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from the editors of CRM magazine

News

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Go Real-Time or Go Home

Experts at DCI's Real-Time Enterprise Conference say companies must operate in real-time to survive

by [Martin Schneider](#)

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Addressing an SRO crowd in the ballroom of San Francisco's Palace Hotel, the keynote speakers at DCI's premiere Real-Time Enterprise Conference held this week said that companies must be able to access vital information in real time to compete in a changing business atmosphere. They also agreed that the real-time enterprise is not about the enabling technologies, but about the business processes they support.

George Schussel, founder and chairman of DCI, called the real-time enterprise the "single most-exciting IT initiative in years," and noted that companies need to integrate their systems in real-time to cut expenses, increase revenues, and enhance the overall customer experience enough to create a long-term competitive advantage.

Barton Goldenberg, a cochairman of the conference and president of ISM Inc., said the business process and technology enabling the real-time enterprise will come to be known as "the greatest accomplishment of the decade."

Goldenberg cited examples of companies like Wal-Mart and General Motors that are already using real-time strategies to maintain what he calls long-term competitive leadership. And Hewlett-Packard Executive Vice President Janice Chaffin noted that early adopters of real-time technologies and processes could soon hold a virtual monopoly in their industries, because the real-time enterprise drives revenue growth as well as customer loyalty.

"Customers only back winners," said James Hall, managing partner, technology and research of Accenture, adding that companies must immediately work toward becoming real-time enterprises, because the current business climate gives customers significant power over sellers. Companies need to realize real-time efficiencies to stay competitive and meet customer needs, he said.

Tom Siebel, chairman and CEO of Siebel Systems Inc., said that Web services based on either .Net or J2EE architecture will be the driving force in enabling the real-time enterprise. "Web services bring the opportunity to breathe new life into a variety of existing applications," he said.

All the keynote speakers agreed that wide penetration of the real-time enterprise is still a few years off, but that companies should begin now by taking small steps toward becoming real-time enterprises. Goldenberg said that companies first need a clear vision of what they plan to achieve by doing so. "It's a process, not an event," he said, adding that technology is a "minuscule piece of a plan's success."

"The real-time enterprise is a natural progression [from CRM]. We're not going to stop it; it's where the world wants to go," Goldenberg said. "But it's not about the processes or the technology, it's about the people using the technology who must see its value. This industry must be built on the business value, not the technology. This is not happening tomorrow. It's an evolution happening over time: 2002 was the incubation period. By 2006 it will be a hot new market like CRM in the late 1990s; and by 2010 it will be roaring full blast."

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