

## WHITE PAPER

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# Enabling Partner Success: Systems Integrators Leveraging Oracle Grid-SOA Offerings

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## PARTNER VALUE PROPOSITION

The combination of Oracle's grid and service oriented architecture (SOA) technologies and initiatives, coupled with the Oracle PartnerNetwork (OPN) program, is enabling the company to provide its systems integrator (SI) partners with the ability to deliver more flexible and scalable solutions and capture new market opportunities. The SIs interviewed by IDC for this IDC White Paper worked with Oracle to help position and deploy Oracle 10g products along with their own specific expertise to deliver benefits to their customers that they felt included:

- Lowered total cost of ownership (TCO)
- Improved service quality and process reliability and availability
- Increased agility to respond to business changes and opportunities
- Accelerated delivery of new capabilities and services
- Ability to scale and grow with business demands

Furthermore, leveraging these SOA and grid capabilities has opened new opportunities for these partners that include:

- Addressing new customer segments, including small and medium-sized businesses, and vertical market-specific solutions
- Modernization of legacy systems
- Complementary engagements for business intelligence (BI), security, and compliance solutions

From a top-line perspective, the SIs interviewed benefited from membership in OPN and participation in Oracle Grid and SOA Initiatives by gaining access to technical and sales support and training that assisted them in developing and demonstrating the customer value of their solutions on a global or regional basis, or both. These SIs have developed close working relationships with Oracle and identified customers through joint marketing initiatives that have resulted in net-new business.

In addition, the Oracle technology, according to the SIs interviewed, has provided them with solutions that deliver value to customers through reductions in overall complexity and cost while increasing productivity. Their experiences indicated that the Oracle Grid and SOA technologies helped them to maximize server and storage capacity, provide high availability of system resources, and deliver uninterrupted service during upgrades and maintenance. Oracle's standards-based technology also contributes to customer confidence and acceptance rates, according to the Oracle SI partners.

The SIs interviewed also experienced key business benefits both from their relationships with Oracle and from Oracle 10g technologies. The SIs felt that gaining access to training and sales support, as well as initiatives to drive leads, has accelerated their ability to win key projects and enter new markets — the partnerships have translated into the identification of opportunities and higher close rates. These benefits, combined with Oracle guidance on the technology value proposition and product life cycles, position these SIs to better plan, resource, and develop their future business opportunities. In addition, the ability to provide hosted grid solutions has enabled some SIs to deliver services to customers in an efficient and cost-effective way.

## **THE PRESSURE TO PERFORM**

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### **Embracing Change for Opportunity**

Organizations today are under pressure to adjust rapidly to meet changing business requirements with fewer resources. Factors such as economic volatility, regulatory responsibilities, and global supply chains and competition are influencing organizations to adopt new processes or enhance existing ones. These factors all require reliable, highly integrated systems that ensure accurate and timely automation and access to vast stores of information. Achieving such aims, however, is not an easy feat. Most enterprises have amassed an assortment of systems over time, and built on a variety of vendors' products and generations of technology, as a result, such efforts in the past have been challenging and costly.

Most enterprises realize that they need to become much more strategic in how they build and deploy applications. As processing requirements change and new stakeholders are brought on board, business systems need to readily adapt and scale. Oracle refers to this trend as "the automating of IT." The marketplace is beginning to pay closer attention to system architecture best practices and taking a longer-term vision of treating IT environments in a more holistic fashion. These trends are creating opportunities for vendors such as Oracle and its business partners to help enterprises build more efficient solutions and take better advantage of their existing IT assets.

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To gain some of the necessary degrees of flexibility and control, many organizations have opted to pursue a three-pronged strategy to centralize, modularize, and standardize their IT systems. By creating sets of common infrastructure, data, and application services, organizations hope to optimize system assets, dynamically calling on and allocating each as needed. The growing emphasis of SOA and grid technologies in the greater vendor community is also helping to drive companies to take a hard look at their existing IT environments and future road maps. Ensuring appropriate provisioning, access, monitoring, management, capacity balancing, and backup across such distributed environments is taxing, and enterprises will require more advanced approaches and technologies to address these demands. These organizations will be doing this with keen attention to TCO, leveraging low-cost system alternatives and flexible licensing arrangements from their IT suppliers.

Oracle views its partners as crucial in driving grid and SOA solution deployment and is providing them with appropriate tools and resources to enable these efforts. SIs, independent software vendors (ISVs), value-added resellers (VARs), and other solution providers are in an ideal position to better understand specific customer pain points and educate customers about what is available in the market to help them make critical technology decisions and address their customized needs. Oracle has launched initiatives over the course of 2005 and 2006 that provide sales and marketing, technical resources, and tools that are explicitly geared to helping its partner community take advantage of the latest capabilities in its Oracle Fusion Architecture, Oracle Fusion Middleware, and Oracle Database software for SOA and grid activities.

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Based on interviews highlighted in this IDC White Paper, IDC has observed that SI partners that have participated in these programs and OPN have been able to identify leads, close business, and create for themselves differentiating value propositions to build business. Gaining experience and reference cases in these emerging solutions areas is crucial in this highly competitive services and software vendor marketplace, but it is also important to building overall market confidence to take further advantage of these computing approaches.

### ***Market Momentum for Service Oriented Architecture***

For years, the IT industry has been advancing network infrastructure capabilities that allow for greater levels of communication within and outside the enterprise. Following suit, applications are slowly moving away from discrete container-centric environments to more logical constructs that take advantage of the power of the network. What might appear to some as counterintuitive to simplifying and consolidating systems is the market migration to further levels of application fragmentation within an SOA environment. Although each service may be more easily created, reused, and maintained, added complexities in state management, dynamic mediation and aggregation, and computing support will result. Web services standards-based technologies are being developed to make it easier to integrate and manage service-based systems, and complementary trends in virtual processing software and grid computing are gearing up to help balance underlying system computing capacity with dexterity and efficiency. They are all critical components of a dynamic IT environment.

Many organizations typically consider where manual efforts can be eliminated and target opportunities for greater levels of integration and optimization across an overall process. Such automation can translate into greater efficiencies and labor savings, along with better risk management, by avoiding potentially costly errors. Building solutions based on SOA, combined with leveraging system virtualization technology, should isolate explicit service and application functionality from any particular operating system or physical environment — allowing greater levels of choice and autonomy, as well as dexterity to add or delete processes. In addition to cost savings by eliminating redundant systems and in particular ongoing change management efforts, some of the largest benefits for businesses from SOA are in the form of decreased time-to-market differentiation, increased levels of information exchange and collaboration across value chains, and optimized leveraging of external resources.

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SOA can open doors to more flexible sourcing scenarios and technology access models. Although additional challenges exist in managing, monitoring, and securing a service-based environment, by implementing a policy-driven system with abstracted capabilities to handle these needs, organizations can provide more detailed control and governance across the IT landscape. If such a system is implemented with care, the ability to enforce business, fiscal, and regulatory policy compliance can be supported via both centralized and federated SOA (and information grid) models. The ability to pull information across the environment for enhanced decision support, and eventually integrated into real-time processes as needed, is another key goal.

Large enterprises and those with complex, heterogeneous environments have been the first to actively pursue SOA. However, interest and activity have been building across the entire market, with more than 30% of enterprises recently surveyed by IDC indicating that they are already at some stage of adopting some form of SOA, whether a discrete solution or at an intended enterprise scale. Even more are or will be working with Web services technologies in general. The initial wave of first movers has been concentrated in the financial and communications sectors, high-tech manufacturing, and federal government, but growing interest and adoption span multiple industries and size classes.

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According to IDC, by the end of 2006, the total worldwide SOA-driven software spending opportunity should reach \$2.3 billion and is expected to grow to nearly \$9 billion by the end of 2009. Most enterprises anticipate expanding their SOA environments in an evolutionary manner over multiple years, and the momentum of growth is expected to be propelled as more ISVs introduce service-compliant applications into the marketplace in the later part of the decade and beyond.

Given in part the many planning and transformation activities often associated with enterprises pursuing strategic SOA initiatives, the total SOA external services opportunity is dramatically larger than that of software; it is forecast to reach \$8.6 billion by the end of 2006 and aggressively expand to a tremendous \$29 billion by the end of 2009. SOA external services spans multiple areas within consulting, systems development and integration, and outsourcing.

## ***The Potential of Grid Computing***

Two of the key IT goals prompting the building interest in virtualization techniques and grid computing are to obtain value from taking full advantage of systems' underlying capacities and to more efficiently traverse and leverage heterogeneous environments. Enterprises hope to gain added flexibility and value by pooling system hardware assets and system infrastructure software assets as shared resources across multiple domains. They also need to achieve more consistent availability to address unexpected workload volatility and only scale out capacity as needed.

According to IDC research, grids hold significant potential in the marketplace, especially as the technology becomes more broadly applied to commercial datacenters. However, much education needs to still take place in the market regarding what such environments entail.

Virtual processing software can support multisystem configurations known as clusters, grids, compute farms, and even peer-to-peer computing. It should not be confused with virtual machine software that can allow a single system to act as if it is really many systems or allow many systems to act as one.

There are also many ways to look at the grid market today. One approach is to divide the market into three types of grids, based on end use: compute grids that focus on computational power allocation, optimization grids that focus on high-level productivity and cost efficiency, and data grids that focus on optimization and compute power for information-centric concerns. Vendors, such as Oracle, also refer to the term "Enterprise Grids" to reflect a more comprehensive datacenter utilization of such technologies versus a limited set addressed solely within point solutions.

Highly synergistic with the concepts of SOA, the goal of these varying forms of grid-based approaches is to leverage common interfaces. These interfaces are always accessible and available and can dynamically manage and provision enterprise-scale infrastructure services. Grid computing typically makes IT resources available by networking them together with management or provisioning software, allowing an application to draw on processing, data storage, or other resources on an as-needed basis. As new application and system access and ownership models have emerged in the IT industry to promote hosted and utility-based models, the concepts of sharing and dispersing resources in a demand-driven manner are gaining tremendous mindshare. Another factor driving recent interest in leveraging grid computing in particular is the growing availability of hardware and software technology to support such environments.

According to recent IDC research, healthy interest exists in organizations of all types and sizes to leverage grid computing and virtualization technologies, with over a third of the sample reporting to be either in production or in pilot stages in some form. An interesting dimension to these findings was also the relatively high propensity of these study respondents to indicate the likelihood of reaching out and engaging external services providers for consulting related to these initiatives. In 2005, IDC estimated that grid and cluster technologies would help drive \$5 billion in server hardware spending by 2009, along with another potential \$5 billion in related investment for attached storage, networks, software, and services.

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# ORACLE'S GRID AND SOA STRATEGY

## Oracle Grid and SOA Offerings

Oracle's comprehensive product reach, from its applications down through many layers of the infrastructure, places the company in an optimal position to add value to its partners' service and software offerings on many fronts. The company continues to commit significant resources to evolve its offerings to address the architectural demands presented by SOA and to optimize its infrastructure software to run on and facilitate managing a grid-based environment. A variety of acquisitions and licensing arrangements has helped Oracle further extend its SOA portfolio and Web services support, and the company is active in promoting and implementing core and emerging technology and industry-level standards.

Oracle's recommended strategy for its customers and partners for business infrastructure is to standardize, consolidate, and automate. To aid in these goals, Oracle intends to provide a unified infrastructure platform in 2007, targeting greater levels of interoperability and bundled configurations.

The Oracle Fusion Middleware portfolio, with its Oracle Application Server 10g as a critical deployment foundation, offers a suite of products for integration and event processing, strategic business process modeling and execution, identity management, business activity monitoring and business intelligence, portal infrastructure, business rules and traditional development tooling, Web services management, and dedicated edge processing for applications such as RFID.

From the applications dimension, the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) has already been exposed as Web services. Other Oracle applications, including PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, and Retek, are in the process of being SOA-enabled. In the future, these offerings will be further configured and supported by Oracle Fusion Middleware to take advantage of a standards-based infrastructure. By doing so, Oracle is positioning to more easily extend its application environment to integrate with third-party applications and technology.

In 2003, Oracle announced the launch of Oracle Application Server 10g, Oracle Database 10g, and Oracle Enterprise Manager 10g as a complementary family of products targeted at providing a foundation for grid computing and SOA. Together these technologies are targeted at enabling pools of information and data resources to be shared across multiple applications and physical machines. The value is to configure and optimize computing capacity and storage as needed by shifting resources, managing provisioning, and automating failover.

Specific products within the Oracle SOA Suite, which is part of the Oracle Fusion Middleware portfolio, include Oracle BPEL Process Manager, Oracle Business Activity Monitoring, Oracle Web Services Manager, Oracle Enterprise Service Bus, and Oracle Business Rules.

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Oracle's grid infrastructure is designed to provide asset management services, with virtualization, dynamic provisioning, resource pooling, automated tuning, and unified management, across layers of the computing stack (databases, application servers, storage, and applications). Oracle Enterprise Manager is positioned as a centralized framework with a user dashboard through which administrators can monitor and manage Oracle database, application server, and underlying storage and operating system resources, with plug-ins for third-party technologies. Specific vendor systems management capabilities are meant to be leveraged and augmented by Oracle Enterprise Manager rather than replaced. The premise behind Oracle's strategy is to utilize a common, central database repository for pan-system capture and control.

Oracle's data grid strategy builds on the company's Oracle Real Application Clusters (RAC) technology, which runs on symmetric multiprocessors (SMPs), as well as commodity servers including blades, and supports multiple databases and multiple applications, which are not dedicated to individual servers. With its Oracle Database 10g release, the company extended capabilities in dynamic provisioning of resources (storage, servers, and data) and policy-based automated workload management. These capabilities provide for mixed application workloads to be managed proactively in a single cluster. To address storage grid requirements, Oracle includes Automatic Storage Management (ASM) as a feature of this offering.

### ***Standards Support***

Enterprises are looking to vendors to address the many complexities surrounding interoperability between systems; thus, support of standards is an extremely critical issue. Many organizations are creating policies around what standards to uphold and adopt, and they will often mandate that their IT providers prove adherence to specific protocols. Most will want their ISVs and SIs to address those standards that are likely to emerge as market standards. However, enterprises may also consider the many industry-specific schemas and communications protocols gaining traction in specific segments of the market.

Oracle has a stated commitment to building standards-based software to help its customers reduce complexity and get the most of their existing technology investments. Oracle has traditionally been a leading proponent of standards such as Java. Today the Oracle 10g family of software is based on leading industry standards such as XML and Web services. In addition, the company is actively involved in key standards bodies such as the Web Services Interoperability Organization (WS-I), World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), and Liberty Alliance. With its growth, whether via acquisition or organic R&D efforts, Oracle has remained committed to support for current and emerging SOA and security standards.

Oracle is also a sponsor of the Global Grid Forum (GGF) and is a board member of the Enterprise Grid Alliance (EGA), a non-profit organization comprising vendors and customers chartered to develop enterprise grid computing solutions and drive grid adoption. The Web services and grid communities are converging to support like and complementary standards that focus on resource management interoperability, such as Web Services Resource Framework (WSRF) and Web Services Distributed Management (WSDM).

# ORACLE: EMPOWERING PARTNERS

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## Oracle PartnerNetwork

Oracle has implemented specific enablement and go-to-market strategies based on its grid and SOA technologies to align with the needs of SIs driving and delivering opportunities in this area. Key to this strategy is supporting partners in the areas of sales, marketing, and technical support and services, underpinned by Oracle PartnerNetwork. OPN is Oracle's framework for providing resources to its worldwide partner network and includes an information management portal, an interaction center, and access to benefits such as education and technical, marketing, and sales assistance.

Oracle's Grid and SOA Initiatives have one overarching goal: to drive partner return on investment (ROI). These strategic initiatives have been designed to help enable partners to successfully adopt, develop, and deploy grid and SOA solutions built on Oracle's software, according to the vendor. The goal is to help partners jump-start the use and deployment of the Oracle 10g family of software in solutions for early adopters of grid and SOA.

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These capabilities are in addition to Oracle's ongoing Application Integration Initiative to ensure that its partners' software complies with its integration methodologies, standards (e.g., XML, Web services, BPEL), and published APIs and to provide design and development assistance, validated integration, upgrade guidance, and training.

Partners committed to identifying, positioning, selling, deploying, and supporting grid and SOA solutions based on Oracle 10g technology can benefit from a direct link to Oracle's technical and business assets offered to initiative members. This link provides partners with access to resources, tools, and services that are designed to align with their needs within the enablement, sales, and deployment cycles of grid and SOA solutions. Partners are required to meet predefined criteria to be accepted into the initiatives and to maintain member status. More detailed information on these initiatives is available on the Oracle PartnerNetwork site under the Oracle Grid Computing Initiative and Oracle SOA Initiative sections:

☒ Grid: [www.oracle.com/partners/home/bi/global/grid/unauth/index.html](http://www.oracle.com/partners/home/bi/global/grid/unauth/index.html)

☒ SOA: [www.oracle.com/partners/home/bi/global/ofm/unauth/index.html](http://www.oracle.com/partners/home/bi/global/ofm/unauth/index.html)

In addition, OPN provides the framework by which all partners access the benefits based on their membership commitment. Benefits such as joint marketing and sales engagement activities, business strategy planning, and access to key Oracle personnel and technology road maps increase with the commitment of partners as defined at each OPN membership level. Membership ranges from Partner to Certified Partner and Certified Advantage Partner.

Capgemini, EDS, and Inter Access, profiled in the following pages, are only a few of the partners that have participated in and benefited from partnerships built on the Oracle 10g technology, as well as the OPN program and its affiliated Grid and SOA Initiatives, to capture market opportunities. These SIs and others have access to an array of benefits as OPN members and members of the Grid and SOA Initiatives to

realize the market potential of those solutions. Partners in the Initiatives are assisted in achieving their goals through membership privileges that include the following:

- Access to Oracle SOA- and Grid-specific product, technical, sales, and marketing resources and services  
  
e.g., White Papers, customer presentations, sales kits, research reports
- Informational webinars; Online and instructor-led technical and sales training
- Technical enablement, migration assistance, and support
- Access to beta testing and pilot classes
- Participation in lead generation and awareness activities
- Exposure to Oracle field sales for increased partnering opportunities

## **PARTNER AND CUSTOMER CASE STUDIES**

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### **Case Study Methodology**

IDC conducted telephone interviews with a selection of current Oracle SIs. These SIs were identified by Oracle. IDC developed a standard interview guide to facilitate the exploration of the SIs' views and real-world experiences in adopting and implementing grid and SOA solutions. The Oracle SIs provided the views into the customer case studies.

### **The Capgemini Partner Experience**

Capgemini, one of the world's foremost providers of consulting, technology, and outsourcing services, employs over 61,000 people worldwide and most recently reported annual global revenue of 6,954 million euros.

Capgemini, a Certified Advantage Partner, has benefited from a strong working relationship with the Oracle field organization in the delivery of SOA and grid projects. Based on a joint technology agreement between the two companies, the SI receives critical technical and sales support and training. "Our two companies have dedicated teams that work together closely in identifying customers and performing the tactical and strategic planning required in delivering SOA and grid projects," said Andy Mulholland, global chief technology officer.

Paris-based Capgemini counts Oracle as one of its four strategic alliances and has had a strong, committed focus on the vendor's technology for four years. "Our relationship with Oracle is reflected in our status as an Alliance Partner, which means together we're a driver of a changing marketplace and in addressing how that impacts the capabilities of our customers," said Mulholland.

Capgemini's SOA strategy began in July 2005, which reflected for the SI a changing moment in the market. "It was all about how a business creates and uses services to do business with others," said Mulholland, adding that this means being able to provide different solution propositions to different customers.

To date, Capgemini has delivered five large SOA projects with Oracle 10g and has also begun a grid project through its outsourcing division. The latter deployment focused on business intelligence for a United Kingdom-based firm and is expected to save the client millions of euros by cutting costs out of the infrastructure layer through virtualization.

Capgemini views the overall value proposition of the Oracle Grid platform as allowing it to deliver a better service to customers in a changing market where more meaningful data is required in the front office to achieve business results. Grid also becomes an enabler of SOA to allow access to SOA functionality across an entire organization. "In a grid solution, time to getting the right answer in the front office goes down sharply, and the cost to maintain the back office goes with it," said Mulholland. "The capability of our customers to do more things companywide goes up, but without the traditional barrier of cost, which has always been difficult for them to justify."

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The ability of a grid solution to lower cost and complexity while increasing productivity through data transaction processing power is extremely important to the SI because market interest is coming from customers with large data requirements and complex IT systems. In adopting the Oracle 10g platform for grid computing, Capgemini says it can provide customers with cost and productivity savings, particularly in business intelligence and compliance where customers require more database functionality in generating business results.

Capgemini's goal is to provide its customers with a solution that is responsive to ongoing changes in requirements in business processes. With a grid solution, the SI assists customers in alleviating the stress of high workloads needed to meet specific business needs while providing a highly scalable platform for the future. Capgemini's grid architecture, powered by Oracle Database 10g and Oracle RAC, serves customers through its outsourcing facilities (Advanced Development Centers) in consolidating data and reducing TCO through simplified systems management and the optimization of hardware, license, and support staff capacity.

"What customers want is a cure to an immediate problem that requires more processing power. The use of Oracle Grid is a sharply focused way of addressing these business needs, and it's very easy to manage because the overall complexity is reduced," said Mulholland. "And Oracle has a major part of the answer to support our focus on compliance and business intelligence, which works to expand our market share."

For Capgemini customers, success is highly dependent on their ability to respond quickly and continually to market demands. Consolidating data through a grid solution, according to the SI, maximizes the use of underused server and storage capacity to deliver the highest availability while allowing for system upgrades and maintenance without service interruption, thereby reducing the cost of such activities and accelerating TCO.

## ***Capgemini Customer Case Study: R.L. Polk & Co.***

### **Situation Overview**

R.L. Polk & Co. is a privately held provider of automotive intelligence based in Southfield, Michigan, with over 1,300 employees globally. Having served the automotive industry since 1922, Polk provides business value by collecting and compiling data from over 240 different sources, including state agencies, automotive manufacturers and financing companies, and a variety of providers of lifestyle and demographic data. Polk has enjoyed a position as the market leader, and as the "gold standard," its automotive vehicle and consumer data is used by every automotive brand to make critical decisions about their businesses. Further, many automotive suppliers, dealers, and other automotive-related businesses (finance and insurance, media, advertising agencies, consulting organizations, market research, government agencies) utilize Polk solutions.

In December 2004, Polk's CEO, president, and executive committee held a series of strategy meetings to discuss how Polk could first maintain and then improve its competitive advantage amid significant industry, regulatory, and technology change. Never wanting to "rest on its laurels," Polk has continually improved its data management methods over the years. Given today's environment, in which privacy compliance is introducing even tighter restrictions on how data can be used, the time was right to move beyond continual improvement to develop an innovative approach that would revolutionize Polk's core foundational data management activities and data warehouse.

### **The Solution**

In December 2004, the Polk board of directors approved a comprehensive business process reengineering program (named re-FUEL) and the creation of RLPTechnologies, a wholly owned subsidiary of R.L. Polk & Co., to develop a new solution for use by the parent company. Traditionally, Polk had utilized a mainframe system, supported by an Oracle9i software stack, coupled with a variety of legacy systems that had applied the company's rich automotive expertise to managing very complex data.

In essence the project team was given the rare opportunity to take a clean-sheet approach to designing the new systems, processes, and organization. The team evaluated and eventually embraced a standards-based SOA as the foundation for the new system. Polk and RLPTechnologies turned to Capgemini to assist in the implementation of a grid and SOA architecture on Oracle 10g with RAC and TIBCO. The project began in January 2005 and has an expected completion date of May 2006.

The key motivations in the customer adoption of grid based on Oracle technology were its high availability, scalability, fault tolerance, and performance. Oracle components used in the solution include Oracle Database 10g, RAC, Portal, and Identity Management. "This client processes large amounts of complex data to create their data warehouse, so they needed a solution that supports huge amounts of data processing and can hook into SOA," said Mulholland.

SOA provided Polk with significant benefits relative to protecting legacy investments, reducing costs, and providing accelerated time to development. The business vision that was delivered to Polk enabled the company to be 50% more efficient and 50% faster while focusing on delivering 100% quality. Quality is a critical element of the solution, enabling the company to protect its rich heritage as the industry standard while providing improvements to identify problems earlier in the process.

#### *50% More Efficient*

The re-FUEL project transformed the structure and size of Polk's Data Operations group, creating a more cost-efficient and focused unit. Renamed the Data Factory, the group is now 43% smaller, and team members have significantly different roles and responsibilities. The group is structured more efficiently, with roles that align directly to the functions of the solution (Data Capture, Standardization & Enhancement, Reference Data Management, Single Source of Truth/Operational Data Store, Assembly, and Operations Management). Further, the reduction in manual processes has enabled the group to focus on strategic management and analysis of data, including areas such as issue resolution and handling.

The implementation of RLPT's grid computing model will result in significant savings for Polk. By moving away from a mainframe-based system, the company will lower its hardware costs by more than 50%.

Capgemini had few objections from the client in regard to the Oracle Grid solution because the client had a strong relationship with the vendor. "When we started the solution, Oracle was a natural choice because of the client's strong position for the technology," said Mulholland.

#### *50% Faster Overall*

Tests to date show improvements of up to 70% in data-file processing speed (on average). For example, an average state registration file that previously would have required manual processing by as many as three full-time employees (FTEs) and 4–13 hours of processing time now is processed in an automated fashion in roughly 23 minutes. Further, RLPT's approach to grid computing has allowed the solution to scale to process 42 transactions per second, nearly twice as fast as Polk's design goal of 25 transactions per second, providing headroom to accommodate future transactions or business growth.

The technology stack for the solution operates in a grid computing environment running Red Hat Linux on Intel Xeon processors. The production grid comprises 49 servers and 118 processors. The operation of the grid is managed by the solution's service orchestration engine. The grid-based computing platform has allowed both significant cost savings and flexible scalability options to provide capacity on demand.

### *100% Quality Improvement*

The standardization and enhancement functionality of the solution measurably improve the accuracy and completeness of the data, preventing quality problems that might impact customer satisfaction. Automated data quality checkpoints allow for earlier recognition of problems and enable the team to resolve issues before the data is delivered to Polk's business intelligence and operational applications. This functionality drives a focus on preventing issues or, at worst, recognizing them earlier. This follows the rule of thumb that "It costs \$1 to prevent a problem, \$10 to identify a problem, and \$100 or more to fix it."

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## **The EDS Partner Experience**

The value of the relationship for EDS, a Certified Advantage Partner, comes from having ready access to Oracle business and technical expertise in the form of personnel resources and tools that help develop and demonstrate customer value in deploying Grid and SOA solutions. EDS also cited Oracle's founding and involvement in the Enterprise Grid Alliance (EGA) as bringing out the commercial value proposition of the technology and accelerating customer awareness and adoption of grid computing.

"Oracle is engaged in a very pragmatic way in addressing customers' near-term needs," said Guy Peters, EDS global product and strategy manager, adding that Oracle's efforts with EDS will have a "major impact" on new revenue opportunities that have begun flowing through the SI's funnel and that were generated through mutual effort.

As a Certified Advantage Partner, EDS participates with Oracle in joint sales and marketing activity but also benefits from working with the vendor in creating global and regional go-to-market strategies that utilize Oracle resources worldwide. "We receive guidance in the product life cycle to build sales momentum and to understand how best to deploy a solution in a specific market; the support provided helps us deliver and maintain commitments to our customers," said Peters.

EDS, which posted revenue of \$20.7 billion in 2005, expects grid and SOA deployments to contribute significantly to its continued market performance and expansion. In particular, the SI is generating grid and SOA leads and deployments in key industries that include finance, telecommunications, consumer, and manufacturing.

EDS is fully engaged with Oracle through EDS' Agility Alliance, a strategic relationship that has developed over the past three years to facilitate joint delivery of the EDS Agile Enterprise Platform based on Oracle 10g and other vendor technologies. "Oracle is our strategic platform, offering an end-to-end product line with high performance, scalability, and quality, which provides a more complete solution than point vendors with platforms that run SOA on grid," said Peters, adding that SOA and the underlying grid provided by Oracle 10g offer a flexible infrastructure that is leading the move away from "stovepiped" architectures.

The EDS-Oracle technological and strategic alliance has mutually developed Grid and SOA marketing and sales initiatives that have resulted in key project wins, including 10 global solutions currently in the implementation phase with Fortune 500 accounts. Adoption of the Oracle 10g platform for grid and SOA has increased client demand for EDS' services and reduced the cost of the SI's ability to meet that demand. "What's changing is the cost of achieving high-quality service; it's simply now more cost-effective," said Peters, adding that it has allowed the SI to move from "monolithic" to highly "granular" solutions with a lower cost of entry, which expands the company's market to smaller customers. "This is a big step for us, and the Oracle relationship has allowed us to do that."

Adoption of the Oracle 10g platform for grid and SOA has increased client demand for EDS' services and reduced the cost of the SI's ability to meet that demand.

To achieve cost reductions, EDS first made investments in the processes and automation required to manage delivery of grid-based services, which the company said has allowed it to perform at a predictable and high standard of operation with less overhead. EDS considered this an imperative in staying ahead of the market and being ready to respond to customers that view grid and SOA as the next big thing and are looking to deploy now.

"Our clients understand what this technology can do for them, so it's important we deliver services with those benefits when they require them; it opens more doors and demonstrates a higher value proposition," said Peters, adding that results of this approach have been increased market share and margin from the cost reduction in delivering solutions globally and in changing the skills profile of its consultants to engage more effectively with clients on how to transform their businesses.

EDS also cited standards-based technology such as Oracle 10g as reducing maintenance costs by lowering complexity and providing consistency for its customers. The complexity equation is evident in the large number of standalone servers that customers have required to run their businesses effectively. "Each business process is wedded to a specific piece of hardware, which leads to rigidity," said Peters, adding that Oracle Grid allows EDS to transfer business functionality to improve utilization while taking the complexity out of the system, which drives down maintenance costs and TCO.

"Our customers have benefited specifically from solutions based on Oracle Grid technology through its inherent redundancy and scalability that can address new customer business issues as they occur. And what they have can be used to better resource without major investment in infrastructure, thereby maximizing returns on their investment," said Peters.

The value proposition to EDS of the Oracle Grid-SOA platform is in allowing the SI to offer new business solutions to clients faster and cheaper, which allows clients to respond to business issues faster. In fact, becoming grid-enabled has allowed EDS to help customers reduce TCO by up to 50%, according to the SI, primarily as a result of reduced hardware requirements and related costs for maintenance and staffing. "All customers want to reduce overall TCO, but they're also looking for more agility or a wider amount of capability for growth, and Oracle Grid-SOA provides that," said Peters.

The value proposition to EDS of the Oracle Grid-SOA platform is in allowing the SI to offer new business solutions to clients faster and cheaper, which allows clients to respond to business issues faster.

## ***EDS Customer Case Study: Large Multinational Banking Organization***

### **Situation Overview**

The client is an international banking organization based in Europe that focuses on midmarket consumer and commercial clients and a select global clientele. The organization has five regional business units worldwide and serves approximately 20 million clients in 60 countries through 3,000 branches.

The financial institution has regional business units responsible for a client or product segment and three product business units focused on global markets, asset management, and transaction banking. The company also has four customer banking segments: personal, private, business, and corporate.

In one of its European regions, the company needed to address TCO and, especially, time-to-market issues it experienced with its business banking unit. As an example of the latter, the bank's legacy system took from two to six months to deploy and provision its database server and make it operational. The goal of the company was to find a more controlled way of managing and monitoring customers and assets while rationalizing disparate standards inherent in its environment.

"It was also imperative for the client to have a scalable solution since it was implementing a change in strategy in expanding further into the middle market," said Eric Zonneveld, EDS database architect on the project. "For this reason, it needed a solution that could rapidly and on demand go from processing 1 million payments a month to 20 million."

### **The Solution**

EDS made a strong business case for the customer to move away from a legacy hardware and OS configuration to a grid-enabled x86 Linux environment that offered, according to Zonneveld, a clear picture for provisioning, monitoring, patching, and management.

EDS is deploying an Oracle-centric solution in two datacenters using Oracle Database 10g with RAC, which also takes advantage of Oracle Automatic Storage Management and Oracle Enterprise Manager 10g. The datacenters serve all aspects of the bank that use Oracle databases, including OLTP and data warehouse systems as well as batch-oriented to online real-time payment processing. "The grid is designed to host anything. There are dozens of applications and hundreds of databases; it's not a solution for a single set of applications," said Zonneveld.

EDS was able to convince the client to go with the grid-enabled system based on its TCO business case and the value demonstrated through a proof of concept of critical applications in the grid. "This took away any fears the customer may have had," said Zonneveld, adding that EDS is targeting TCO savings of 50% for the bank through the grid environment that is realized by reducing fixed capital expenditures on hardware and through major performance, security, and scalability benefits.

## **The Inter Access Partner Experience**

Inter Access, a privately held SI based in Hilversum, the Netherlands, credits Oracle with expanding its market potential through a commitment to marketing and sales support that includes market development funds, joint go-to-market activities, and the ability to gain access to key personnel.

Through its Oracle partnership, Inter Access participated in 10 events in 2005 that produced many qualified leads, one of which has become a large SOA project. One joint SOA seminar promoted through Oracle's Web site and sales personnel that was expected to bring out 20 potential customers attracted 100. "We understand SOA as a great opportunity, so we're very focused on it this year, and Oracle is helping us become a leader by giving us access to a huge pipeline," said Edwin van den Thillart, manager of solution development.

Inter Access, which has 1,000 employees, has been an Oracle partner for five years and has expertise in Java development and enterprise application integration for midmarket, public sector, and trade, and finance customers. This Certified Advantage Partner runs an Oracle Grid-based Linux datacenter hosting 10,000 live users and has 10 live SOA customers, with many others in the implementation phase. "Partnering with Oracle and 10g allows us to do innovative projects that make optimal use of the technology to deliver the most effective solution for the customer," said Van den Thillart.

Inter Access, which targets public sector, trade and industry, finance, and medium-sized enterprise customers with 20 to 5,000 seats, has experienced increased customer interest in SOA over the past six months alone, which has had a significant overall impact on its business and its volume of SOA-related projects from a services perspective. "The revenue we've generated in SOA projects year over year has increased by hundreds of percentage points," said Van den Thillart.

The value of grid and SOA for the SI comes in the ability of its customers to reuse existing investments and applications and the flexibility it provides in meeting business objectives in highly competitive environments. This is particularly true in markets that experience rapid change and competition, such as for business process outsourcing (BPO) providers, where Inter Access has a client focused on mortgage processing for financial services firms.

"Inter Access' services are in high demand from customers that have very different process requirements and have committed to adopting a new application and architecture to address the changing and individual needs of their customers and to keep up with the growth of their service to their customers," said Van den Thillart.

A key contributor to Inter Access' success is its ability to use the technology to provide a customer value proposition that addresses lowering cost and improving productivity while increasing flexibility in the business. This value proposition is achieved primarily through the empowering of front-office personnel. "It allows us to reduce our customers' maintenance costs through reuse of business objects that can be used to empower business analysts rather than the more complex objects that can only be used by developers," said Van den Thillart.

Customer satisfaction is also of primary importance to Inter Access, and providing a solution that can meet the demands of its clients' competitive markets is a key differentiator for the SI. "Oracle Grid allows us to meet the shifts in customer demand by being easily adaptable to changing business requirements, which makes for a happy, more satisfied customer," said Van den Thillart.

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The combination of grid and SOA enables existing IT infrastructure investments to provide more flexible business functionality with rapid and efficient scalability to deploy new functionality as it is required, according to the SI. This value is evident in an Inter Access customer that provides a hosted salary administration application for schools. What began with 150 schools supported through an Oracle Grid architecture grew to 800 schools within a year. "We haven't had to change the application; we just brought on more blade servers, and they're still running in production with those schools just fine," said Van den Thillart.

A large part of Inter Access' staff focuses on grid and SOA sales and deployment, and the company is planning to hire additional personnel in the near future. "Besides a business focus, we currently spend a great deal of time on training and recruitment," said Van den Thillart.

### ***Inter Access Customer Case Study: Municipality of Ridderkerk***

#### **Situation Overview**

Local government in the Netherlands is divided into 467 different communities (municipalities), each of which, in law, is an autonomous unit required to perform various services on behalf of its citizens and central government. There are extreme variations in the size of these municipalities. The Municipality of Ridderkerk, close to the large city of Rotterdam, is one of the smaller municipalities, serving 45,000 citizens and employing a staff of approximately 350. Of these employees, the IT organization comprises only seven professionals.

As can be imagined, the autonomous nature of these bodies and the differences in scale have led to many variations of IT infrastructure to deliver what are essentially similar services. The services are supported by numerous back-office applications, and the traditional user interface has been via a front-office function where a number of manned service desks (this number varied between four and nine in the case of Ridderkerk) provide a human interface for in-person visitors or to process paper-based forms.

As with many local and national government organizations, the municipality had paid little attention to surveying its citizens to establish how these clients would prefer to interact with the available services. It was recognized that citizens would need a single point of contact that would provide access to all services, and that single interface should be available via a number of entry points to include, but not be restricted to, the Internet, email, telephone, and in-person visits. However, the top priority was seen to be the provision of a single physical front desk, where staff would be provided with a single integrated application through which to provide greater responsiveness in addressing client needs.

## **The Solution**

Inter Access project implementation — an SOA approach to integrating back-end systems through an Oracle-based middleware layer to provide an integrated application delivering a consistent interface for citizen and front-office interaction — commenced in early 2004. The first live implementation of the SOA infrastructure and run-time environment was in October 2004.

This implementation period of approximately six months included a degree of "wait time" while scope and design decisions were being made. The approach taken was to develop a scalable integration solution that would be portable to different municipalities where different combinations of back-office applications were in place. Municipalities typically have roughly 300 such back-office applications, of which some 20–30 are significant. The implementation at the Municipality of Ridderkerk continues to progress with further services planned.

The intention is to leave in place the established back-office applications and to maximize the reuse and longevity of these systems. The "midoffice" processing tier fills the role of enterprise service bus, providing message transformation, routing, and persistence, and additionally caching information in an operational data store. The front office is a new composite application used by staff in the physical front office, but it is also available to the public via the Internet and is capable of supporting access from different device types.

The heart of the system is the midoffice layer, which is constructed entirely on Oracle Fusion Middleware and Oracle Database products. The Oracle Fusion Middleware tools are felt by Inter Access to be technically complete, particularly with respect to integration.

Oracle BPEL Process Manager offered reduced complexity and greater adaptability and became the choice for the orchestration component. This is the most important component of the midoffice layer. It provides technology-independent mapping between all the services that need to be invoked to satisfy user requirements.

It is worth emphasizing that the primary purpose of the project was to enhance the accessibility of services to the public. "Accessibility" in this sense includes a single point of access, consistency of use across multiple services, availability of services from multiple connection points and devices, and continuous availability of services outside the normal hours of business. There were also significant time savings for some processes (from 10 days to 2 days in a typical process), which improved the level of service to citizens.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ORACLE AND ITS PARTNERS**

Market momentum and interest in SOA and grid computing continue to build. However, although many in the IT ranks understand the technological value propositions behind grid and SOA, they must elicit vendors to help articulate specifics to their business counterparts.

Many enterprises have been holding back on making large investments in technology and are considering carefully what is available and the associated short- and long-term costs and value. Vendors choosing to focus and differentiate their offerings with capabilities to support these infrastructure needs must be able to show the business value to the particular enterprise. In many cases, the value proposition may need to supersede the mere desire of a prospective customer to shift toward these architectural premises and must be attached to a dedicated business goal or project. This can place services providers in a particularly good position because they are more often brought in for explicit consulting projects.

In many cases, the value proposition may need to supersede the mere desire of a prospective customer to shift toward these architectural premises and must be attached to a dedicated business goal or project.

Implementing SOA is a long-term development and deployment proposition, bringing opportunity for vendors and partners to engage with and forge lasting relationships with their clients over time. The value of SOA can mean greater independence for organizations to build, integrate, and manage their own environments, forcing IT vendors to further innovate — whether through technology or new business models and support. Oracle should work collaboratively with its partners to focus on addressing specific industry domain needs, building what it can into product capabilities.

There has been good progress in bringing greater awareness of grid computing to the general marketplace beyond its traditional base of the scientific and academic communities. Oracle sees its partners at the forefront of educating potential customers on the value of such technology. Nevertheless, the onus is on the company to stay involved, especially via training and technical enablement, to help its partners through the sales cycle. Building and leveraging best-practice methodologies and sharing business value models will help both partners and their customers with planning and implementation guidance.

An overall challenge for the industry is to stay focused on creating applications that meet SOA design tenets and that can be optimized in a grid computing environment. To date, the creation of specific applications has been gradual, primarily within the ranks of industry that typically build their own solutions. With its Fusion initiative, as Oracle rolls out modified and new versions of its own application base, it will undoubtedly pull through market opportunities for its services partners to help customers with migrations or new implementations or with customizing solutions that leverage some of its newer capabilities. The company is one of a few vendors in an important position to bring SOA-based applications to the masses and move the adoption of this type of architecture across the chasm. From a grid perspective, opportunities beyond implementation and initial configuration activities, such as additional performance testing and outsourced or hosted management arrangements, should ultimately develop.

With its Fusion initiative, as Oracle rolls out modified and new versions of its own application base, it will undoubtedly pull through market opportunities for its services partners to help customers with migrations or new implementations or with customizing solutions that leverage some of its newer capabilities.

Oracle's extensive application and database customers are obvious prospects for the company and its partners to pursue SOA and grid market opportunities. To extend beyond this traditional base, Oracle also continues to heavily invest in its technologies to ensure that it can compete as a general-purpose platform provider. The measure of its future success is deeply tied to its ability to continue to build a robust partner ecosystem that builds on its technologies as a foundation. The company acknowledges that it needs to leave significant room for its partners to build value and grow. Oracle faces a specific challenge to integrate its various acquired enterprise applications into one unified architecture and is making significant progress toward this stated goal.

One of the leading reasons that enterprises pursue SOA is to tie together heterogeneous systems, from various generations of technology and from various vendors. Most enterprises desire the flexibility to choose the solution that best fits their business needs rather than worry about what technologies are compatible. IDC recommends that Oracle continue to hold regular interoperability sessions with partners and, even more importantly, with competitors. These sessions will help Oracle communicate to the market how it has embraced standards and can fulfill its "hot-pluggable" vision without mandating use of specific elements of its infrastructure.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Summarizing Partner Value

The SIs IDC interviewed have already recognized the following benefits by engaging with Oracle's specific grid and SOA partner program initiatives with:

- ☒ Access to critical technical training and sales support that helped accelerate their own competencies and win key projects deploying Oracle Grid-SOA solutions
- ☒ Joint sales activities and go-to-market initiatives with Oracle's field force, with access to key Oracle personnel to help generate and nurture leads on a global basis and a regional basis
- ☒ Oracle assistance in tactical and strategic business planning and guidance on product life cycle that enable partners to better plan, resource, and develop their Oracle business
- ☒ Oracle's marketing of the commercial value of grid-SOA technology to accelerate customer awareness and SI deployments
- ☒ Business growth via the ability to address new opportunities for net-new revenue, higher profit margins, and access to or hiring of personnel

Some of the key business and operational benefits experienced by SIs and their customers by leveraging SOA and grid-based constructs supported by Oracle 10g technology included:

- ☒ Lowered IT cost and complexity through deploying virtualization and grid capabilities and in allowing for system upgrades and maintenance without service interruption
- ☒ Increased customer productivity and responsiveness to ongoing changes in business process requirements and the ability to more rapidly and cost-effectively deliver new solutions and services
- ☒ Maximized legacy and/or underused server and storage capacity to deliver high availability and system scalability to allow for expansion requirements
- ☒ Standards-based technology for reduced maintenance costs by lowering complexity and providing consistency
- ☒ Reuse of existing customer investments and applications

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## Recommendations

Oracle is reaching out to meet the needs of SIs through its partnering mandate to build significant momentum for grid and SOA and the use of its technologies. The three SIs interviewed for this document have already experienced broad benefits from engaging with Oracle and participating in both OPN and Oracle Grid and SOA enablement initiatives to identify and close deals. However, the ultimate value proposition for these partners has been in leveraging the technology to assist their customers in having more meaningful and cost-effective interaction with businesswide IT systems that drive business results. By combining Oracle's technology, such as Oracle Database 10g and Oracle Fusion Middleware, with their own expertise and knowledge, these SIs were able to contribute to building new and enhanced processes and reducing maintenance costs and overall complexity for their clients.

By combining Oracle's technology, such as Oracle Database 10g and Oracle Fusion Middleware, with their own expertise and knowledge, these SIs were able to contribute to building new and enhanced processes and reducing maintenance costs and overall complexity for their clients.

Oracle anticipates that its services partners will be able to build significant business opportunities by pursuing SOA and grid constructs, including IT transformation and consulting engagements; monitoring and management services; application migration and database upgrades; and additional development, integration, deployment, and testing activities. Many such projects will also potentially pull through other activities related to network and hardware configurations and installations. IDC believes another key target area over the next few years will be how these initiatives fit in with legacy modernization projects.

Some additional points to consider include the following:

- ☒ For Oracle to continue morphing into a full-fledged deployment and management platform provider, it must be as open and transparent as possible with vendor and customer communities. Oracle's partners should continue to place pressure on the company to build into its infrastructure any specific requirements they deem necessary to drive opportunity and compatibility with other technologies they need to support.
- ☒ The economic and flexible use of commodity systems is much of the value proposition underlying grid computing. As SIs gain more reference cases, they in turn can provide the much-needed proof points to helping the more general population understand the bottom-line impact. For example, specific ROI and TCO frameworks and tools should be developed and leveraged.
- ☒ One of the concerns voiced by many enterprises regarding the adoption of SOA is the impact it may have on performance and transaction integrity, especially as these environments scale out and become more complex. Oracle and its partners should take advantage of whatever differentiating capabilities Oracle's technologies offer and supply benchmarks based on real-world scenarios.

- ☒ As Web services and SOA-based solutions roll out, many organizations will turn to experienced SIs to help them through their growing pains. Vendors that can convincingly demonstrate the benefit of these technologies in the context of specific industry processes stand to exercise great influence in the market. SIs should consider where they can take their existing expertise and IP assets within specific vertical market domains and build out solutions leveraging standards-based infrastructure and SOA and grid constructs. Often, SIs will gain experience from early engagements and reference these learnings for exposure in specific segments of the market for follow-on opportunities.
- ☒ Targets for SOA and grid often include those use cases that depend on highly collaborative processes and sharing of informational resources; enable activities that may include multiple parties (or systems), whether internal or external to the organization; involve environments that are required to deal with extreme volatility in load and type of systems engaged (in particular for grid); or support for environments in flux, such as for a merger or an acquisition. SIs should examine their customer and prospect portfolios to see if SOA and grid might add value to their implementations.
- ☒ Vendors should understand that most organizations will continue to be under duress with tight budgets and resources. Even though on face value, SOA and grid computing can potentially help lead to greater worker and system productivity and cut overall IT costs, enterprises have much more at stake. They are in need of risk mitigation, and any change can present complications. To ensure that no downtime is experienced, as well as for other reasons, many organizations will need to make sure that their systems are and will remain in compliance with any government-, industry-, or company-mandated regulations and policies. SIs that build up an expertise in these areas and that can help organizations with ensuring that their systems are in check will be well-positioned to address such fears and offer additional services as needed. SIs could also consider leveraging Oracle's technologies in business intelligence, identity management, security, and compliance to complement such initiatives.

Oracle and its partners should be able to keep the momentum rolling if they continue to focus toward the future, beyond the mere implementation of SOA and grid as technologies in and of themselves, and concentrate on the specific business benefits that these dynamic architectures enable.

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