WHY BLACKBERRY’S FUTURE JUST GOT BRIGHTER

► When good companies blow up, it can be a terrible shock. Enterprises that took years to build—that once ruled the world—can collapse into smoking heaps right before your eyes. We watched in smoking horror when it happened to Nortel back in the early 2000s. And over the past few years, we have watched it happen all over again to BlackBerry.

A recent report reminded me of the simi-larities between the two collapses. Published by Jonathan Calof, associate professor of international business and strategy at the University of Ottawa, it’s the definitive study on why Nortel—one of the ninth most valuable company in the world—imploded. Calof and his team surveyed hundreds of former Nortel offices, customers, competitors and consultants in an attempt to distil just what it is that can cause successful companies to fail. And, in the process, he uncovered a ray of light for BlackBerry.

Calof discovered that Nortel’s demise was due to a slew of factors, but one noteworthy trigger was an overwhelming sense of arrogance at the telecommunications giant, which prevented it from taking its new competitors seriously. This was combined with an internal lack of resilience owing to poor financial management and a broken company culture, as well as the “black cloud” that engulfs any company in a broken company culture, as well as the “black cloud” that engulfs any company in a broken company culture, as well as the “black cloud” that engulfs any company in a broken company culture, as well as the “black cloud” that engulfs any company in a broken company culture, as well as the “black cloud” that engulfs any company in a broken company culture.

Sound familiar? Everyone who reads the paper knows that all of those factors were at play in BlackBerry’s collapse as well. But when I finished Calof’s report, I wasn’t convinced BlackBerry is doomed to follow in Nortel’s footsteps. In fact, I felt more convinced BlackBerry is doomed to follow in Nortel’s footsteps. In fact, I felt more convinced BlackBerry is doomed to follow in Nortel’s footsteps. In fact, I felt more convinced BlackBerry is doomed to follow in Nortel’s footsteps. In fact, I felt more convinced BlackBerry is doomed to follow in Nortel’s footsteps.

Chen’s plan just might work. It’s doubtful BlackBerry will ever realize its dream of becoming a global handset player again, but it could carve out a profitable niche serving clients for whom security and reliability come first. It will likely be a smaller player, at least for now. But it will be alive to see another day.