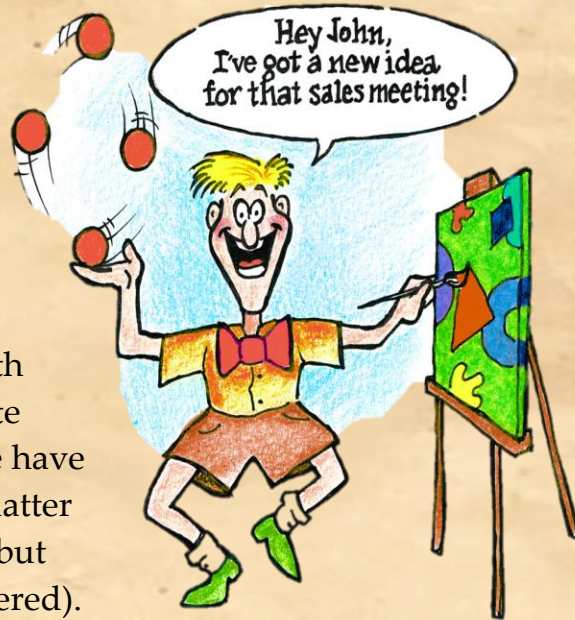


# SOURCES OF IDEAS: GOLD COLLARS

From where do ideas come? Psychology can't answer this one with assurance, but the ability seems to be found in those who have high mental engagement for most all of their waking hours, broad interests and/or a deep knowledge base, and a seemingly innate ability to recognize how outwardly disparate concepts can be combined in novel ways. What we do know is that individuals differ significantly with respect to creativity. Companies have long identified "white collar" and "blue collar" employees – terms that often do not fit employees who are exceptionally creative. Perhaps "gold collar" is a more appropriate term for those employees who have the ability to generate many new ideas.

If each employee is viewed as having a distinct "intellectual pool" from which they can draw new ideas, we will quickly see that employees differ significantly with respect to the depth (quality) and flow rate (quantity) of their respective pools. Some have a high flow rate, but little depth (much chatter but little value) while others have depth, but poor flow rates (good ideas but rarely offered). The exceptionally valuable pools have both depth and a high flow rate (good ideas frequently offered). Such gold collar employees may not always fit into the social norms of the corporate environment and may well test the limits of a leader's tolerance from time-to-time, but effective leaders will have a MindSet that recognizes just how rare these creative employees are and what tremendous value they hold for any company.



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