

a bottle, especially right before bedtime.) Identifying a problem is also part of this first step—for example, recognizing that excessive exposure to the sun can lead to cancer—as is recognizing a potential opportunity—for example, that reality shows appeal greatly to today's TV viewers.⁶⁴

An important part of learning about a problem or opportunity is involved in the second step—gathering information. Here, too, learning takes place as the learner figures out what kind of information to gather. In the process of gathering information, the learner might decide the problem or opportunity has been defined too broadly or too narrowly. He or she may then go back to step one and redefine the problem or opportunity before proceeding to learn about which information to gather and how to find it.

The third step in the creative process is the production of ideas. Once learners have gathered information, they need to come up with potential responses to problems or opportunities. During the production of ideas, it is important that learners feel free to come up with ideas that seem far-fetched or off the wall.

Once the ideas have been produced, learners are then ready for the fourth step of the creative process: selecting the idea or ideas they think will be useful. Sometimes learners assess each idea according to some criterion they may have previously determined to be important, such as the estimated annual sales of a new type of digital camera or the amount of computer memory needed to run a program. At this step, the information gathered during the second step can be helpful in evaluating the usefulness of each idea generated.

Once one or more ideas have been selected, it is time for implementation. At this stage in the creative process, innovation kicks in. Can the organization successfully implement the creative ideas it has developed and chosen to pursue? Although the steps in the creative process are described previously and are shown in Exhibit 5.4 as if they always occur in a certain sequence, the order in which they occur is not fixed, nor does each step have to take place for creativity to occur.

Many organizations are relying on innovation labs with open spaces and comfortable surroundings to bring teams together to create new products and services. South Korean consumer electronics giant, Samsung Electronics, has taken this concept one step further with its Value Innovation Program Center (VIP Center).⁶⁵ Creating new products at rapid-fire speed is key to Samsung's success. Many of these products are developed in the VIP Center located in a five-story building in Suwon, South Korea. Researchers, engineers, and product designers are brought to the Center to brainstorm new ideas for products, solve design problems, cut costs, and create and innovate.⁶⁶

The Center boasts training rooms; work rooms for teams; a kitchen; a relaxation center in the basement with a sauna, gym, billiards, and ping-pong (though apparently, employees are often too busy to relax); and a dormitory with 42 rooms on the fifth floor. The presence of the dormitory speaks to the intense, round-the-clock creating that takes place in the VIP Center. In fact, when employees are working on a project or trying to solve a problem, they are often expected to stay at the Center until their problem is solved or their project has progressed.⁶⁷

Creativity and the creative process, by their nature, are hard to predict. It is difficult to tell in advance, for example, which decision makers will come up with creative ideas. Some people are naturally more creative than others, but, under the right circumstances, a person who is not very creative may come up with a creative solution. Evidence also shows that creativity is more likely to occur in some groups and organizations than in others. Researchers who have tried to

EXHIBIT 5.5

Determinants of Creativity

