoiding duplication and confusion. These centers can be adapted and deployed in each host city, ensuring national coordination is paired with local expertise.

We can find similar examples abroad. The UK's [JESIP](#) (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles) model offers a tested framework for effective interoperability across multiple agencies. It's built around clear, plain-language communication, co-located decision-making, and a shared understanding of risk. These ideas translate well to the U.S. context and can inspire training and planning frameworks across American agencies.

Accenture has deep experience supporting our clients with centralized command centers to accomplish their mission, operating a global network of leading-edge fusion centers in Washington, D.C.; Houston; Bangalore, India; Prague; Tel Aviv, Israel; Naples, Italy; Sydney; and Tokyo. These centers bring together world-class threat intelligence, vulnerability assessment services, and dedicated teams of industry security analysts to secure and defend a wide array of clients, including large and complex industrial systems. Accenture also operates numerous cyber ranges to help industrial companies—including those in the oil and gas, chemicals, utilities and manufacturing industries—practice their response to cyberattacks across their most critical assets.

The next step in centralized command centers is that they no longer even need to be contained to physical spaces. Technology now enables information sharing and data exchange on the go, transcending agency boundaries entirely.

Cross-border collaboration

Because most of these mega-events are international in nature, collaboration must also span across many countries.

Some valuable collaboration is already taking place. For example, officials from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other federal partners—in collaboration with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the global governing body for football—hosted a workshop in Washington, D.C. to prepare Embassies for the upcoming FIFA World Cup.[x]

As the White House Taskforce on the FIFA World Cup 2026 is aware, far more collaboration will be needed as planning advances. However, sometimes when agencies collaborate, conflicting missions and priorities and differing risk perceptions can arise.

But there are numerous examples of bilateral and multilateral organizations that have shown us how to achieve collective progress on specific issues even when there may be other tensions or disagreements present in those relationships. The Future Borders Coalition, for example, has facilitated meetings between U.S. and Canadian officials aimed at improving travel and trade across their shared border. Lessons from these meetings and other regional groups, such as those managing the Cascadia Subduction Zone, can be valuable for future cross-border collaboration.

Such a model could be helpful, for example, in addressing concerns about how to manage anticipated spikes in cross-border traffic in 2026 as thousands of U.S. and Canadian soccer fans flock to attend 13 FIFA World Cup games in Seattle and Vancouver. Focused discussions early between the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Canada Border Services Agency can explore options—including proactive processing of visas, vetting, and departures—can improve the day-of-travel experience for World Cup attendees while allowing law enforcement to home in on those who pose the greatest risk.

Aligning infrastructure for impact

One of the trickiest coordination challenges lies in infrastructure. Different jurisdictions often have different policies, funding mechanisms, and systems—which can make unified action hard. But mega-events offer a unique moment to align long-term goals with short-term urgency.

Take Los Angeles. With the 2028 Olympics approaching, local leaders have a chance to expand regional transportation in ways that benefit both visitors and residents. Unified planning—across counties, transit agencies, and federal partners—can turn what might be a temporary Olympic fix into a lasting mobility upgrade for the entire southern California region.

By using mega-events as a shared goalpost, agencies can overcome bureaucratic red tape and siloed budgets to deliver integrated, resilient infrastructure that outlasts the events themselves.

Scaling workforce readiness through innovation

Meeting surges in personnel demand—while maintaining high standards—requires fresh thinking. Cross-agency staffing, community volunteers, and accelerated training can all help agencies scale effectively.

Emerging technologies make this even more powerful. VR simulations, AI-powered training platforms, and digital twins can enable scenario-based learning at scale. Agencies can onboard supplementary personnel faster, sharpen frontline decision-making, and boost situational awareness.

For example, technology-based training can help prepare federal workforces for the cultures they will encounter so they can better understand what is and isn't a threat, better anticipate how fan dynamics might evolve in certain situations, and adopt culturally relevant protocols that can diffuse potentially dangerous situations early.

Accenture, in partnership with NVIDIA, worked with leaders across Europe's public sector, energy, telecom, industrial, and retail sectors to expand the AI Refinery platform to enable European organizations to accelerate the deployment of AI agents, while addressing their sovereignty concerns.

By taking a platform-based approach to AI sovereignty, Accenture enables European organizations to develop and deploy AI capabilities even as they leverage their own cloud infrastructures and adhere to their own data residency and security requirements.

AI tools can also help field officers interpret and apply complex legal frameworks on the fly, ensuring consistent, fair enforcement and reducing the cognitive burden on staff.

By investing now in smart technologies and integrated training, agencies can prepare a workforce that's not just ready for the next mega event—but more agile and effective long after it ends.

When it comes to leveraging innovation to scale workforce readiness for dramatically improved performance, Accenture brings its own extensive experience and capabilities to help clients solve similar challenges. Applying innovative tools, Accenture equipped a half-million of its employees with generative AI skills in response to rising client demand, resulting in a surge of sales. This training has enabled employees to automate routine tasks, such as assembling presentations, and focus more on substantive work and mentorship opportunities, which enhances both productivity and professional development.

One of Accenture's tools is Accenture TQ, a program available on Accenture's Udacity platform. Accenture TQ is a foundational learning program designed to help employees understand how emerging technologies work and how they can be applied in a business context. TQ provides an essential baseline of knowledge in areas such as AI, cloud, agile and DevOps, automation, blockchain, data, enterprise platforms, and security. Unlike technical certification programs, TQ is built for all roles within an organization and it equips teams with a shared language and understanding that enables faster technology adoption, stronger collaboration, and smarter decision-making.
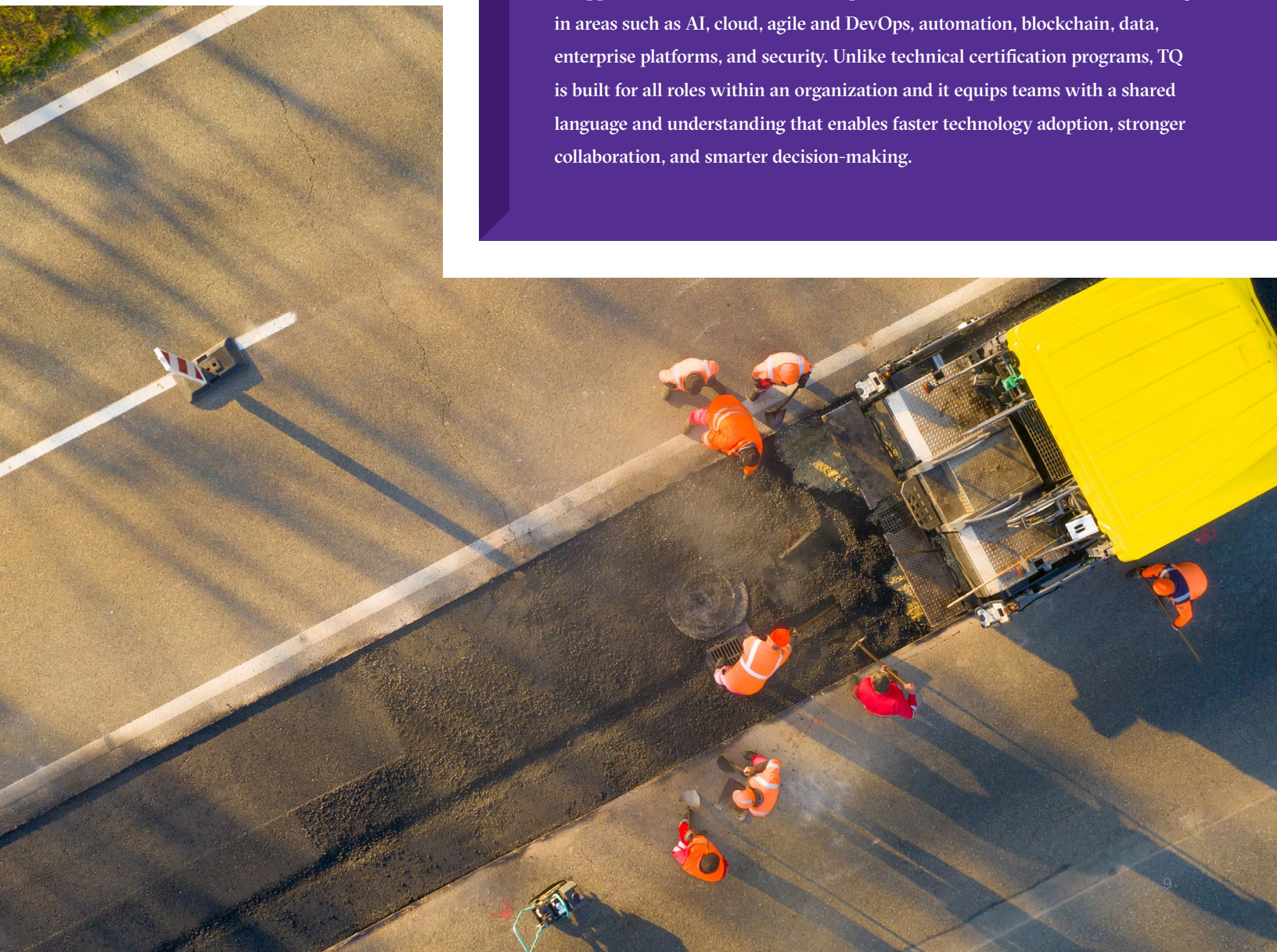
"As the U.S. prepares to host high-profile events like the Olympics and the World Cup, it's imperative that we make robust security preparations to ensure Americans—and millions of international guests—can safely enjoy their experience."

— Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), vice chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security and chairman of the bipartisan Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events in the United States[xi]

Enhancing public experience and trust at mega-events

What makes mega-events so... well, *mega*? Of course, there's the large global audiences, the over-the-top fanfare, the national and international prestige, and the potentially enormous economic gains at stake. But there's more to it. It's also about the perceptions, trust, and lasting global impressions that these events leave in the minds of everyone watching and attending them.

For federal agencies, ensuring that attendees come away with positive experiences is not only a matter of pride but a strategic imperative.

People's experiences shape public behavior, strengthen or erode trust in institutions, and, ultimately, determine the host nation's reputational legacy. That means the way federal agencies communicate, coordinate, and deliver services must reflect a commitment to both safety and hospitality.

Security that reassures, not intimidates

While police and security presence can make people feel safe, highly visible security measures can be intimidating and create unease. Security officials should focus on safety but be aware that heavy-handed security can reduce public trust and comfort.

It's important to get the right balance. A better approach blends presence with poise: clear signage, approachable personnel, and subtle, effective measures that protect without provoking.

Providing clear information in advance, for example, can help increase compliance and reduce tension at critical touchpoints, and campaigns like Canada's "Know Before You Go" offer a model. By equipping travelers with clear, accessible information before they arrive, authorities reduce confusion, improve compliance, and lower the need for aggressive interventions. Travelers flying into Canada can also make their customs and immigration declarations on a digital app, called ArriveCAN, up to 72 hours before their flight, thereby helping to streamline the arrival process at the airport. Similar strategies can be used at U.S. entry points and venues, aided by digital tools like CBP Home that streamline customs and security processes.

Digital tools like ArriveCAN and CBP Home allow travelers to submit advance traveler information, apply for permits, schedule appointments with border officers, and check wait times before their journey—and promoting awareness of these tools can greatly enhance the entry process.

Using a similar approach, consider, for example, the idea of creating a virtual front door for all participants and attendees of the World Cup or the Olympics. Such a "front door"—on a government website or an app—could welcome travelers to the event, navigate them to needed information from multiple agencies, guide them through the approvals and documentation process, and, when they arrive, track their stay and departure.

Moreover, apps like these can also help alleviate challenges that arise when first-time visitors lack clarity around regulations or mistakenly presume reciprocal procedures exist on either side of the border.

A critical component to building trust and a positive public experience during these mega-events is adopting a multilingual approach to government interactions with the public. A good example of this type of approach is at the IRS, which proactively launched large-scale engagements with the multilingual community through customer-centric education, outreach, and digital tools.

The IRS, partnering with Accenture Federal Services, used a user-centered, impact-focused design approach to gather behavioral insights with which to design a system that serves all customers. This included identifying the most commonly used forms and most commonly searched information on IRS.gov and developing a plan to translate this content into six languages, which enabled the agency to reach 81% of multilingual taxpayers. The agency also stood up a multilingual, interagency working group of federal employees that could share resources and ensure commonly translated phrases were the same across agencies, helping to build trust through consistency. With a vision of providing multilingual taxpayers more meaningful access to the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to fulfill their tax obligations, IRS's ultimate goal is an improved experience for all.

Crowd dynamics done right

Mega-events are defined in part by their large crowds. Much consideration must go into how the movement of those crowds is managed, whether at an airport, in transport to or from an event, or at a stadium where an event is taking place.

At a basic level, people expect to be informed and to easily navigate both the physical and digital spaces they encounter. How intuitively are those spaces designed and how well managed? Clear, multilingual signage, real-time updates via event apps, and barrier designs that allow for transparency and visibility all help attendees feel confident and respected.

The architecture of crowd control also plays a key role in managing the anxieties and high emotions that can manifest in large gatherings. During the 2014 G20 in Brisbane, organizers gave special consideration to the design of polycarbonate barriers that provided security while maintaining transparency. These barriers allowed officers clear visibility but ensured the public could see the events, reducing the perception of confinement.

Predictive technologies can also play a critical role in helping to ensure there is adequate staffing and law enforcement on hand to maintain crowd control. By analyzing real-time data from ticketing, sensors, and mobile apps, agencies and organizers can adjust operations dynamically—directing flow, avoiding congestion, and minimizing frustration.

Trust as a strategic asset

Positive experiences build trust. And trust isn't just a nice-to-have—it's the foundation for compliance, cooperation, and long-term reputation. When attendees feel informed, respected, and safe, they're more likely to follow guidance, assist others, and leave with favorable impressions.

This is where federal agencies have a unique opportunity to lead. By approaching mega-events as moments of national service—as much about diplomacy and hospitality as they are about security and logistics—agencies can turn challenges into triumphs.

"While this is an important opportunity to showcase American exceptionalism, we have seen time and time again that mass-spectator events can present unique challenges for law enforcement and prime opportunities for America's adversaries."

— Mark E. Green, MD (R-TN), chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security and ex officio member of the bipartisan Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events in the United States[xii]

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Modern tools for mega-event security: Intelligence, advanced technologies, and imagination

Mega-events provide a powerful platform for individuals and groups seeking to amplify their message. These activities range from legitimate protesters advocating for their cause to extremist groups with more dangerous intentions.

Separating the legitimate from the worrisome from the imminently dangerous activities requires gathering and analyzing large amounts of information, the ability to run scenarios, considerable expertise, and a good deal of imagination.

Planning for the unknown: Intelligence and imagination

Many ingredients are blended together to create an effective security architecture for a mega-event.

Robust intelligence helps with planning, threat assessment, and resource management. Multi-agency collaboration ensures the right expertise, resources, and tools are applied efficiently. Technology helps accelerate data collection, analysis, and exchange; sift signal from noise to reveal and assess threats; and create a shared operational picture. And risk assessment frameworks help agencies understand and respond to crises and potential crises more effectively.

However, good policing and security still rely on some level of judgment and intuition.

Agencies must blend intelligence-led risk assessments with imaginative scenario planning to anticipate not just traditional threats but also spontaneous, fast-evolving risks. This proactive approach helps planners get ahead of problems rather than chasing them in real time.

Why imagination? Because the most disruptive threats are often the ones we fail to imagine. The 9/11 Commission famously described the attack as a "failure of imagination." Since then, agencies have embraced more proactive planning techniques that explore a wide range of possible scenarios. Agile response protocols and robust contingency plans are essential to dealing with the unexpected—from cybersecurity breaches to drone attacks to flash protests.

This approach requires a foundation of cross-agency data sharing made available at the events themselves. Such digital investments to enhance intelligence sharing and risk assessments at the edge will not only help protect the games but also sustain greater security for the long term.

Scarce resources should focus on accurate threat predictions to be most effective. This demands a risk-based planning approach that balances intelligence and imagination with agile response protocols.

Getting ahead of threats

Mega-events attract crowds—and with them, criminal opportunities. From petty theft and ticket scams to more serious issues like human trafficking, crime rates often spike before and during major sporting events. Prevention demands early intervention.

For example, intelligence sharing across countries can identify known bad actors before they even arrive. This approach has worked in international soccer, where law enforcement units collaborate to flag high-risk individuals. The same idea applies domestically: intelligence sharing across federal, state, and local jurisdictions can help identify people already in the United States who are viewing mega-events as opportunities for criminal behavior.

Rapid response to emergencies

Even the best-laid plans must account for the unpredictable. Large-scale events can be disrupted by spontaneous emergencies—extreme weather, structural failures, medical incidents, or active threats.

Readiness is about mindset and muscle memory. This is where regular exercises that test coordination across jurisdictions can be critical.

Programs like FEMA's Integrated Emergency Management Courses (IEMCs) offer practical training tailored to event scenarios. Moreover, technologies like VR simulations, digital twins, and AI tools can also assist with scenario-based training programs. These simulations build familiarity with roles, sharpen communication, and ensure readiness when real incidents strike.

The cyber–physical nexus

Today's threats are increasingly hybrid. Cyber intrusions can quickly translate into physical consequences. For example, attackers might hack digital ticketing systems, disrupt stadium operations, or interfere with transportation and utilities.

As the infrastructures and fan interfaces associated with modern mega-events become increasingly digital, cybersecurity threats will grow as a concern for security planners. Cybersecurity must be woven into every layer of event security. During a previous World Cup, analysts actively monitored dark web forums for chatter about physical attacks. This kind of forward-looking digital surveillance, paired with rapid-response cyber teams, can help prevent incidents before they occur. The addition of AI-driven tools can also flag unusual patterns and give officials real-time insights.

"We have 10 million tickets for sale. It's like three Super Bowls every day for one month."

— Gianni Infantino, president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)[xiii]

Unlocking opportunity: Meeting the capacity and demand challenges of mega-events

Perhaps the most defining feature of any mega-event is the sheer numbers of people involved.

Consider these eye-popping figures: The FIFA Club World Cup in 2025 is projected to draw 3.7 million spectators; the 2026 World Cup, 6.5 million spectators;[xiv xv] and the 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Los Angeles, 11 million (if the 2024 Paris Games are any indication).[xvi]

The logistics required to support such numbers of people are complex, to put it mildly. For U.S. planners, the task ahead is to anticipate and address the significant spikes in demand these events are certain to bring—from visa processing to infrastructure to staffing.

These capacity challenges are too large, too close in time, and too complicated to be bridged solely through added human labor. So investing in infrastructure and service now will be key and, if planned well, will result in long-term benefits for the future.

Said another way: With the right mindset and strategies in place, these capacity challenges can be reimagined as lasting opportunities for modernization, economic growth, and global leadership.

Build it and they will come... if they can.

One of the biggest capacity issues stressing these upcoming mega-events is being felt even before anyone has hopped on a plane to attend. For millions of potential spectators who desire to witness these upcoming mega-events, the chief hurdle is not cost, but rather visas.

Every European team eligible for FIFA World Cup qualification—along with nations such as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand—are part of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program known as ESTA, which allows citizens from 42 countries to travel to the U.S. for up to 90 days without a visa. So the lengthy visa process will predominantly affect approximately 20 teams (and their fans) considered as contenders for World Cup qualification that are not from ESTA-covered countries.

To prevent such administrative backlogs from undercutting the promise of upcoming mega-events before they even begin, the U.S. travel industry is recommending the Trump administration adopt reforms, including:

- Increasing consular staffing to accelerate visa processing.
- Shift visa processing responsibilities from the State Department to a proposed new agency, the National Vetting Service, that can process all visitor visas within 30 days or less.
- Expanding the Visa Waiver Program through a "Secure Travel Partnership" to add eligible nations.[xvii]

These steps aren't just about avoiding bottlenecks. They're about reinforcing America's reputation as a welcoming, well-prepared host and fully realizing the cultural and economic promise of these mega-event opportunities. With smart investments and coordination, the visa process can become a powerful enabler rather than a stumbling block.

A quick glance at the State Department's Global Visa Wait Times webpage conveys the challenge: average wait times to get a visa interview at many U.S. embassies and consulates stretches well beyond eight months and even beyond a year in some cases. Honduras, Colombia, India, Peru and Ecuador face some of the longest wait times, and even many cities in Mexico and Canada must wait six months or more.

That means it is already too late for many to attend this summer's matches of the FIFA Club World Cup tournament—and, for many, it may already be too late to arrange travel for next year's FIFA World Cup tournament.

Colombia	700 Days
India	442 Days
Mexico	262 Days
Brazil	28 Days
South Africa	7 Days
United Kingdom	72 Hours
Germany	72 Hours
Estonia	72 Hours
Morocco	72 Hours

Visa wait time >=6 Months

Sources: State Dot. Immi. Assist

Infrastructure: From temporary fixes to a lasting legacy

Mega-events are a proven catalyst for infrastructure transformation. Barcelona's 1992 Olympic upgrades turned the city into a modern, globally connected hub. The U.S. now has a similar chance—but only if infrastructure investments are made with a long-term mindset.

The surge in demand for hotels, restaurants, transport, and venues during a mega-event drives immediate economic activity. But short-term gains aren't enough. Thoughtful

infrastructure development can position American cities for enduring economic and cultural relevance. Potential candidate projects could include:

- Expanding and modernizing transportation systems.
- Upgrading public venues and digital infrastructure.
- Designing projects that support both the event and community needs afterward.

Case in point: Transportation

Take a look at the transportation system, for example, which drives nearly $2.9 trillion in economic activity each year. By many measures, it is straining to meet the fast-growing demand of both U.S. and international travelers.

In 2024, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screened more than 3 million passengers on two different days, breaking all previous records. By 2026, TSA is projected to hit that 3-million-a-day mark 50 times annually, and by 2028, 100 days per year, according to the U.S. Travel Association.

Presently, the American travel infrastructure is ill-equipped to handle these increasing numbers due to long wait times for processing, outdated technology, and operational inefficiencies.

Careful planning and strategic investments now—through the use of smart technology, process improvements, and

government and private sector collaboration—can create a more seamless, efficient, and secure travel experience for all.

For example, TSA recently started a pilot program called One Stop Security (OSS) in collaboration with American Airlines and the U.K.'s Department for Transport.[xviii] It enables passengers originating from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport to land at London Heathrow Airport (LHR) and then connect to non-U.K., international destinations without having to go through security screening a second time.

Similar steps can prepare our transportation system for the intense growth in demand that is expected and help ensure that America remains a premier destination for travel and business and is able to accommodate many mega-events to come.

Workforce augmentation: Scaling human potential with technology

As we noted, even without any mega-events on the horizon, workloads within the transportation and travel sector are swelling. In 2024, TSA screened nearly 1 billion travelers, and CBP dealt with unprecedented cargo volumes. Add millions of mega-event attendees to that and the pressure on federal agencies intensifies.

Given the timeframes and complexities of the capacity challenges around mega-events, additional hiring can only be a partial solution. Using technology to augment human capabilities can help teams adapt to changing demand.

That said, implementing these technologies in civilian-facing roles would have to be carefully thought out to be effective. Tacit knowledge and human judgement are critical for ensuring flexibility in intelligent systems. Maintaining humans-in-the-loop ensures that human operators can step in when novel challenges arise.

Addressing the capacity surges that accompany mega-events isn't about replacing people with machines—it's about empowering people with technology. AI, digital twins, and edge computing can:

- Predict demand spikes and optimize staff and resource deployments.
- Automate routine screening and administrative tasks.
- Enhance situational awareness in real time.

"The most important shift in major events is seeing them not as a destination but as catalysts for lasting change."

— James Bulley, CEO and Co-Founder, Trivandi[xix]

Seize the moment, shape the future

There is a legacy imperative with these mega-events.

Just look at any of the recent cities that hosted the Olympics or the FIFA World Cup—Paris, Beijing, Doha, and others—and consider the incredible investments they made in new and refurbished infrastructure.

Even now in the U.S., Kansas City, Seattle, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and other host cities are busily working on hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of transportation, facilities, parks, and other urban projects to prepare.

For federal agencies, the question becomes: what capabilities will they invest in to prepare for these events that they can leverage in the years ahead?

To meet this moment, federal agencies need more than plans and playbooks. They need powerful tools and capabilities. Here are five critical technologies that can dramatically improve how agencies prepare for and execute mega-event operations—while also bolstering their capabilities, readiness, and resiliency for years ahead.

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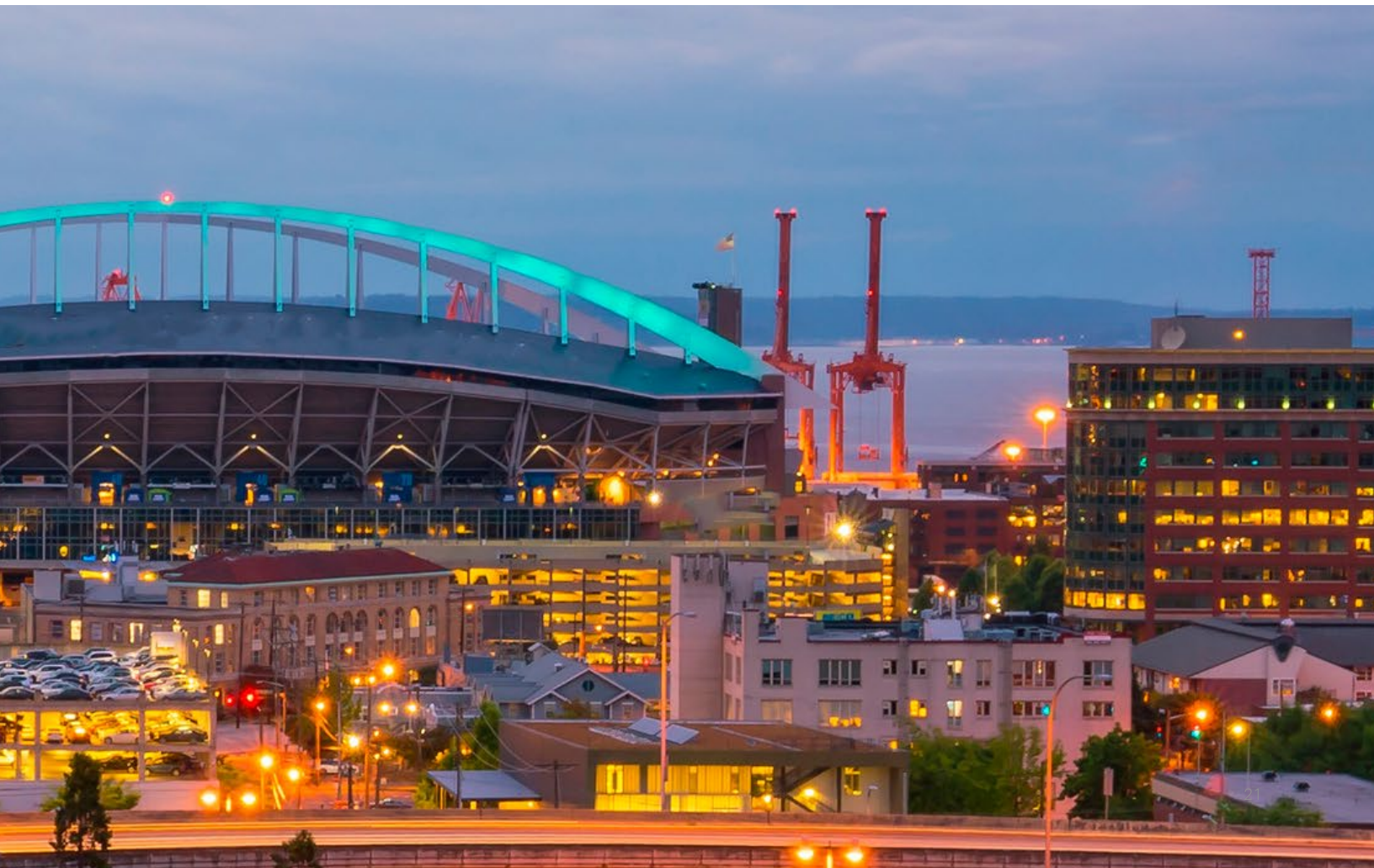
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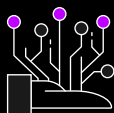
Data mesh

As America prepares for these mega-events, it is critical that federal security agencies operate as an integrated force. This is the power of a data mesh.

A data mesh is a decentralized data architecture that extricates data from functional silos so it can be easily and rapidly aggregated from across an enterprise or even across organizations and analyzed in one place.

Data meshes also enable self-service exploitation of data —which is tightly governed and enforced—so that anyone permitted to access that data is able to derive value from it as needed. These accessibility and self-service benefits truly unlock the data's full potential value for federal mission objectives.

How data mesh delivers value

Only by tapping into the full value of data can federal agencies tackle some of the thorniest challenges associated with overseeing mega-events. Intelligence analysis, strategic and predictive decision-making, early threat detection, and seamless collaboration—all of these tasks and functions demand data support, and data mesh makes that possible.

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR)

AR and VR bring training, planning, and citizen engagement into immersive environments. Agencies can simulate event scenarios, visualize infrastructure builds, and deliver high-impact training.

How AR/VR delivers value

These technologies can train officers in realistic scenarios, prepare volunteers and first responders, and even preview emergency plans in a simulated environment—leading to better coordination and confidence.


Artificial intelligence (AI)

AI is more than automation—it's augmentation. Generative AI can create real-time responses and content tailored to specific needs. Predictive AI uses historical data to anticipate likely scenarios, from crowd surges to threat vectors. Machine learning continuously improves those predictions over time.

How AI delivers value

From fast visa screening and real-time language translation, to threat detection and citizen services, AI provides the responsiveness and precision mega-events demand. It gives planners foresight and frontline responders a force multiplier.
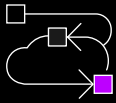
Edge Computing

Edge computing moves data processing closer to where data is generated—on a camera, at a checkpoint, or in a drone. It delivers rapid insights without waiting for data to be sent to a central system.

How edge computing delivers value

Mega-events are where the action is—not just the fanfare, but the federal operations supporting those events. Edge computing enables federal teams to conduct crowd analytics at a stadium gate or biometric verification at a remote checkpoint. Edge computing translates into real-time, on-the-ground analysis and assessment that keeps pace with the dynamic environments federal agencies are monitoring. When every second counts, edge computing delivers speed, reliability, and situational awareness.
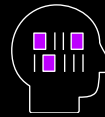
Agentic AI

Agentic AI takes AI to the next level by enabling AI agents to act autonomously on behalf of users—completing tasks, initiating workflows, and even coordinating with other AI agents.

How agentic AI delivers value

Agentic AI enables interagency orchestration at a scale befitting a mega-event. Consider the possibilities of having multiple AI agents working in sync across agencies to monitor queues, manage transportation logistics, and triage support requests—all in real time.

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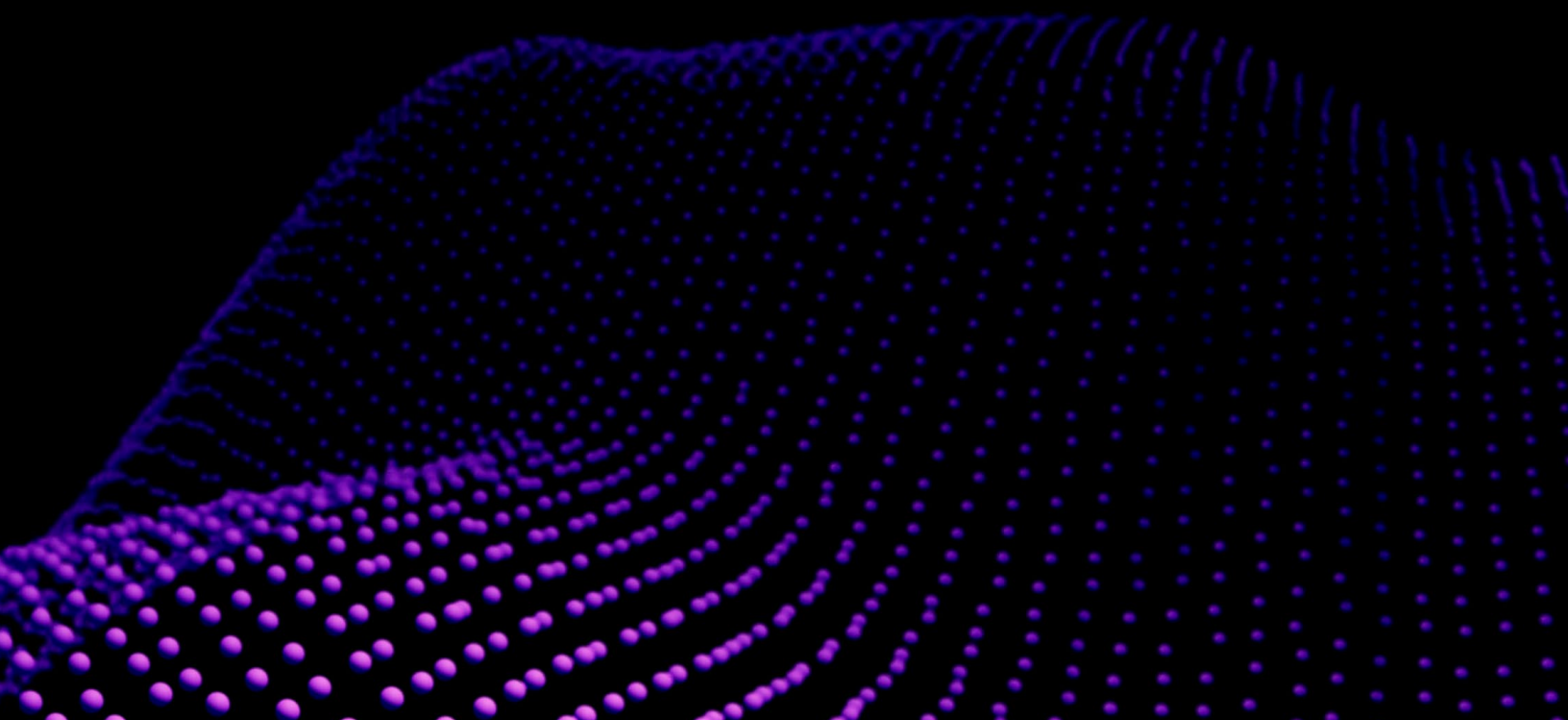
The importance of resilient, adaptable systems

When building technology-assisted systems to address burgeoning capacity needs, it's critical that they be designed to be flexible and responsive to complex, dynamic environments.

For example, keeping **humans in the loop is key**. By designing systems that blend human judgment with machine precision, agencies can remain agile, adaptive, and resilient in high-pressure environments.

Other important features to consider include:

- **Integrated systems over siloed solutions.**
  This ensures the quick and smooth flow of critical information and—when combined with technologies, such as edge AI—can enable real-time decision making.

- **Adaptable protocols over rigid procedure.**
  Rigid, one-size-fits-all procedures can fail in unpredictable or high-stakes situations, whereas adaptable protocols allow for flexibility, enabling teams to modify responses in real-time based on changing conditions. With technologies such as digital twins and AI-driven scenario simulations, organizations can dynamically adjust operations rather than follow fixed steps that may become obsolete.

- **'Seamful' over seamless design.**
  'Seamful' design (as opposed to seamless) is about selectively revealing the complexities of the system and allowing operators to adapt, troubleshoot, and reconfigure systems as needed. By showing users what is useful without hiding the complexities or overwhelming them, it enables them to improvise when needed.

- **Redundancy over single points of failure.**
  Avoid catastrophic system failures by building redundancy and backups into the system. Understand the big picture and identify potential bottlenecks that could lead to cascading failures or problems. Also, design systems with multiple independent backups, distribute critical functions, and regularly test failure scenarios to ensure rapid recovery.

i   https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/the-inaugural-address/
ii   https://www.uschamber.com/economy/how-the-super-bowl-creates-economic-impact-across-the-country
iii   https://www.nlc.org/article/2025/02/07/civic-pride-and-spending-what-the-super-bowl-means-for-host-cities/
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xix   https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/from-mega-events-mega-legacy-new-standard-trivandi-aahvf/

Conclusion: A moment to lead

Mega-events offer more than spectacle—they present a rare and powerful opportunity for the United States to lead by example. If federal agencies act strategically, these moments can catalyze enduring improvements in security, infrastructure, diplomacy, and public trust.

Yes, the path forward is complex and there are challenges, but these shouldn't be viewed as roadblocks, but rather as runways. With smart planning, bold collaboration, and a commitment to both safety and service, America can rise to meet the moment—and leave behind a legacy that lasts long after the final whistle blows and the crowds go home.

The world will be watching. Let's show them what's possible.

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About Accenture

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