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Innovation Is Alive And Well, And We Honor It

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There's been a lot of discussion this week in our editorial offices and in the industry about the Oracle- Siebel acquisition and what it means for the software industry and for customers. Where's the innovation? Where are the industry-transforming power plays? Is this just a market-share game that will lead to years of complex product integration, fewer choices for customers, and limit negotiating power? That's all probably true to some degree, but there's also proof that there's market interest in integrated software suites-just look at SAP's business. But I don't care what Tom Siebel says about companies no longer wanting best-of-breed applications. None of this means the end to alternative business models and innovative new players. There's still plenty of room for them, even if Oracle succeeds with its integration plans. I'm in the "innovate or die" camp, not the "integrate or die" one.

This week, we celebrate innovation with the 17th annual InformationWeek 500, where leading companies use business technology to build change-embracing cultures, to improve business processes, to increase productivity, to make customers happier and more loyal. Budget dollars are the lowest in five years, but that hasn't put a stop to innovation.

A special congratulations to the business-technology team at Capital One, our No. 1 company this year. The financial-services firm is the epitome of excellence in business-process innovation and technology-business alignment-the kinds of things necessary for making fast and fluid decisions. In the words of CIO **Gregor Bailar**: "Technology is the vortex of the company." Read more about Capital One and many other innovators, beginning on p. 34.

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