

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/reinvention-and-adaptation>

There is no such thing as a sustainable great idea. Ideas have to be continuously reinvented. Jensen likes to tease that his company is always thirty days away from going out of business. The world is changing so rapidly that techniques and strategies will be obsolete thirty days from now, and therefore must be continuously changed.



Transcript

The third thing is you think you've got great engineers.. Everybody has got great engineers.. Stanford University pumps out a great deal of very high caliber engineers but so does MIT and so does Carnegie Mellon and so does USC.. Many, many universities pump out great engineers.. And today, the great engineers all have great tools.. And it's very likely they all have pretty good funding.. And so, the challenge then is now your idea is not unique.. You also happen to discover some kind of a fundamental secret sauce.. And you know that your team, although extraordinary and you're really proud of them, is by and large no better than anybody else's team.. This is really just like football in the final analysis..

We have a salary cap, too.. Everybody has got a salary cap.. How many engineers does it take to build a chip? And can you add 10,000 engineers to build a single chip? And so, it's along the lines of, what is the phrase of saying "you can't deliver a baby in a month with nine women"? I think the same thing applies with engineering.. At some level, having 10 times more engineers is not helpful.. And so, what does really says is in the 10 years that I've been at NVIDIA, there has not been a single thing that I can currently put my finger on, that can tell you it's a sustainable idea since our beginning, not one.. Every single good idea we invented last 30 days.. And there's a phrase that many of our employees are delighted to tell you if there are any investors around the world, I'm saying this in jest, I don't actually mean it in reality, but our employees will say, "Jensen is always telling us we have 30 days from going out of business." We have a billion dollars in the bank today.. We're not really going to go out of business in 30 days.. And if there are any employees, don't flee for the door.. But the fact to the matter is, the idea or the notion that you have to reinvent yourself every 30 days is a very important one, the idea that the world changes so rapidly..

So, whatever techniques and whatever advantages in the world of technology you had or whatever strategies you had, are really in fact going to be obsolete 30 days from now.. And so, you have to stay on your toes.. You have to innovate constantly.. And you have to assume that you're going out of business every 30 days...