



| Case Study

Preserve and Enrich Company Culture with the Power of Birkman

■ Executive Summary

In 2016, MailChimp CEO, Ben Chestnut, won the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® National Award in the media, entertainment, and communications category because of his team's continuous innovation and success in their field. When MailChimp began experiencing very rapid growth in 2013, Ben and his team faced the challenge of cultivating the company culture and continuing to empower employees.

No matter how large the company grows, MailChimp strives to maintain its values of humility, creativity, and independence in order to remain "more human." MailChimp uses Birkman to continue to be an authentic and people-centric company, even as they grow and impact businesses around the globe.

■ Preserving Values

In 2013, MailChimp partnered with Michael Sacks, an organizational development expert at Emory University's Goizueta Business School. Michael recommended that MailChimp use Birkman as a way to establish common ground among its employees in anticipation of all the challenging conversations that would likely arise at a fast-growing company.

Julie Remington, talent mentor and development lead at MailChimp and Birkman Certified Professional explains, "To maintain our values and continue empowering our customers, we want to help our employees better understand their individual strengths, work across differences, have better conversations, and continue to collaborate well. We thought that bringing Birkman into the workplace could provide the tools for better understanding of ourselves and our colleagues to foster a productive, self-reflective, and authentic workplace."

■ Implementing Birkman

MailChimp began by giving the assessment to all employees, team by team. All new hires fill out the assessment on their first day and are introduced to Birkman terminology on their third day. Within six to eight weeks of their start date, new hires meet with their manager and a MailChimp Birkman Certified Professional for a conversation about using Birkman as the framework for communication success.

Most teams at MailChimp complete a Birkman team activity once or twice a year. "We love customizing reports and focusing on the Needs of each individual duo, team, or department to help serve the conversations they're having right now," explains Julie. These activities range from simple feedbacks to problem-solving activities focused on goals, projects, or Birkman Component scores.

■ Overcoming Challenges

“At first, we struggled with some skeptics towards the assessment, but decided to embrace them and the opportunities for constructive conversation. Leaders made it clear to employees that the only person’s data they are responsible for is their own. Employees are encouraged to own their report results and talk about their scores in whatever way they are comfortable with,” explains Julie.

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Julie Remington
Development Lead, MailChimp



Birkman gives people the opportunity to easily engage in deep conversations, and at MailChimp, they ensure that everyone knows Birkman reports are the jumping-off point for conversations. By having Birkman as a conversation starter, individuals are able to explain their point of view and how they feel they express their different behaviors and personality traits. Additionally, Julie expresses, “Birkman gave MailChimp a shared neutral language to talk about diversity and help demonstrate that differences are assets to be cultivated and handled with care.”

Birkman sheds light onto the positive aspects of personality and helps individuals embrace their unique strengths while developing awareness of thought diversity. Only when individuals own their differences can a company unleash its creativity and be “more human,” as MailChimp likes to call it.

Expanding Birkman Throughout MailChimp

Today, Birkman is used or referenced in three courses offered at MailChimp University and as part of their training program for new managers. Recently, the MailChimp teams used insights from Birkman Stress Behaviors during National Stress Awareness month to help 100 employees create stress management goals based on actionable suggestions. Due to the popularity of Birkman among the employees, MailChimp has partnered with Study.net to allow employees' family and friends to take the assessment and benefit from the ways Birkman enhances relationships. Over the last two years, they've performed three company-wide Birkman-themed lunch and learns, 30 new hire introductory sessions, 40 manager and direct report meetings, and an estimated 60 group/team Birkman workshops.



Birkman is one piece of MailChimp's puzzle for preserving and elevating its company culture. Their strong company values and vision guide the use and implementation of Birkman throughout MailChimp each day, allowing individuals, teams, and managers to work with more understanding, humility, creativity, and independence.

Birkman at Work Toolkits



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About Birkman

Birkman International is a behavioral and occupational assessment company headquartered in Houston, Texas with an extensive global reach. The company began assessing personality through a proprietary methodology founded by innovative organizational psychologist Dr. Roger W. Birkman in 1951.

The Birkman Method remains a preferred instrument to better understand interpersonal dynamics and achieve higher performance through positive psychology. It is used widely in the fields of career coaching, leadership development, human resources management, and organizational design today.