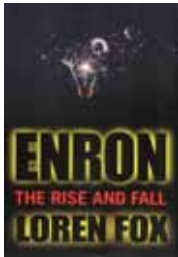


# Criminals & Comics



**Enron: The Rise  
And Fall**  
**By: Loren Fox**  
**Publisher: Wiley**  
**Price: \$52.95**

**T**he Enron story will be told and re-told over the next few years. Each telling will reveal yet another delicious tidbit of intrigue. But all accounts should add up to the same thing; this is an example of corporate greed and exploitation leaders and managers everywhere should study and remember.

There are already more tantalisingly written books about Enron on the market, but *The rise and fall* has an important place in the genre. It is a generally dispassionate account, a journeyman journalist's rendition of the sequence of events, the key players, their strategic plays and their contributions to the final eclipse.

The success story turned sour is, as is always the case, about human accomplishments and weaknesses rather than anything generic. Even the innovative elements focused on how to deliver more money rather than how to more efficiently and effectively service the needs of customers. And that is the real moral in this case, because Enron packed itself to the gunnels with brilliant people.

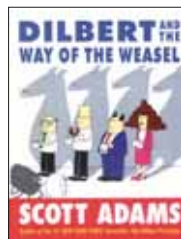
Enron, as an insightful story in *The New Yorker* magazine pointed out last year, was the "ultimate" talent company. Meticulously following the McKinsey & Company – America's largest and most prestigious management consulting firm – model of talent mind-set orthodoxy, the partners in crime created a universe of stars. That they crashed and burned should explain something about people and the way they react to role model leadership and self indulgence. "We hire very smart people and pay them more than

they think they are worth," a McKinsey partner said about Enron's recruitment policy, which the consultancy directed.

Perhaps you can relate to the process at work here by thinking about personal examples. Ever noticed how those who become rich or influential almost simultaneously assume they have equally suddenly been endowed with a commensurate multiple of IQ? They are invariably more vocal, assertive and expressive of their own views. Confidence comes with cash I guess. What happens when the cash runs out frequently reveals what you always suspect was true. Intelligence is not a by-product of wealth generation; it does not rise and fall with a share price.

For those willing to read between the lines, *Enron: The rise and fall* is a story about money and power (please forgive the pun) and how they can generate greatness and, equally effectively destroy individuals and the enterprises they serve.

Loren Fox is a former senior editor at Business 2.0 and, apparently, an authority on business strategy. True, the book identifies the strategies deployed at Enron to turn itself into one of the world's largest energy enterprises. If the writer fails to tell the rest of the story, it is because he overlooks the leadership strategy that drove the people that ultimately turned Enron into an investor's energy burn out. *RJB*



**Dilbert And The Way  
Of The Weasel**  
**By: Scott Adams**  
**Publisher: Harper  
Business, Harper-  
Collins Publishers**  
**Price: \$31.99**

Some intentionally humorous business books, like C Northcote Parkinson's *Parkinson's Law* or *Up The Organization* by Robert Townsend, also made some pertinent, even wise, points about the way companies are run. Other business

books like the cash-in-quick attempts to portray people like General 'Stormin' Norman' Schwarzkopf and Donald Rumsfeld as 'business leaders' are unintentionally funny.

The Dilbert books published by HarperBusiness are almost a category in themselves. They're certainly very funny and the setting is the business world, but they traverse well-worn clichés rather than providing anything insightful about corporate behaviour. They're not really business books but they certainly haven't done any damage to HarperBusiness' bottom line.

The creative premise behind *Dilbert And The Way Of The Weasel* is that "people are weasels" as in behaving in a weasel-like manner. The commercial premise is that text (a) bulks up the book nicely and (b) makes it look less like a collection of comic strips. Author/cartoonist Scott Adams presents his revelation as an advance on the original Dilbert principle: "A retarded chimpanzee can drink a case of beer and still perform most management functions."

The text and cartoons deal with weaseling managers, professionals, marketers, CEOs as well as weasel products, motivation, philosophy and so on.

Scott Adams writes entertainingly; his cartoon humour is, after all, in the dialogue rather than the simple, stylised drawings. Possibly Adams sees his future more as a writer than a cartoonist; his latest book has the same number of strips as the earlier *Dogbert's Management Handbook* but is twice the length.

Overall, though, fans will welcome Adams' latest offering and there must be lots of them because the first four Dilbert titles all made the *New York Times* best-seller list. **IFG M**

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