

identify some of the determinants of creativity have found that characteristics of individual decision makers and of the situations in which they make decisions contribute to creativity.

Characteristics of Employees That Contribute to Creativity

Numerous characteristics of employees have been linked to creativity, but the ones that seem to be most relevant to understanding creativity in organizations are personal characteristics or individual differences, task-relevant knowledge, and intrinsic motivation (see Exhibit 5.5). These characteristics contribute to creativity whether employees work individually or in groups.

Although these factors contribute to creativity, they do not, of course, guarantee that any given employee or group of employees will be creative. And the lack, or low level, of any of these factors does not mean that a person or group will not or cannot be creative. Creativity is determined by the interaction or joint effects of a number of factors.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES In Chapter 2, we described a variety of ways in which people differ from each other and some of the personality traits and abilities especially relevant to understanding and managing organizational behavior. At least three of the personality traits we discussed earlier are likely to contribute to creativity.⁶⁸

Recall that one of the Big Five general personality traits is *openness to experience*, which captures the extent to which an individual is original, is open to a wide variety of stimuli, has broad interests, and is willing to take risks. How does openness to experience contribute to creativity? It helps employees come up with new ideas and ways of doing things, and it helps to ensure that employees are willing to take the risks involved in proposing unusual ideas. As illustrated in the following OB Today, entrepreneurs and inventors are often high on openness to experience.

OB TODAY

Jim Newton's Openness to Experience Helps Others Be Creative



TechShop, Inc.

Jim Newton, whose do-it-yourself tech workshop is 15,000 square feet and filled with various tools and equipment, likes giving people the power to realize their ideas.

Jim Newton is a Silicon Valley entrepreneur who has come up with and been open to a variety of new ideas, has broad interests, and is willing to take risks to bring his creative ideas to fruition. Newton has over 220 inventions, has taught graphic design and combat robotics, was on a BattleBots combat robotics team, and had the position of Science Advisor for Season 3 of the popular MythBusters series on the Discovery Channel.⁶⁹

While Newton was teaching classes on building remote controlled robots for Battlebot competitions at the College of San Mateo, he realized that some of his students were taking his class multiple times so that they could use the college's machinery and equipment.⁷⁰ An avid tinkerer himself, Newton got the idea for TechShop, a workshop where tinkerers, creators, and inventors would have access to machinery, equipment, tools, instruction, and space to pursue their creative interests. Located in Menlo, CA, TechShop is a 15,000-square-foot workshop with \$500,000 worth of

tools and equipment; members pay a \$100 fee per month to use the workshop. Mills, laser cutters, 3-D printers, lathes, mechanical fabrication tools, welding stations, sheet metal equipment, a plasma cutter, and all sorts of other equipment and tools allow