



Chapter 2 Case Study for Discussion

Use this case study as a discussion prompter with your teams or students.

Working in the pharmaceutical industry has its benefits, but an ongoing issue within my department has made me wonder if others have experienced it in their organizations. Ours is a high-functioning team with some of the highest sales numbers in the company, but that has all changed since Angela was hired and then, within weeks, promoted to lead our team. Now I'm not against promotion, but while Angela holds an equal degree, she has far less experience than several of us on the team.

She is a nice person but is often very emotional. I and other team members started noticing how the CEO and the office manager interacted with Angela. They were constantly praising her and even their voices distinctively changed when talking with her both around the office and in meetings. Their tone was much softer and higher pitched. Now you might be thinking I am imagining this, but after noticing it the first few times I never mentioned it to anyone and then several others on the team came to me and asked if I had noticed it, so it isn't just me. The office manager often greets her with "hey buddy" and both the CEO and manager seem charmed by her. Angela seems to revel in their attention. It is quite embarrassing. Frankly, it has impacted the trust in our team.

One day Angela came into my office and directed me to change a process that I knew, based on years of experience, was not the appropriate action to take and would result in a very bad outcome for the client. When I respectfully objected, she became very upset and left my office. A short time later the CEO called and was angry saying, "You made Angela very upset. It doesn't matter if you disagree with the directive, you must do as you are told or you will be terminated!"

Wow! As you might expect, team morale has plummeted as we feel we no longer have a voice and the only voice the CEO and office manager want to hear is Angela's. I wonder if the CEO and office manager both being older males and Angela being attractive and in her late 20s has anything to do with it.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is bias present in this case? Explain why or why not.
2. Given the information presented, describe what you believe is going on in this case.
3. As a member of the team, what action, if any, do you recommend?