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Do You Think Like a Permanent *Beta?*

by **DQI Bureau**   —   June 26, 2012   in **Features**   💬 0

Technology is the driving force behind growth and is the barometer with which we measure the development of any country. Recently, Reid Hoffman, the founder of LinkedIn, said something in a TV interview that made me think. He suggested that only those countries that become permanent beta can stay developed.

This was interesting as we are all talking about developing countries, emerging economies, and thinking that becoming a 'developed' country is a goal to be attained and then we can relax. On the other hand, developed countries think that they can relax since they have achieved their goal and find their jobs are getting outsourced and their economy going downhill. So what do we do if we wish to turn our country into a developed one and how do we as techies think like permanent beta?

The corporate mantra seems to be that we either import the talent or export the job.

In the next decade we will have to be more prepared as the situation will worsen. If we do not want to import talent like the US then we have to identify and nourish talent. So we need to CIRUS if we are to stay ahead as technology, by now you would have realized, is the everturning wheel that goes faster and faster. CIRUS as I call it stands for the following:

C: Create new technology

I: Invest in research and development to stay ahead of the learning and job creation curve

R: Don't relax but work harder as there is no such thing as developed state, only the next invention or the next big thing

U: Update the technology and technical knowledge as technology is like timeit never stops for anyone.

S: Sustain new talent by identification, encouragement, and compensation.

How to achieve CIRUS?

There are multiple things we need to concentrate on if we wish to keep our country in the permanent beta mode. The four main things are as follows:

Education: This is the first and most basic field of all. Something the US failed at in the school stage. So, it is important to learn from the West and Japanese mistakes. In education, it is vital to retain the basics and upgrade the text books constantly. Most textbooks are outdated and print/online publishers do not encourage or seek out authors to upgrade the content and neither do the educational authorities.

Most of them are not thinking like a permanent beta but like a finished product. It is time for upgraded textbooks in both schools and colleges as technology has grown in leaps and bounds but the textbooks are still trotting. But teachers need to constantly upgrade their knowledge to teach the content of the new textbooks.

aim higher. This can be achieved by encouraging interaction programs between retired scientists, educational scholars, and students who are the next generation.

In TV reality singing contests, young talents are exposed and get a chance to interact with the experts in the field. In some shows, they are even trained by experts and always given tips for betterment of technique.
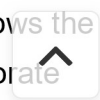
This is exactly what is needed in the technical field where young talent gain direct exposure and a chance to interact with the experts in the field. This will inspire them to do better and also such networking might lead to great inventions. One way to do this might be to create a 'Young Inventor' annual reality contest on TV where people vote for what they consider to be the most practical and best invention. Or it could be something along the lines of 'Best Young Technical Talent of India' where different school/colleges across India are made to participate and the winner/winning team goes home with a considerable prize such as a full-term scholarship or a home or a job contract.

Funding: We need dedicated funding and allocation for R&D in the educational, corporate, and government sectors. Good R&D programs are responsible for future inventions and technological innovations. Every college, corporation, and scientific establishment should have an R&D department. Currently, there are very few good R&D programs in the country while most of the others are in name onlyjust as a statistic to prove they have presented 'X' number of papers in international conferences to continue to receive funding. However most of these presenters are not really interested in R& D. This approach has to go.

On the other hand, I have seen several promising projects by college students fall flat at the secondary stage because of lack of funding. Then there is the management discouragement which includes their professors. These students, who if funded right would have become great scientists, are now just earning a livelihood.

Nourish: All of us know it is important to nourish promising talents to envisage the future as our viewpoint should be long term and not short term. A big component in nourishing talent and retaining them is by taking the financial component out of the equation, so they can learn and work without worrying about it.

In India, the lack of local scholarships and work assistantships in educational institutions shows the long way we have to go to achieve the permanent beta mentality. Every industry in the corporate sector, even the small ones can afford to educate one talented student a year by providing

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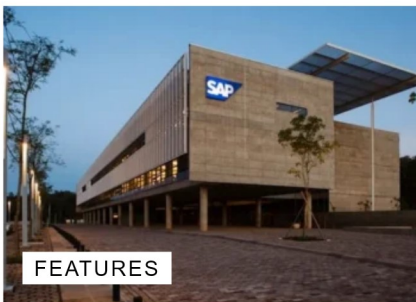of the Indian-WISE e-group
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