

MicroScope

Vendors invest in the future

by Simon Quicke
simon.quicke@rbi.co.uk

Software vendors have launched a number of initiatives to ensure the future is bright and the channel is strong enough to take advantage.

One approach has been to target SME resellers, help them improve their skills and provide them with incentives to increase the volume of business they are generating.

But running parallel are efforts to establish links with start-ups that could well turn out to be strong channel customers in the future.

Those providing business advice, access to technology help and links into the venture capitalist community include Oracle and Microsoft.

Chris Baker, senior vice president technology, UK, Ireland and Israel at Oracle, said the UK lagged behind in being able to grow a large base of start-ups because traditionally this country had been "strong on innovation but weak on commercialisation".



Baker: "The UK still lags behind Europe in terms of the incentivism"

"We feel positive about some of the things that are going on, but we still lag behind Europe in terms of the incentivism," he said.

Baker added that Oracle put no money into the companies it helped, but tried to give the support and the business connections that

would help them succeed.

Oliver Chadwick, CEO of CreditIQ, said his start-up, which provides banks with real-time reports of customer data, had gone through several business models and evolutions as it fine-tuned its business and was now exploiting

the Oracle database technology.

"You get a different view by teaming up with another business," he said.

Mindy Wilson, head of campaign for manufacturing and engineering at the government supported Make Your Mark Campaign, said that although television programmes such as *Dragon's Den* helped put entrepreneurs in the spotlight, there were still too few examples of support for entrepreneurs.

She said last week's spotlight on innovation during Enterprise Week would have helped, but there was still too much focus on success and failure compared with in the US.

Other vendors have set up schemes to stir the entrepreneurial spirit or encourage venture capitalists to work with technology start-ups.

Microsoft has not only been pushing its accelerator programme to encourage businesses, but has been working with students at school level to encourage innovative thinking. ■