



EMBRACING BEST PRACTICES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Dr. Sunil Khanna, Vice President, NIIT University, writes on the steps that advanced educational institutions in India need to take to stay ahead of the race in the digital era...

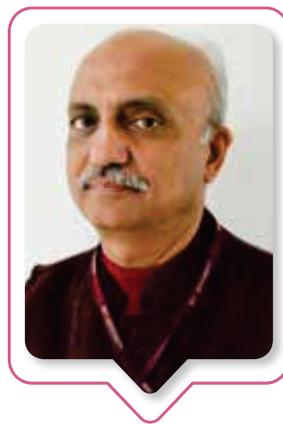
The wave of Digital Transformation is sweeping across the world. Touted as one of the biggest disruptions to face and reshape humanity and described often as the Fourth Industrial revolution, Digital is expected to lead to a paradigm shift in the way we live, work, govern and conduct business.

While the trend itself requires all the ecosystems to embrace Digital, it also brings its own set of challenges. Manpower remains the biggest impediments in the path of Digital Transformation. Just as in the IT era, where it was skilled manpower that became the fuel and fodder for industry growth, in the Digital age, once again it will be rightly-skilled talent that will be the key catalyst of this critical phase.

The Digital movement will require a workforce that is equipped with advanced skills in emerging technologies such as Cloud, Big Data, Analytics, Social, Mobility, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics and a host of other tech flavours of the day.

This kind of skilling would compel the higher-end schools of learning to provide training that produces 'just what the doctor ordered' for all industry sectors. To build a gargantuan pool of highly qualified Digital Transformation professionals, colleges, universities, B-Schools and other institutions too need to usher in change.

In order to do so, it is becoming critical for them to adopt Educational Best Practices that enable them to stay cutting-edge, with an eye on the horizon. Many, in fact, will have to gravitate towards new business and



Premier institutions need to invest in faculty development, in order to stay globally competitive. Faculty has to be constantly 'upgraded', 'upskilled' and placed on the path of continuous learning to ensure that it is always abreast of what's new in education

delivery models, alter their existing processes, go Digital themselves, and leverage Best Practices for teaching and learning.

According to several leading Universities, these Best Practices improve the quality of faculty and teaching. Premier institutions need to invest in faculty development, in order to stay globally competitive. Faculty has to be constantly 'upgraded', 'upskilled' and placed on the path of continuous learning to ensure that it is always abreast of what's new in education. Teachers must be encouraged to enrol for programmes in specialized areas in other institutions that possess this knowledge. Inviting experts for training faculty is also very important.

For instance, teachers have to be trained in Digital technologies so that they can in turn build students with cutting-edge Digital Transformation skills.

Besides faculty training, making learning effective also requires the implementation of a Best Practice. Typically, this involves intensive student engagement in the training process, which in turn is the result of exciting classroom and online programmes.

Ideally, Universities should create an environment that learners find engrossing and makes learning easy. Use of cutting-edge tools and methodologies that simplify complex concepts is one such way. By harnessing state-of-the-art modes of instruction (that include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic tools), institutions can capture the attention and imagination of learners. 

As told to Aeshwarya Tiwari