

Moving into the Future: CEIBS' Journey Ahead



CEIBS President (European)
Dipak C. Jain

Major Global Trends

Today, whether we are talking about business schools or any other global organisation, there are numerous trends and challenges that they have to deal with.

For one, business schools today face hyper-competition, not only locally, but also from different parts of the world. Furthermore, competition is also coming from companies offering online programmes and modules. Given the nature of competition in this global environment, business schools must work harder to understand what differentiates them from their competitors.

Today, there are also digital innovations in education (i.e., blended learning modules which should be treated as an integral part of the business curriculum). Whether it is the CEIBS Shanghai Smart Campus project or a similar project at our other campuses, we need to embrace technology as an important driving force for differentiating ourselves from other competing business schools.

At the same time, the world is also facing *aging demographics*. On one hand, we have to develop new *human talent*; while, on the other hand, we have to come up with a plan for *elderly care*. Managing this is going to be

a big challenge for talent development.

With this in mind, I would like to turn our attention to some of the traits and advantages we, as humans, have for succeeding in the modern world, and how we might apply them to forming a new DIET for today's challenging environment.

Human Traits for the Modern World

What are the specific traits required for the modern workplace? First, is the *ability to anticipate*. This means thinking critically about how we work and how we teach and what possible scenarios might arise in future.

The past two years have been very challenging for the whole world. It is one thing to make predictions, but it is also very important to have the *courage to deal with ambiguity*. As such, we need to create a culture of being bold and courageous.

We also need to develop the power to *adapt across diverse cultures*. As a global business school, we recruit students and faculty from different parts of the world. Whether at CEIBS or elsewhere, we must learn to cope with cultural diversity, and we must be sensitive and respectful to different viewpoints, norms and rituals.

The Human Advantage: Think, Reason, Execute and Evaluate (TREE)

A pertinent question surfacing today is, in a world dominated by the IoT, artificial intelligence and machine learning, what is the real human advantage?

First-and-foremost is our ability to *Think*. Human beings

also have the power to *Reason* what is good or bad. We also have the ability to *Execute*. Once we have thoughts and ideas, and also the right reasons, we put our plans and intentions into action (albeit often with the help of machines). To examine the quality of our performance, we can also *Evaluate* the results of our action plans.

By learning from our actions and connecting the relevant dots of our human advantage, we form the roots of the *Wisdom TREE*.

A New Human DIET: Digital Thinking, Innovative Mind-Set, Entrepreneurial Spirit and Team Culture

In order to leverage our human traits and human advantages and keep pace with global trends, business leaders need to adopt a number of key skills and concepts – what I refer to as the new human DIET.

While technology has proved invaluable in connecting people and resources throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it has also necessitated *Digital thinking*. In the future, we will need to adapt to both in-person and digital communication in order to access new knowledge and opportunities.

Second, we will need to embrace creativity and have an *Innovative mind-set*. Our focus need not be only on innovative products and services, but also on innovative ideas and processes. We must constantly question why and how we are doing things and whether we can do them better.

Third, is *Entrepreneurial spirit*. Entrepreneurship doesn't simply mean starting a new business; it reflects having the willingness to take risks, to be courageous and bold. Moreover, this spirit is at the forefront of the world's largest

success economies.

Finally, an effective **Team culture** is critical for any business, yet few leaders emphasise this in their organisations. To become an effective business leader, one should not only focus on his or her skills, but also learn how to collaborate with other team members, peers and partners.

To summarise, if we are to overcome the challenges we face today, we need to work together for a common **purpose**. Our faculty, alumni, students and staff all belong to a global community and family which has a higher purpose.

At the same time, learning is a life-long journey. It does not stop the day a student graduates. Those who attend a business school, for example, may be students for only a year or two, but they will be alumni for the rest of their lives. Moreover, alumni are lifelong learning partners and schools need to find ways to facilitate and enhance this partnership in the future. A great example of this is to create **Lifelong Learning as a Service (LLAAS)**, a concept proposed by Professor Mohanbir Sawhney at Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University (Forbes, March 4, 2019).

Today, we will live in a **high-tech** world. However, what we really need is a **high-touch** environment and, moving forward, we need to build a **high-trust** culture of mutual respect and trust amongst everyone in our community.

Finally, at CEIBS, it is important that we build a culture of giving amongst our community partners. So, let us work together and encourage each other's efforts to create a lasting legacy for CEIBS and make the world a better and safer place to live and enjoy.

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