As this year comes to a close, we get around to decide which CI industry stories were the most important. Was Apple buying Beats, or was it Jeremy Burckhart's return to the industry? Take a moment to gather your Top 10 before comparing it with ours below!

Big names take on automation: Home automation was the new hotness of 2014. How hot? Google coughed up no less than $3.2 billion to buy smart thermostat maker Nest Labs, Samsung revealed the Smart Home platform at CES 2014 and Apple integrated the HomeKit device control platform in iOS 8. Expect the smart home opportunity to grow even bigger come next year.

Jeremy Burkhardt is back: the man behind SpeakerCraft made his return this year with Origin Acoustics. The comeback was not without its controversies, as it followed the failed acquisition of outdoor audio maker SoundCast, not to mention non-compete lawsuits from former employers Nortek.

Pioneer drops home electronics: Pioneer had enough in 2014, seeing how it sold 51% of Pioneer Home Electronics to private equity company Baring as part of a new operation joined by Onkyo. Why did it sell out? The company clearly sees no future in CE, and instead wants to focus on the more lucrative auto electronics market.

Apple buys Beats: Apple's biggest acquisition (yet) was shrouded by weeks of speculation--

so much so it led to disbelief on our part -- yet, come end May 2014, it still happened. So why did Apple spend $3.2 billion for headphone maker? Apple is still finding a way to integrate the Beats brand with its own, but we're sure it is already finding use for Beats' star co-founders, Jimmy Iovine and Andre "Dr. Dre" Romelle Young.

TVs rebounds (somewhat): The ailing TV market gets some good news, as DisplaySearch says Q3 2014 shipments are up by 4% Y-o-Y through primary TVs entering a renewed replacement cycle, at least in some regions. 4K TVs also show some shipment acceleration, and increased competition (leading to cheaper prices) should lead to more sales.

Goodbye plasma, mixed fortunes for OLED: In more TV news, 2014 marks the near end of plasma TVs, as China's Changhong is the only company making such TVs in the world following the dropping of the technology by LG, Samsung and Panasonic. In the meantime TV makes appear to be putting OLED technology aside in favor of quantum dots, even if one can also argue LCD will continue to rule over TVs, be it HD or UHD/4K.

Loewe finds new owner: German high-end CE maker Loewe got lucky in 2014, as it managed to find a new owner (Munich-based Stargate Capital) following the withdrawal of funding from investment group Panthera.

Netflix expands into Europe: Netflix made "significant" expansion into Europe this year as it entered Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Luxembourg. As a result IHS says international customers will make 20% of overall Netflix subscribers by end 2014.

Amazon makes STB: In a confirmation of long-running rumours online retailer turned hardware maker Amazon revealed the Fire TV, a console-slash-STB in the shape of a small black box handling streaming media content and games.

RIP George Feldstein: Crestron founder and industry legend George Feldstein passed away in 2014 at age 73 after a battle with brain cancer. A "Made-in-America" success story, George Feldstein founded Crestron back in 1969, and currently the company employs over 2500 people and is estimated to be worth around $1 billion.