

| Case Study

Resolve Conflict with the Power of Birkman

Executive Summary

Miramont Country Club is one of the finest, family-friendly, upscale organizations with a focus on service excellence, led by General Manager Aaron Dawson. Jon Snider, the director of Miramont's award-winning golf course and grounds, was one of his key employees. Dawson and Snider found conflict in their relationship due to significant differences in communication preferences and personality makeup, eventually resolving the matter by implementing Birkman in the organization.

Challenges

Jon, one of Miramont's most tenured employees, was on the verge of resigning due to perceived irreconcilable personality differences and frustration with Aaron's direct communication style. Aaron didn't know he was at risk of losing a critical employee and experienced deep frustration in his dealings with Jon, feeling like what should be short conversations repeatedly dragged on.



Miramont members who ran a business of their own recommended Birkman as a tool for conflict resolution and team alignment. Relying on over 15 years of leadership experience, Dawson was skeptical that the tool would help him. After using Birkman to assess himself, he was amazed by its powerful insights and decided to implement the tool across the organization.



Results

On the Birkman personality map, Aaron and Jon's data exhibited contrasting styles. Aaron was a "Birkman Red," known to be decisive, straightforward, preferring others to be direct. Jon was a "Birkman Blue," indicating a preference for time to reflect and opportunities to express feelings. Birkman gave Aaron and Jon a method to understand each other and learn how they are different without judging these differences as right or wrong.

The insight Birkman provided empowered Aaron and Jon to tailor their prior conflicting styles into functional communication through shared understanding.

Reflecting, Aaron notes, “I adapted my style and approach without thinking about it. That’s pretty profound. I took a situation and did something different with it because I realized, subconsciously, that the person I was communicating with needed something different from my usual style. It dynamically changed our relationship.” Taking it a step further, Aaron emphasized, “Think about this on a bigger scale—Jon has 60 employees that report to him. If he and I aren’t aligned, it would have a dramatic impact on his team.”

Several months after going through the Birkman reports, Jon told Aaron, “Mr. Dawson, once you ‘Birkmaned’ me, you lightened up on me.” In his typical Red fashion, Aaron replied, “The heck I did!” However, it was true, and Aaron now believes that Jon would have left his team but “Birkman helped me keep a valuable employee.”

“Birkman helped me keep a valuable key employee.”

Aaron Dawson
General Manager, Miramont

■ Implementation Across Miramont

Aaron became a Birkman Certified Professional and gave an assessment to everyone in a leadership position at Miramont. At first, his team members were fearful of the unknown and how Birkman might affect the workplace—Miramont’s superintendent even called it a “psycho test.” However, the power and accuracy of the tool soon proved itself within the organization and its use throughout the club continued to grow.



Aaron expanded the use of Birkman to incorporate group reports, helping individuals to understand how they fit in with the rest of the team, and how they needed to approach their peers to keep things running smoothly. A new, heightened self-awareness cascaded across the organization as Aaron guided each manager on how to utilize Birkman to engage with direct reports.

■ Going Further to Help Others

Aaron went on to attend an advanced Birkman Perspectives course, taking a deep dive into leadership and coaching in a way that helps respondents understand the impact their perspective has on themselves and others. He received feedback from one of his directors that Aaron was professionally growing his employees and personally investing in transforming the skill sets and trajectory of each team member.

Using Birkman to bridge the gap in personality styles drives powerful understanding, boosts synergy, and increases productivity throughout the organization.



Partnering with another director, Aaron utilized Birkman as a parting gift for college interns that worked at Miramont. They assessed and provided feedback to each student, helping them gain self-awareness and relate their natural strengths and personality style to career paths where they can be successful and satisfied.

Reflecting on his Birkman journey, Aaron now views what started as skepticism as “one of the best professional decisions I’ve ever made.”

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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.