

# COMPUTERWORLD

Turn SOA on its Head....  
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Bobby Soni, chief strategy officer at Webify Solutions Inc.

business services should be ready in Q3. Pricing for Webify's Industry Fabric software starts at about \$250,000.

... to get business services instead of Web services. Bobby Soni, chief strategy officer at Webify Solutions Inc., contends that many IT vendors are approaching service-oriented architecture projects from the wrong direction. "IBM, Oracle, BEA, SAP and others are going at the SOA problem from the bottom up," he says. "You need to go from the top down." Soni argues that his competitors are too focused on stringing together lots of interrelated components, which is good technology, but not necessarily good for your business. At Austin-based Webify, "we do not create Web services," he says. "We create business services." That is, the company builds Web services with functions that are specific to vertical industries. For example, it sells software that recognizes an independent insurance agent's overall business value to an insurer, so the policies he writes can be given the appropriate priority. Webify's software virtualizes all transactions, Soni says. You can't do that, he adds, without understanding the business domain. The next industry that Webify will target is telecommunications -- a set of telecom

Synchronize the hiring practices in HR ...



Michael Gregoire, CEO of Taleo Corp.

earned the academic credentials they claim and see if they are highly sought after -- not necessarily by other employers but, say, by the police.

... and your IT department. In [last week's issue](#), Computerworld columnist Thornton A. May blasted human resources as being "out of sync with IT work," to quote the headline on his column. Michael Gregoire, CEO of San Francisco-based Taleo Corp., doesn't disagree. Yet he sympathizes with HR folks, especially those at large companies. Automation is paramount for HR, he says. You need a system that matches skills with open jobs and then tracks the skills of employees for as long as they're with your organization so you can identify the best internal candidates for open jobs. Taleo's namesake hosted service does just that, Gregoire claims. Next month, Taleo will add extensive "on-boarding" features for adding new employees, he says. Once someone is hired, Taleo's service will, among other things, alert IT to deliver a computer and assign appropriate usage rights in network directories. Also being added are Web services hooks into external databases, so hiring managers can check whether potential workers actually

Merger mania forces CIOs to look ...

... carefully at the business prospects of their best-of-breed vendors. Many of the companies that supply cutting-edge IT tools and services tend to be small and are run by entrepreneurs. You knew that already, of course. But do you know what their long-term business plans are? You should, especially now, says Eric Gebaide, managing director at Innovation Advisors Inc. in New York. His company, which he refers to as "the tallest dwarf in the village" of investment banks, advises both buyers and sellers of tech vendors on deals worth \$100 million and under. Gebaide says he thinks 2006 will be a good year for him because "everyone is feeling good about revenue flow" and sellers believe their company valuations are peaking. Add to that the limited prospects that small companies have of going public, and you get the perfect storm for mergers and acquisitions to occur. Gebaide advises CIOs to have heart-to-hearts with their best-of-breed technology suppliers about who they might consider to be potential buyers. You can even assist, he says, by being a reference account and talking to a current vendor's suitors. That might help you get a better understanding of how a tool you depend on would fit into a new owner's plans.



Eric Gebaide,  
managing director  
at Innovation  
Advisors Inc.

See supply chain fraud and overpayments ...

... before they happen. That's the claim of Michael Lustig, CEO of Apex Analytix Inc. in Greensboro, N.C. His company's FirstStrike software checks invoices from your supply chain against purchasing-contract discounts to ensure that your business is paying the prices it's supposed to be paying. According to Lustig, overpayments can be equal to as much as 0.1% of a company's revenue. And although transaction fraud on sales to customers is an aberration, it does happen, he says, adding that FirstStrike can help there as well. The software can spot high-risk billing addresses, such as prisons. Lustig says it also calculates the safest areas in which to do business, with New Hampshire and the Corn Belt usually ranking among them. The Southeastern states tend to be the source of more fraud than elsewhere, he notes. Next month, FirstStrike will add support for multicurrency transactions and value-added tax estimates to help companies manage their European suppliers' contracts. There are several pricing options, including fees based on the amount of money FirstStrike recovers for your company.



Michael Lustig,  
CEO of Apex  
Analytix Inc.