B Venkataramana

Mr. B Venkataramana
Executive Director
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1. What are the top 3 innovative trends you see in semicon technology?

Increased proliferation of "smart" devices for security, telepresence, augmented reality, etc. opening the doors to a whole new world More sophisticated intelligence in the form of embedded software, creating a mind-boggling diversity of possible solutions Greater focus on making semicon technology "Green" i.e. making the power consumption lower by reducing power losses in the device

2. What part does India play in VMC's overall technology and marketing strategy?

India is the largest market for VMC's products at present. India and China are the largest markets in the world for electronic and semicon products. India, in particular, provides a great opportunity to design, manufacture and supply "good-value-for-money" products to a demanding and discerning customer base. India also has unique challenges in terms of physical environment, diversity of customers, multiplicity of behaviours and usage, which puts a great challenge to designers and engineers, seeking to build reliable and cost-effective products. It is no exaggeration to state that products proven in Indian conditions, can be deployed without trouble anywhere in the world!

3. What are the critical challenges facing companies looking to develop or expand existing semiconductor companies' operations in India?

The critical challenges facing companies looking to develop or expand operations in India are as follows :

Access to pool of "industry-ready" talent. Companies setting up operations or expanding in India, will have to budget for a significant investment in technical and non-technical skill development

Ability to secure critical resources for operations, i.e., electricity, space, transportation and movement infrastructure, and speedy processing of formalities in a timely, reliable and economic manner. In the globalised world of today, countries and geographies that offer these advantages will rapidly attract industrial investment from across the world.

World-class quality eco-system, in terms of availability of suppliers with processes and certifications who are able to supply large volumes as per need, in a timely and cost effective fashion.

Scalability of business models to reach global scale. All semicon technology is a large scale business. Only large scale manufacture will make the product viable in terms of costs and competitiveness. However, this would also require large investments in marketing and distribution channels to expand customer reach.

4. How do you place the competency of Indian product companies as compared with MNCs?

While Indian product companies acquire technical talent and capabilities quickly, the ability to transform this resource to deliver useful and reliable products on time, is a challenge. Indian companies are imbibing processes used in MNCs for reliable delivery and communication, but there is some distance to go, particularly in semicon industry. The software industry has demonstrated that it is possible to do so, given the freedom and the opportunity, and a set of demanding and profitable customers !

5. What would be the key market drivers in 2012?

The key market drivers in 2012 will be the large scale adoption of mobile voice, data and content management devices (tablets), which will drive semicon to a new boundary of growth. Simultaneously, there will be expansion of remote control applications in home and office security, telepresence and other applications. On the back of consumer demand arising from these communication devices, there will be a corresponding growth in connectivity devices and equipment from the access to the backbone layer in the network. The digitisation of cable tv will offer an opportunity to stream voice, data and entertainment to the individual and the households with relatively simple and cost-effective devices.

6. How do you see the Indian engineering education scenario? What do you think are its strengths?

The expansion of quantity in Indian engineering education in the last two decades is impressive. There are several new engineering colleges across the country, including IITs, and NITs. This education infrastructure, if properly managed, and used imaginatively, can bring India to the next level very quickly. The strength of the Indian engineering education is its strong emphasis on conceptual skills, and the consequent ability of Indian engineers to adapt quickly to changes in technology and direction. The challenge will be to ensure that the infrastructure deployed can provide a minimum calibre of professionals to the industry, with more practical skills than at the moment.

7. How does your company plan to leverage the unique needs of India in the various market verticals?

Our company is focusing on expanding reach and product range to serve the needs of our people in smaller towns and villages. The operating conditions in semi-urban and rural India are significantly different from our experience in urban India. The key features required for semicon products for these areas, are a small energy consumption footprint, reliable performance over a wide range of voltage and thermal conditions, and a definite need for power backup for longer operation. Apart from this, the customers served in these areas also need a different set of devices and appliances that meet their local needs. As I have stated earlier, India provides the best opportunities to develop good, reliable and cost-effective products and solutions, which can deployed anywhere in the world. We will constantly strive with our product development resources to design, manufacture, deliver and service products in communications and power verticals, across institutions and direct customers, across the length and breadth of our country.

About the author
Mr. B Venkataramana
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Venkataramana has over 21 years of experience in finance, information systems, embedded software technology and business planning. He is responsible for all finance, HR and administration activities along with his additional responsibility of managing the Software Research Group at VMC. He has an MBA from IIM-Calcutta and a BE from IIT-Madras.

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