Chapter 5
Individual Creativity:
Predictors and Characteristics

ABSTRACT

It is well documented that creativity is possible for most people. Having the potential for creativity does not necessarily mean that all people communicate or utilize creative thinking. The issue is potential versus actualization and communication of creativity. How to identify factors that connect to creativity and determine if current or future employees are creative pose interesting issues. Connections between the psychological constructs of intelligence, personality, intrinsic motivation and creativity would seem logical venues of study to identify creative thinking. However, the research remains inconclusive as to why some people excel in creativity and others do not. Identifying creative employees is important for employers in the future workplace to intentionally provide model thinking and stronger team productivity.

INTRODUCTION: SQUARE WATERMELONS

There are many motivations for discovering creative solutions: some are fueled by the need to solve a creative problem in an academic setting, but many are from a very real need that arises in the real world. It is, in fact, quite common to encounter issues or challenges in the real world that cannot be solved with typical, linear solutions. One such example represents a very practical need that did not have an immediate, obvious solution. The problem is as follows: "Japanese grocery stores had a problem. They are much smaller than their

US counterparts and therefore don't have room to waste. Watermelons, big and round, wasted a lot of space" (Knox, 2015). Take a moment now and think about how you would solve this dilemma- what recommendations would you make to the businesses in Japan to make it possible for them to continue selling watermelons?

There are a number of ways to tackle this issue- some more creative and some less creative than others. Arguably, the most obvious solution would be to enlarge the stores in Japan to allow for more space to store watermelon. However, there are a number of reasons why this solution won't work- after all, square footage added to one space takes square footage away from another, equally important, space. Another obvious and easy solution would be to simply stop selling watermelon in Japan. It is evident that if there are no watermelons to sell, there does not need to be a place to display them, and therefore there would no longer be an issue. From a business perspective, however, neither of these solutions is ideal. Realistically, either of the above solutions would likely hurt your bottom-line, not to mention the industry of watermelon farming that would be lay to waste. What, then, should grocery retailers in Japan to do about this conundrum?

Many people would simply tell the grocery stores that watermelons grow round and there is nothing that can be done about it- the watermelon lovers in Japan would just be out of luck. Thankfully, a creative and innovative solution has been found. Japanese farmers invented the square watermelon, which, not only made it possible for the grocery stores to keep watermelon in stock, but also made shipping more efficient and cost effective (Knox, 2015). It turns out the solution is actually quite simple- if you put watermelon in a square box while they are still growing they will grow to fit the box and the result is a space-saving, stackable, square shaped watermelon (Knox, 2015).

What can we take from the square watermelon example? According to Knox (2015) there are at least five lessons we should take away from the story:

1. **Don't Assume:** One of the biggest hurdles that had to be overcome to solve the watermelon dilemma was assumption- and we all know what happens when we assume things. One of the foundations of creative problem solving lies in breaking assumptions about what is or what can be.
2. **Question Habits:** The antithesis of creativity is to do things like they've always been done without questioning why they are done that way or

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