

The Rise and The Fall

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Roman aqueduct of Luynes, Photo credit: Daniel Jolivet

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The rise and the fall of a society

The only way to enforce the *egalitarianism* is to mess up the score system which breaks the education system in one basic aim: acknowledge people about their own abilities.

Once the *egalitarianism* becomes a driving trend into education system, it will enforce itself along the time like a vicious loop. This will move the entire society forward to deeper form of mediocracy: the perceived band [*which is the range in which the merit scale has been wrap by collective biased perception*] will get tiny and tinier along the time. Until the total lack of meritocracy will degrade the group or the society at the point that it will collapse by itself (decline) or by external pressures (collapse).

Source: [The Meaning of Mediocracy](#).

Talent mind-set as company strategy

Enron management did exactly what McKinsey consultants advised that companies ought to do in order to succeed in the modern economy. It hired and rewarded the very best and the very brightest. The company was promoting people based on personal evaluations that were not related to overall performance, and the needs of customers and shareholders were secondary to those of its "stars". And these, among other factors, drove Enron into bankruptcy and oblivion.

Rise and fall of Enron

Key events in the growth and bankruptcy of the seventh largest U.S. corporation.

Up and coming

1985 Formed from merger of Houston Natural Gas and InterNorth (Omaha, Neb.)

Late 1980s Created new market by trading in energy as a commodity like oil; began buying interests in utilities, communication, finance worldwide

1996-2001 Six times on Fortune's list of "America's most innovative companies"

1998 Begins building, trading "broadband" communication capacity

1999 Starts EnronOnline, Internet site for trading oil, bandwidth, other commodities

2000 Reports revenue of \$101 billion

Sudden crash

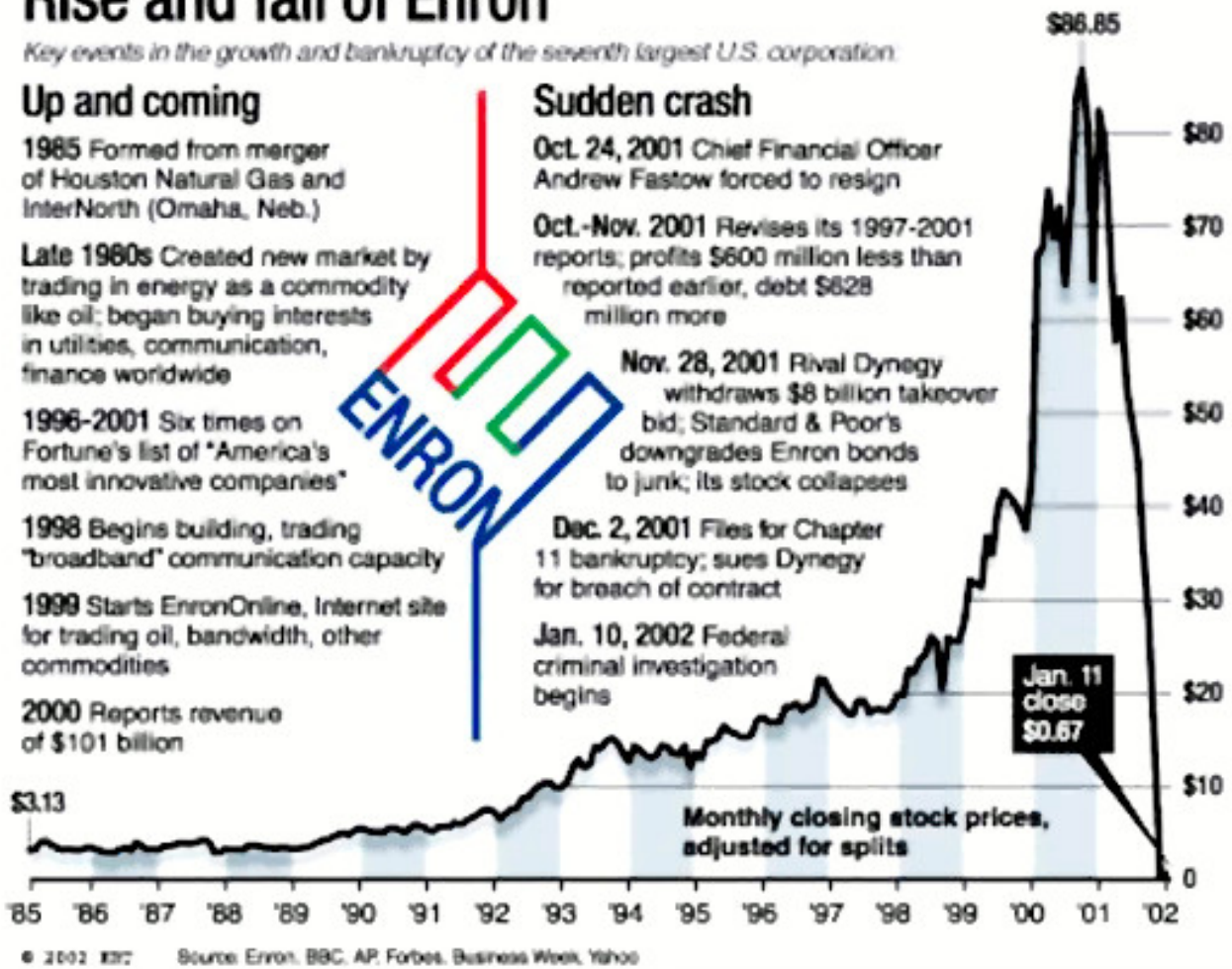
Oct. 24, 2001 Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow forced to resign

Oct.-Nov. 2001 Revises its 1997-2001 reports; profits \$600 million less than reported earlier, debt \$628 million more

Nov. 28, 2001 Rival Dynegy withdraws \$8 billion takeover bid; Standard & Poor's downgrades Enron bonds to junk; its stock collapses

Dec. 2, 2001 Files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy; sues Dynegy for breach of contract

Jan. 10, 2002 Federal criminal investigation begins



The reasons for its collapse are complex and complicated. One fact remains however undisputed: Enron failed not because of the lack of talent, but in spite of its talent mindset and many talented employees.

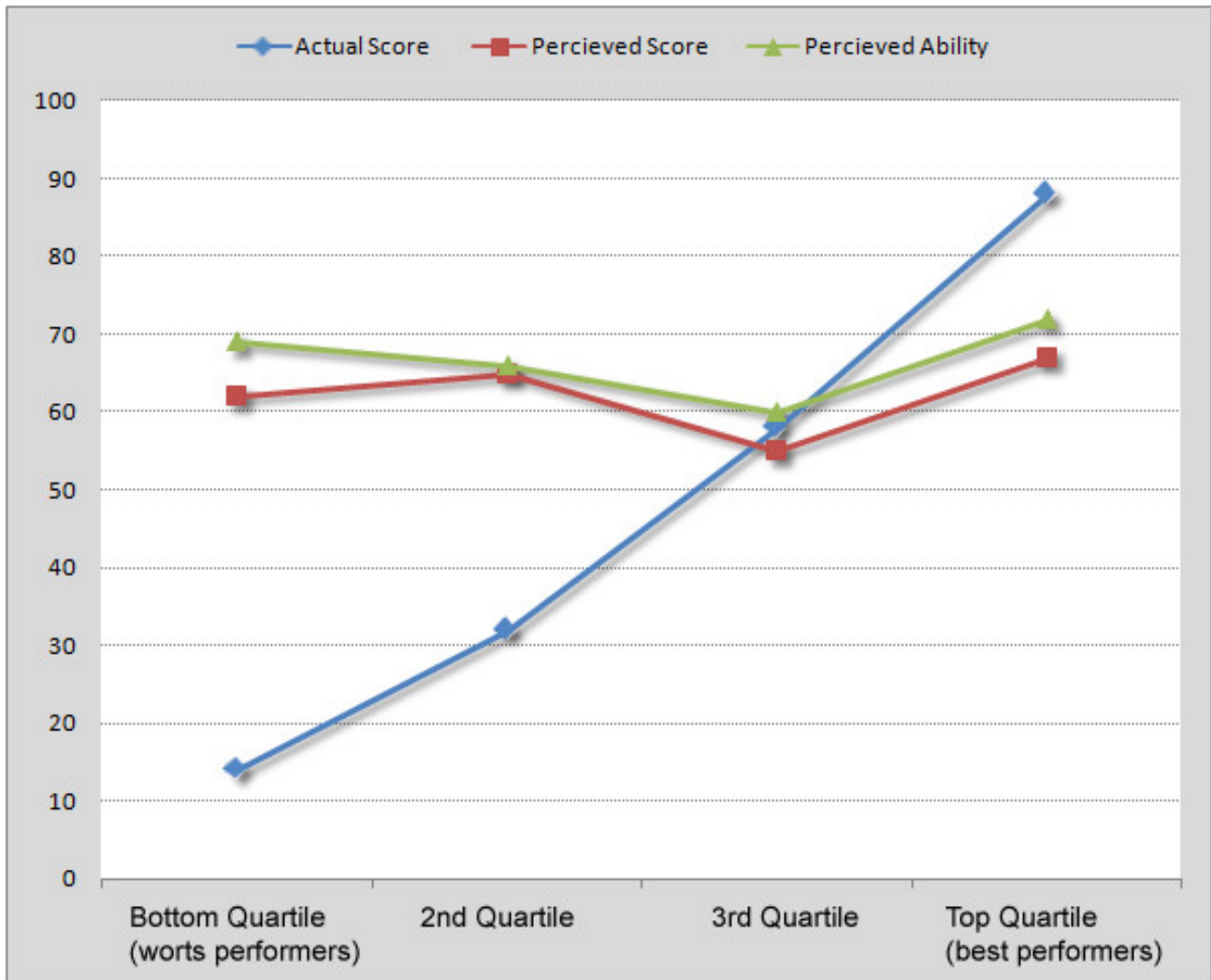
Enron believed and only hired the best business and MBA graduates from the top US Business Schools. This is its first strategic error. Indeed, smart people are not measured by school grades and MBAs from top universities, and doing so make them overrated.

Source: [Fooled AGAIN by The Talent Mindset](#) – June 10, 2016.

The tragic error in both scenarios

Looking at the *Dunning-Kruger* effect and the *Impostor Syndrome* as two sides of the same phenomenon, clearly indicates that there is a methodical problem in education system that does not allow people to know and to value themselves correctly.

It is highly probable that this lack of recognition of themselves will impact on the recognition of merit of the others, as well.



When this happens, the overall balance would be in favour of the two bottom quartiles, penalising the two top quartiles, mainly switching the best half with the worst half, in any context in which it is not possible or easy to establish or rely on an effective score system.

Source: [Mediocracy](#) – April 26th, 2017.

The rise and the fall of the Roman Empire

Smart agricultural practices and an extensive grain-trade network enabled the Romans to thrive in the water-limited environment of the Mediterranean, a new study shows.

But the stable food supply brought about by these measures promoted population growth and urbanisation, pushing the Empire closer to the limits of its food resources.

The research, by an international team of hydrologists and Roman historians, is published today in *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, an open access journal of the European Geosciences Union (EGU).

Source: [Water's role in the rise and fall of the Roman Empire](#) – December 12th, 2014.

Wait a minute...

Does it not sound weird that the Roman Empire fall *because* grain or food shortage?

That was just a symptom not a cause. They were not in shortage of food, talents, gold, labour, technologies, infrastructures, etc. At a certain point they were lacking of a proper metric to choose their elite. Due a poor metric, generation by generation, the men in charge lost also the fundamentals about managing the empire. This was the cause that drove the fall and the fall drove the shortage of anything included grain and food.

| S'ils n'ont plus de pain, qu'ils mangent de la brioche – Last Queen of France.

This famous quote has been attributed to Maria Antonietta d'Asburgo-Lorena 1792, wife of Luigi XVI Last King of France known as *Le Roi Soleil*, but it could have its root in Chinese culture as well, pronounced by one of the Celestial Emperor. Along the history, fierce critics was always thrown against the elite but the lack of common sense, it is the most probable the one preceding the fall of their power and the end of their time.

The fall of the common sense

Notions could be learnt, intelligence could be bought, talents could be scout but when common sense detaches from the sense of reality there is any other way than falling.

