

### Case Study 3: Caught in Between

Julie Miller had recently joined the internal audit department of a large pharmaceutical company as an analyst. As a team, these analysts conducted thousands of inspections to ensure that the sales representatives complied with federal regulatory guidelines. It was a Monday afternoon, and Julie grabbed a seat at the weekly staff meeting. Her boss, Pat, sat at the head of the large conference room table, notebook open, looking ready to begin. Over the next hour, Pat previewed a new plan that he and a senior analyst, Erin, would create to standardize the team's daily logging process.

Pat started the meeting by saying, "I done some checkin', and I can tell that yooz are not doin' the same amount of inspeckin. Uhbeaht heahf of yooz are checkin awwl da voided cards to look for blanks. The udder heahf of yooz aren't looking at no more 'an a hanful. We godda get this more together, ya know?"

He continued in his heavy Philly accent, saying that this type of inconsistency could leave the department open to liability issues and may be a problem in the department's yearly internal audit.

"I jus' wanna make sure ever'bod's on da same page uhbeaht awl dis," Pat explained. "If any of yooz got any ideas 'bout what should be include' in da process, gimme a kawl on the phowen. Me enn Erin are gawn head up this projeck."

With that, as he did at each meeting, Pat asked each person around the table for any questions or issues they wished to discuss.

As soon as Julie got back to her desk after the meeting, the woman from the next cubicle rushed into her space, visibly angry. "What was *that* all about? Are we trained monkeys? Can you even believe him?" Marissa sputtered.

Julie felt a twinge of discomfort; she had been one of the people who recognized that there was a large discrepancy in the analysts' process. She actually looked forward to having more definite guidelines.

Before Julie could respond, Marissa went on, "Why do we even need a standardized process? Is he really so sure I don't know how to do my own job? I've been in this department for 12 years! I think I know how to do an audit by now. Every day, I speak to senior directors who are so far above his head, he couldn't even see them! Of course, with him being so short and bald, that's not that difficult! I can't believe this!"

*Here we go again*, Julie thought silently to herself. Although only a few months into the job, Julie had witnessed enough of Marissa's vocal complaints to know that if left unchecked, she would go on and on.

Julie again attempted to speak but was interrupted by Marissa's rant: "And when will the man learn how to speak? Who talks like that

in management? I can't believe they hired this man to be *my* manager. He's absolutely stupid! I'm supposed to respect him? I can't. I won't. And why did he pick Erin? I have more seniority than she does—even if my title doesn't reflect it! Please! It's a shame you weren't here before Pat got here, Julie. The old boss knew we were doing a good job and left us alone."

Julie didn't know how to respond. She shared a cubicle wall with Marissa and didn't want to get on the woman's bad side. At the same time, Julie and Pat had gotten along well since he hired her a few months ago. Although she agreed that he was rough around the edges, she liked his straightforward manner. Pat had been a captain in the Philadelphia Police Department, until two years ago when he was injured in the line of duty and relegated to a desk job. He came to this company after being recruited by Mary, the senior director and a former Philadelphia detective herself who had worked for Pat. Julie had spoken privately with Pat a few times about his difficult transition from being a manager at the police department, which utilized a managerial style that was very confrontational, aggressive, and structured, and this company, which encouraged a managerial style that sometimes seemed to him to be more about *how* the job got done than actually getting it done. Sometimes, even now, Julie could tell that he had to stop and think about the "right" way to respond to a situation, instead of responding in his natural style.

Complicating matters, Julie had learned from a coworker that Marissa had applied for Pat's job but wasn't chosen. Knowing Mary's history with Pat, Julie assumed Mary had an interest in bringing in people with a background in criminal justice to round out the investigative skills on the team. Marissa, on the other hand, had chalked it up to plain old nepotism.

Julie could not imagine Marissa as a manager. An attractive woman in her mid-50s, Marissa was always meticulously put together. Twice divorced, Marissa had a sarcastic, if caustic, sense of humor that had initially turned Julie off. Marissa rarely held back from sharing her opinion as if it were the only correct one.

Over the past few weeks, however, Julie's initial opinion had softened. From chatting with Marissa, Julie learned that she had endured a lot early in life and, as a result, wasn't able to finish college. Starting as a secretary years before, Marissa had slowly worked her way up the ranks, even without a degree. Although she really was good at her job, Julie noticed that Marissa was rarely commended. Still, Julie was learning to take Marissa's tirades about Pat with a grain of salt. Everyone else did as well.

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Julie whispered quietly, so as not to be overheard, "Well, why didn't you raise any of your objections to the process in the meeting when Pat asked for feedback? He said he wanted to hear people's concerns."

"Are you kidding me?" Marissa replied, in her regular speaking voice. "He only *says* he wants feedback because that's what he learned in some managerial class."

At that moment, Pat walked by Julie's cube on his way to Erin's desk. Marissa stopped and looked a little guilty. Julie sensed the tension, but knowing she had done nothing wrong she just smiled and greeted Pat as she usually did. She assumed Pat would smile and make a friendly joke as he typically did when he saw Julie. Instead, he curtly nodded his head in their direction and barked, "Yo Marissa, why don' I got those referr'l ledders back? I gave 'em to you two-tree days ago. If you can't hannel your work, lemme know. I'll get summon else a do it."

Marissa's face reddened, but she coolly replied, "I'll have them to you within the hour." Pat turned to Julie, smiled, and continued on his way.

Julie was taken aback; Pat had never spoken to her in this way. She had recently turned in some requested referrals a day late herself and had been reassured by Pat that they were "no big deal, just more paperwork."

Julie plopped down at her desk and sighed. *I'm staying out of this*, she thought. *I'll just be nice to both of them and do my work.*

### Questions for Consideration

1. What MDL does Julie appear to use? Marissa? Pat? How would this exchange have been more effective if different MDLs were used?
2. Does Pat converge or diverge in the meeting with his team? How do you know? Do you think Pat will be successful continuing this approach (converging or diverging) with his team? With upper management? Explain.
3. Julie is fairly new to the organization. What strategies has she used to reduce her uncertainty about Pat? Marissa?
4. Using examples for each of EVT's core components (expectancy, violation valence, and communicator reward valence), what does EVT explain about Julie's reaction to Pat? Then, think about it from Pat's perspective. What does EVT explain about Pat's reaction to Julie "gossiping" with Marissa?
5. Which theory alone seems to provide the "best" explanation for the situation? Why do you believe this to be the case? What situations might surface that would make a different theory or theories better at explaining the situation? How could you combine several theories to make for an even "better" explanation of the encounter?