

Pam

You are a new Field-based Area Leader, having stepped into the role two months ago after serving for 5 years as Regional Leader. As FBAL, you've been making a concerted effort to champion change and innovation within your area. Earlier today, in fact, you said the following at the end of a virtual meeting with your Area Regional Leader team:

As you may know, our Managing Partner likes the metaphor of going from the dance floor to the balcony so we can see the big picture. I'm going to stretch that analogy and talk about the dance hall directors and the DJs who play the music. For many years, our field "DJs" have done a tremendous job playing the song lists given to us by our "dance hall directors." Now, the world is changing so much and so fast that the firm wants and needs stepped-up thought leadership from the field. That is, in addition to playing the tunes in the song lists we've been given, the firm is asking the field to help address some very big questions... not just "Are we playing the right songs?" but "Do we want to be more than a dance hall? Should we show movies too? Bring in live acts? Rent our buildings for private events?" You get the idea. These big picture questions are at the very top of the firm's agenda. Successfully growing the firm long-term hinges on answering these questions now. And, more than ever, the firm wants and needs to answer these questions in partnership with the field. Therefore, in our Area RL meeting next month, we're going to begin discussing these questions – in fact, this will be our #1 agenda item moving forward as a team. So, please, come to next month's meeting ready to share your big-picture ideas based on what you're seeing out of your regional window.

As you delivered the above message, you scanned the gallery of faces on your computer screen, and you noticed some disconcerting body language from one of your RLs. The person who looked amiss was Pam, the most senior RL on your team. Specifically, she let out a big sigh and shook her head slightly. When you asked, "*Pam, do you have a concern?*", she quickly shook her head and said, through what looked like a forced smile, "*No, I'm fine, all good.*"

Pam has been RL for 8 years and is well respected in the firm. From talking with the FBAL you replaced, you're aware that Pam has considerable influence on her peers, especially the newer RLs. The outgoing FBAL also told you that, despite expressing interest in the FBAL role, Pam has not been selected because "*when she feels strongly about something, she tends to lose perspective and push back too much.*" You haven't witnessed any excessive push-back from Pam yourself, but then again you didn't know her prior to becoming FBAL and you've only been in the role for two months.

In your role as FBAL, you definitely want/need Pam's support, especially considering how influential she can be and the fact that the other RLs on your team clearly respect her. Despite her "*all good*" reply at the end of the meeting, it looked to you like she *wasn't* good with your request to come with big-picture ideas to the next Area RL meeting. So, you've decided to give Pam a call and see if there's an issue she didn't want to raise in front of the other RLs.

Assume the Area RL meeting just ended two minutes ago. You want to call Pam right away while the meeting is fresh in both of your minds. Before dialing her number, though, you take a minute to gather your thoughts and get clear on what you do and don't want to happen in the call. **(Please jot down your thoughts on what you do and don't want to happen.)**

****David**, I will play Pam in this exercise and, when asked probing questions by the FBAL, I will gradually come out with: "*(sigh) Don't get me wrong, I know you're new to the role and just*

doing your job, but at the end of the day the firm is gonna do what the firm wants to do... You say our input matters, but in my experience the field's input matters only if it agrees with what the firm already has in mind... In fact, the last two times I opened my mouth – once on RTP and the other time on DOL – it came back to bite me... And this was after we were invited to share our ideas, mind you... Both times my ideas were quickly dismissed before I even had a chance to explain... Then I ended up being labeled as 'adversarial' when all I did was try to give a full explanation so people could see what I was talking about... The whole thing felt like a trap or some kind of set-up... And now you're asking me to come to our next Area meeting with big ideas?!... You know the old saying 'Once bitten, twice shy'? For me it's twice bitten, ten times shy..."