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Focus On What Really Matters -- Don't ignore long-lasting technologies for the latest fads, the CIO of Capital One warns

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HIGHLIGHT: As Capital One Financial Corp.'s CIO, **Gregor Bailar** serves as the company's technology strategist, focusing on the information architecture that supports the company's information-based approach, business-technology planning, and development of IT-financial strategies to drive business.

Bailar joined Capital One in 2001 from the Nasdaq Stock Market, where he had served as CIO and executive VP for operations and technology since 1998. Most of his career has involved leading large and complex organizations. He joined Nasdaq after four years at Citibank, where he served as managing director and VP of advanced development for global corporate banking. Before that, he served in various capacities at Hewlett-Packard, Next Computer, Perot Systems, and Trirex Systems. He earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Dartmouth College.

Bailar's management philosophy has been heavily influenced by the high-powered managers with whom he has worked. At HP, he realized the value of enabling people to do their work and have fun at the same time. At Citibank, he learned about scale and dealing with things in a procedure-oriented way. At Nasdaq he gained expertise in urgency-the need to be "up," with millisecond response times. Working with Steve Jobs at Next taught him the value of perseverance. "Steve set the bar high; he knew you could do more than you thought you were capable of doing," Bailar says. And working for Perot taught him the value of salesmanship and drive. (He does a dead-on impersonation of Ross Perot: "Got to get out there and sell something, boy!")

Innovation for its own sake has little value; it's being able to incorporate innovation into processes that drives business value, Bailar says. Many companies make the mistake of becoming enamored with the latest fad technologies, overlooking those that are less glamorous but more long-lasting. Says Bailar, "I'm not interested in technologies, I'm interested in creating great systems."

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