

Role of HR and Managers in managing employees during COVID

These were some added roles of human resources and managers in the wake of the pandemic. However, it should be kept in mind that everything might not work for your organization. Managers and HR should see what will work best for their company and then try to implement them accordingly. These initiatives, if executed properly, can reinforce the workforce which will help to improve the quality of work at your organization.

The world is facing numerous changes amidst the pandemic. Radical changes are happening everywhere - from the workplace to home. People have changed the way they work- from meeting in conference halls to Zoom meetings, from working in offices to working from home. Although these changes have perks of their own, they have also

brought several challenges along with them for both employees as well as employers. Now organizations have to work on building a system so that communication and trust remain unaffected even when everyone is working from home.

Since the pandemic, there has been a significant change in the roles of HR and managers. They are facing new challenges to maintain the workflow and productivity of their employees during these critical times. In this article, we have penned some added roles of HR and managers during the pandemic.

• Recognize the efforts of employees

Owing to Covid 19, people have been struggling with a lot of issues like physical and mental health problems, financial issues to name only a few. In these challenging times, it is important to recognize



and appreciate the efforts of your team. This will not only motivate them to work better but also motivate other employees to be more diligent and hard working. HR should consider rewarding their employees by giving development opportunities, public appreciation or even some affordable perks.

• Support your employees

Employees don't like when they are treated like machines. Each employee adds a unique value to your company. Managers and HR should recognize the uniqueness of each employee and provide them with the assistance they need. A

good communication flow between employees and managers is very important. Besides, managers should guide on sensitive issues, assure them of their job security and effect of staffing and so on.

• Educating the employees

Managers and HR should educate the employees about the ongoing pandemic. They should inform them about the safety measures, health information, how norms of social distancing are to be followed and so on. HR and managers should lay down special guidelines on how to work in the pandemic.

• Upskilling the employees

As mentioned earlier, it is important to appreciate your employees to enhance their productivity and performance. A good way to do so is through development incentives such as learning and upskilling. Doing so will not only

motivate the employees but also enhance their knowledge which will benefit your organization. HR should focus on the growth of the employees which encourages the employees to stay in the organization for a longer period.

• New policies

Another additional role of the HR and managers is to draft new policies given the current situation. Even in the case of remote working there has to be coordination, motivation and sincerity amongst the employees. Although it is challenging to manage the employees virtually however with appropriate policies it is possible. Apart from making new policies managers should also make sure that they are implemented properly because there is no use in forming a policy that isn't implemented at the ground level.

• Collaboration and

counseling

To maintain the flow of engagement, HR and managers must have a two-way conversation with their employees. During these tough times, people are facing mental issues. HR and managers should go one step further and arrange counseling sessions for their employees. These sessions should focus on topics such as

- How to stay positive in the pandemic

- How to take care of mental health during the pandemic

- How to vent away fear, stress and anxiety

Such concealing sessions will help your employees to stay away from all sorts of negative thoughts and distractions so that they can focus on their work. Once the employees vent away their post-pandemic anxiety and stress their only focus will be on providing quality work to your organization.

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Tardeada Encantada

The Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has changed the name of their monthly business networking get-togethers to Tardeada Encantada. Formerly known as their monthly “Mix n Mingle,” the concept remains the same only the name has changed. Tardeada Encantada translates to Enchanted Afternoon. Good food, good times, and great networking equals to an Enchanted Afternoon among friends.

The monthly networking Mix n Mingles came to a halt due to COVID 19 and crowd gathering mandates. For over 20 months we were unable to have our business members host a network Mix n Mingle at their facilities. As vaccine rates improve, and we are able to maintain a safe environment, the goal is to bring back the monthly networking Tardeada Encantada.

If your company is interested or needs information on hosting a Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce monthly Tardeada Encantada, please email the chamber at cr@lascruceshispanicchamber.com.

Thank you, Casa de Peregrinos and Executive Director, Lorenzo Alba, Jr. for hosting the first Tardeada Encantada for 2021.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Casa de Peregrinos - Executive Director Lorenzo Alba, Jr. addresses crowd.



Rosa Banuelos, Belia Alvarez, and Amanda Morales



Winners of Casa de Peregrinos drawings.



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FROM OUR U.S. SENATOR

Helping students complete their degree

BY U.S. SENATOR
MARTIN HEINRICH

The financial rewards of finishing college are well documented. Students who never graduate take on massive student loan debts that they can't repay while seeing nothing in return for all their effort. Students who complete a bachelor's degree earn a million more dollars over the course of their lifetimes than those who halt their education after high school. Those rewards benefit not just the students themselves, but their children, their families, and employers and businesses in their communities.

We have a college completion crisis in this country. While 86 percent of students graduated from high school in 2019, a proportion that has steadily risen for the last two decades, only a quarter of students entering public two-year

colleges graduate within three years. New Mexico has improved our percentage of high school graduates who enter college, but only around 40 percent of first-time freshmen who have enrolled in two or four-year colleges have completed their degree. Among Hispanic, Black, and other students of color, as well as those from low-income families, graduation rates are even lower.

We need to do so much better than this. That's why I was proud to secure the establishment of a first-of-its-kind College Retention and Completion Grants program in the latest version of President Biden's Build Back Better Act that is advancing in Congress.



HEINRICH

For some students, getting into college and being able to afford it is enough. But we need to recognize that for many others—particularly first-generation students, those from low-income families, and students of color—there are more obstacles to overcome between orientation day and graduation day.

We are closer than ever to helping students more easily afford a college education through tuition assistance and a major increase to the Pell Grant, one of the most important tools that helps many low and middle-income students pay for school expenses. But if we want to deliver on the full promise of higher education, we need to do more to help students complete their degrees.

The College Retention and Completion Grants would support a wide-range of evidence-based programs like the Student Experience Project, which is working with partner institutions like the University of New Mexico to create a more inclusive and equitable classroom environment in entry level courses and improve the support services provided to first and second-year students from underrepresented backgrounds. Another great example is New Mexico State University's on-campus food bank called the Aggie Cupboard, which has helped address growing food insecurity among its student community.

The College Retention and Completion Grants would also allow colleges and universities to scale up these types of direct student supports that students need

such mental health services, child care, food, transportation, housing assistance, career coaching, and work-based learning opportunities. It would also help schools collect real-time data on student progress, create incentives to keep students on track, and improve their dual education, developmental education, and transfer pathways.

Colleges would also be able to implement two-generation solutions that help parenting college students. We have not adapted well enough to the reality that more than one-in-five college students are also parents. If parents are able to find time to attend school, they have to fit their class schedule around their jobs and their child's school and child care hours. All of this limits parents' access to a full and rigorous class schedule. If colleges

can provide better support to parenting students and their children, then families will overcome barriers and achieve success together.

No student should have to drop out of college because their car breaks down and they can't afford to spend \$500 fixing it. No parent should have to choose between finding child care for their kids and continuing their own studies. And no student should devote two years to taking courses at a community college only to find out the public four-year school of their choice won't accept their credits.

If we can establish the College Retention and Completion Grants as part of the broader Build Back Better agenda, we can make sure students not only make sure students aren't just getting into college. We will make sure they are also getting through college.

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What is local SEO & 3 ways to improve your local SEO

BY JAIDEN NAVARRETE

If you've been Googling ways to grow your business by getting more traffic to your site, then you've probably come across the term Search Engine Optimization, also known as SEO.

What exactly is SEO, you ask?

SEO is the process of taking steps to help your website rank higher on Google.

If you are ready to learn more about the benefits of Local Search Engine Optimization and how it can help your business, keep reading for some useful tips!

What is Local SEO?

Before we go any further, we first need to understand the difference between SEO and local SEO.

When you have a website, SEO allows you to target the entire (online) world. On the contrary, local SEO focuses on ranking your website higher in your local area rather than around the entire world.

Whether you have a brick-and-mortar business or an online business, you want to make sure your web pages rank for specific search queries performed by a local audience.

This is where the optimization comes in.

Optimizing your business's website is about making sure people can

find you when they search on platforms like Google or Bing. Optimizing your site for local search is very important, especially when trying to gain new clients in specific towns, cities, regions, and even states.

Why is Local Search Engine Optimization important?

When you use local SEO, it allows people to find information about your business quickly and easily, increasing their likelihood of using your service.

How Exactly Does Local SEO Work?

Customers are searching for the best products and services near them – and they don't want to have to wait for answers.

Think about the last time you Googled a service. Did you scroll through and look at all of the options, or did you look at the top suggestions from Google?

If you answered the latter, do you know if your business shows up at the exact time when local customers are looking? Will they pick you out of all the local competition? If your answer is anything less than a yes, then you need to take a look at your business's local SEO.

Local SEO is all about letting search platforms like Google **know where your business is located.**



COURTESY PHOTO

Jaiden Navarrete of SpyderWeb Dev.

This helps search engines know where your business is located and allows people in that area to find your business.

Search terms are essential to understand and play a big part in customers finding you.

For example, if you have a business in Las Cruces, New Mexico, you would want to incorporate local SEO search terms to help customers in the Las Cruces area find you. You would want to choose local keywords that focus on that geographic location. Keywords like "web designer in Las Cruces" or "Las Cruces website designer" can help reach people who want to find a local professional or business. These keywords are then integrated into your website, which allows your business to rank in local search results.

Help Your Business Get More Customers

Now that we have talked about what local SEO is, it's time to discuss if a local SEO strategy is a good option for your business. Since local searches convert to sales, your business will definitely benefit from using local SEO.

The main reason you will benefit is **that local searches have a high conversion sales rate!** When users conduct local searches, they're typically ready to find a business that fits their needs and immediately convert. But if you don't have a local SEO plan in place, you'll miss out on so many valuable leads for your business and will also lose the customers to your competitor.

Local SEO is geo-targeted and timely. Get found by local customers in real-time as they are

searching for a solution that you offer.

Local SEO is untapped potential. Instead of only focusing on ranking for general search terms, you can stretch your marketing budget by hiring a local SEO specialist to help you get found by potential customers.

3 Ways to Improve Your Local SEO

There are many things you can do to improve your local SEO. Here are three ways you can improve your local SEO and get found by customers in your areas.

1. Utilize Google My Business

Part of your local SEO strategy should focus on updating your Google My Business (GMB) listing. Your GMB listing will list the information that's relevant to your business, which includes:

- Business name
- Address/directions
- Website
- Business hours
- Customer reviews
- Phone number

A key component to local SEO is keeping your GMB listing up to date. People can find your GMB listing anytime they do a Google search for your product or service. Creating and updating your GMB listing will improve your local SEO, and customers will find your business with ease. We

offer Local Search Engine Optimization and GMB management services to take this off your plate.

2. Review Generation
Review generation means getting regular reviews from happy customers. There are many benefits to getting your customers to write reviews for you, not just the fact that it optimizes your online presence; it also encourages more local customers to buy from you.

Here are a few tips to help you encourage customers to leave reviews:

Ask for a review in person after completing a sale/service.

Set up post-purchase email automation to request reviews from customers.

Make sure you include the link to your review page to make it easy for the customer to leave a review.

Remember to respond to existing reviews professionally, thanking reviewers and addressing complaints in not-so-favorable reviews.

3. Local SEO Focused Web Design

Your website and the keywords you use play a huge role in local SEO. As a web designer, I can't stress enough how important it is to improve your website if you want great local SEO results.

The location page or about us page on your

SEE **SEO**, PAGE 6

AeroVironment expands footprint in New Mexico

With all the attention on Virgin Galactic's human spaceflight missions over the last few months, it is easy to miss the other exciting developments in aerospace happening in New Mexico. Spaceport America is now home to four on-site tenants: Virgin Galactic, UP Aerospace, SpinLaunch and HAPSMobile/ AeroVironment, and has many other customers utilizing the facilities for the purpose of testing, research, and development of innovative new technologies.

AeroVironment, Inc. has recently expanded its footprint at Spaceport America bringing two new unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) projects to New Mexico for testing and training. Operations for JUMP 20 medium unmanned aircraft systems (MUAS) and tactical unmanned aircraft systems (TUAS) began out of the Spaceport's Vertical Launch



The Jump20 medium unmanned aircraft systems vehicle.

Area in September. AeroVironment first became a tenant of the spaceport with the HAPSMobile Sun glider project, which flew twice in 2020.

"We developed a great relationship with AeroVironment last year, which has now expanded with these two new UAS proj-

ects," said Scott McLaughlin, Executive Director of the New Mexico Spaceport Authority. "We appreciate their confidence in us and what we offer with our employees, our facilities, restricted airspace, remote location, and great weather for flight. Spaceport America's business continues to

grow and bring value to New Mexico."

With this new contract, AeroVironment is able to conduct engineering flight test operations for research and development, and validation and verification purposes. The AeroVironment team is also able to conduct customer training

IMAGE COURTESY OF AEROVIRONMENT

and customer demonstrations at Spaceport America bringing international visitors to the region.

"Spaceport America is an ideal location for testing and training of the JUMP 20 and TUAS vehicles due to the abundant special use airspace and cooperative business arrangements that

exist between Spaceport America and AeroVironment," said Gorik Hossepian, AeroVironment vice president and product line general manager for MUAS.

AeroVironment is currently leasing temporary facilities from Spaceport America for short-term use but is looking to add permanent infrastructure at the Vertical Launch Area to support training and testing operations in 2022.

AeroVironment, Inc. is HAPSMobile's minority owner and aircraft development partner for the Sun glider, a solar-powered unmanned aircraft designed for stratospheric telecommunications platform systems. HAPSMobile Inc., has been developing and testing the 'Sun glider' at Spaceport America since June 2020. AeroVironment and partner Soft Bank invested over \$8 million in developing a hangar and an airstrip at Spaceport America in spring.

SEO, FROM PAGE 5

website plays a huge factor in local SEO. You need to make sure you list important information on your website, like your address and the Google Maps attachment of your location.

Your website also needs to hone in on local keywords. Your keywords should be relevant to local customers. It only makes sense, doesn't it? Create a list of locally relevant keywords to target and add to your website's meta

content, copy, and URLs.

Another way your website contributes to local SEO is through mobile optimization. Mobile website visits are quickly becoming the number one way to search online. You have to optimize your website for mobile to be a player in local SEO (and, really, for any SEO).

It's Time to Utilize Local SEO

By now, you should have a better understanding of how your business will

benefit from local SEO along with the benefits that local search offers. Now it's time to take advantage of local search engine marketing! If you are looking for better search results or help to improve your local listings in Google Maps, Google my business or Bing, then you can trust that our local SEO expert will help you dominate your local search results.

If you are ready for more foot traffic and local leads, then you should talk with us.



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The Sopranos: Everything you need to know about managing people

BY PHIL SAN FILIPPO

Watching reruns of *The Sopranos* is far more educational than many courses on supervisory management. The beauty of *The Sopranos* is its full character development and story telling which made it one of the top-rated series of all time. If you are not familiar with *The Sopranos*, you're probably under 25 years of age or have been sleeping under a rock since 1998. *The Sopranos* originally graced our living rooms on HBO from January 10, 1999, until January 10, 2007. It is usually on the top of most critics' best shows of all-time.

For the first time, the viewing audience observes firsthand much more than just a bunch of bad guys. There is Tony Soprano. As the show begins, he's trying to deal with a teenage daughter, a 13 year-old under-achieving son, a marriage on the rocks and a mother with the personality of a hungry barracuda. Meanwhile, he inherits the head management job of the Di Meo Mob Family and all its quirky staff. Through the angst of Tony Soprano, we observe firsthand the challenges of managing various personality types common in almost all organizations. As I describe some of the key characters, see



PHIL SAN FILIPPO

if you recognize any of these personalities in your organization.

Tony's Management Style

When all else failed, Tony was able to handle errant staff by having them "whacked" i.e. killed off.) No such harsh resolution is recommended here. However, problems left without being properly managed will not go away. As we go through some of the members of Tony's team, it's easy to understand why Tony is having panic attacks, seeing a "shrink," and taking Prozac. In many ways, Tony Soprano is every manager dealing with staffing issues and characters seen in many organizations. Let's see how many you recognize in your own organization.

Uncle Junior - (The Junior Dilemma)

Uncle Junior has been with the organization for a very long time. Tony readily admits that in many ways Junior was like a father to him, but time has

passed Uncle Junior by. He expects to be respected because he has been around so long. Unfortunately, he hasn't changed with the times. Many of the recent things he has done have created major problems for the DiMeo Family. He is critical of Tony behind his back. He speaks out against Tony and has even tried to have Tony whacked. He is negative, stirs up controversy, and is a source of constant strife. He is always contrary and a major source of conflict. Yet, because of his longstanding membership in the organization, he expects to be respected.

Uncle Junior likes to gossip and makes fun of Tony and the decisions he makes. He is more concerned with having the honor of the big job than doing the actual work. He is resentful. Yet, because he has been around the organization so long and is the figurehead, people continue to ask him for advice. Depending on his mood, he will give appropriate advice, harmful advice or steer people in the wrong direction. Does anyone have or know an Uncle Junior hiding in their organization? If you do, he or she can be exceptionally dangerous and make it difficult to keep your team together. In almost every job I had or organization I observed, an Uncle Junior

is there to create strife within the organization. Of course, the Uncle Juniors of the world believe they are too important to the organization to ever be disciplined. If you try to warn them, they are likely to step up their criticism. The issue needs to be tackled head-on with consequences clearly laid out.

Christopher Moltisanti - (Christopher Syndrome)

Christopher, oh Christopher! Tony had so much hope for you!! Christopher Molisanti is a young, good looking, semi-charismatic, low-ranking member of the Di Meo Family. He's usually charming, and he is an expert at kissing up to Tony when he is around. Behind his back, it's another story. Christopher is so impatient and volatile, one never knows what he is going to say or do. He thinks he knows all the answers and belongs higher up in the organizational structure. Oftentimes, Tony has told Christopher that he is going places and tries to mentor him. Currently at a very low level, Christopher is confident he can move up the ladder without doing much work. Behind Tony's back, Christopher is lazy and impulsive. He is a hard-core drug addict. He can be aggressive and impulsive to prove that he's a big shot. If Tony only knew half the stuff that Christo-

pher has done....

Rather than concentrating on the DiMeo Family business, Christopher is usually trying to do side deals to make some extra income behind Tony's back and position himself as more capable than his supervisors. Of course, Tony gives him so many chances because Christopher is truly a likable guy and Tony really wants him to succeed. Tony catches Christopher screwing off and screwing up time and time again; but Tony tends to go easier on Christopher than he would on others with similar infractions. Christopher realizes he usually gets off easy and takes full advantage of the situation Christopher is a whiner and every time he is caught, he whines and begs for forgiveness. Usually, Tony relents. Bottom line, Christopher feels empowered. He doesn't need to perform because Tony will always have his back. As the series evolves, Tony eventually realizes he's being used and the Christopher problem has to go away.

We've all supervised employees who are smart and likable and, at first, we see a potential shining star. We then begin to realize there are problems. Project deadlines aren't met, there is repeated tardiness, things go over budget. We reprimand them. yet we cut

the employee more slack than we should as we still think they have potential to move on to bigger and better things. Ultimately, we need to come down hard on them and, because they are not used to it, they become resentful and even vindictive.

Christopher's Syndrome reigns throughout many organizations. These people may have high aspirations, but they are too lazy or do not have the drive to move up the ladder the right way. They usually stick around the organization at the lower level even though with a little effort they could be a star employee.

Paulie Gaultieri - (Paulie Walnuts)

Paulie Walnuts is almost a Christopher in reverse. Paulie is deeply loyal. He will do whatever is asked of him. He is a dedicated worker and will work hard (not smart) to get the job done. If Paulie seems like the real thing that's because he is. (As an aside, the actor playing Paulie is the only one of the entire cast, who actually served time in the big house. He originally tried out for the Uncle Junior role, but when that role went to Dominic Chianese, he agreed to the Paulie Walnuts role with the understanding that Paulie would never snitch to the Feds.)

SEE SOPRANOS, PAGE 8

FROM THE LOS AMIGOS CHAIR

United Way of Southwest New Mexico announces the 2021 Technology Fund

Raising funds is an essential component to running a successful nonprofit organization. It takes monetary support for a nonprofit to succeed with sharing its message and daily operations. This is why donors can play such an important role in an organization's fundraising goals. However, depending on an agency's mission, the financial support of donors may not be enough to help achieve the organization's goals.

Fortunately, grant funding opens the door to new opportunities for nonprofit organizations which is why United Way of Southwest New Mexico is announcing our 2021 Technology Fund. Our goal is to accelerate digital equity to address challenges in underserved



AMANDA MORALES

communities in Southwest New Mexico focused on basic needs, education, and financial stability.

Technology grants are useful for developing or enhancing an organization's technological infrastructure. In today's technology-driven environment, nonprofits rely on data to drive everything from fundraising campaigns to policy decisions. That's why technol-

ogy plays such an important role in an organization's mission. With technology-focused grants, a nonprofit can build or improve upon an existing technological infrastructure.

Requirements for this new funding opportunity include: organizations must be recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) and must be located in and directly serving the communities of Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero, and Sierra Counties.

All grant applications must be completed using the online application form on the United Way of Southwest New Mexico website. Highest priority will be given to proposals that clearly articulate the planned im-

act of their efforts, as well as the metrics by which the impact is measured. United Way will not consider incomplete proposals, emailed proposals or paper-based applications.

Eligible expenses may include computer equipment, internet access expenses, printer supplies, software subscriptions, etc. needed to successfully provide services to your organization's clientele. Documentation for the estimate of technology expenses must be uploaded in the application to be considered.

"As technology continues to impact every aspect of our lives, there's a real danger of more people getting left behind. We cannot allow that to happen." stated Amanda Morales, Chief Ex-

ecutive Officer. "By providing this funding opportunity, United Way of Southwest New Mexico is assisting to break down the digital divide that can prevent so many from accessing the basic needs, education and financial stability they need to live a quality life." Morales continued.

One example of how United Way of Southwest New Mexico has helped to bridge the education divide and provide response to the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in October 2020. United Way of SWNM donated 108 document cameras to the Cobre Consolidated School District to support remote teaching and learning. The document cameras allowed teachers to project their textbook

page or worksheet right on to the computer screen for students who were at home for remote learning. This made teaching much easier as educators didn't have to put their worksheet up to the web camera which provided challenges as it was difficult for students to read the documents.

The 2021 Technology fund will contribute to the United Way of Southwest New Mexico's goal of helping bridge needs with resources and solutions—specifically related to, basic needs, education, and financial stability.

For more information regarding the Technology Fund, contact Amanda Morales at impact@uwswnm.org or call the United Way office at 575-524-7561.

SOPRANOS, FROM PAGE 7

True to character, Paulie remained completely loyal to Tony. Paulie is a little short on brains. (He got his nickname "Paulie Walnuts" because he once set out to hijack a truckload of TV sets. Instead, he hijacked a truck full of walnuts. Thus, "Paulie Walnuts" was born.) Paulie has many of the good qualities you want in an employee. He is exceptionally loyal, sensitive, and has a good sense

of humor, but he does not have the mental capacity to move up the ladder. Tony would send Paulie out to handle many sensitive jobs only finding himself to go out and clean up the mess. Have you run across a Paul Walnuts or two?

Silvio Dante

Silvio Dante worked his way up through the ranks to sit at the right hand of Tony Soprano as his consigliere. He is Tony's most

loyal, smart and dedicated soldier who is always there through thick and thin to support Tony. He has the courage to tell Tony when he thinks he is wrong. He will argue with him behind closed doors but always supports him completely in public. He always watches Tony's back and has Tony's best interest at all times. More importantly, he always has the best interest of the entire organization. Silvio is his own person.

He speaks up. He is a team leader and example to the rest of the employees. Every team would always be better with at least a few Silvio's on their roster. He is a leader, supporter, cheerleader, doer, coach, mentor, and inspiration to the rest of the team. He is usually level-headed and he informally keeps everyone else in line. Every organization has a Silvio and they are probably the most important personalities you will find in any

organization. These people are worth their weight in gold.

Summary

Whether you're managing a bank, accounting firm, or running the Di Meo family mob, these personality types are commonplace in many organizations. It's impossible to avoid them. A good manager will be aware of these flaws and intervene before they get out of hand.

I use *The Sopranos* because it is filled with so many colorful personality types. These rich characters are extreme examples in so many ways. However, in real life, the personality types come in all genders, nationalities, and educational levels, and they are generally seen in some form in every organization. Enjoy picking out the Uncle Juniors, Christophers and the rest of the gang in your workplace.