

Case studies have no genes

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It's possible some business types have not undergone a case study. But from the thousands that have it's time to ask, what has been learned? We learn what went wrong from failed businesses. We learn what went right from successful businesses.

It's tempting to assume that success results from avoiding what has failed and duplicating what has succeeded. This is not true. Success is not the result of duplicating the past. Success results from parlaying with the future. Case studies cannot tell us about future behavior, because there is no case to study in the future.

In short, case studies have no genes. They report past performance, they cannot report future behavior.

A business manager with prolific case study knowledge should no more expect to duplicate a successful business than a sports team by like process should expect to duplicate a national champion.

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Success in business, like national championships, comes from anticipating and parlaying with future behavior. This talent is the scarcest of all business resources. Managing this talent is the scarcest of all business skills.

Talent and the environment in which it is managed are the nature and nurture of all organizations and these elements while identifiable are not inheritable. No case study to date has shown how the scarcity of these two elements can be made plentiful for distribution to all who desire them.

