



## Get a Grip #11: From “I” to “We”: Tips for Grip-Birkman Team Building



*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment. (Philippians 1:9)*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others (Philippians 2:3-4).*

*For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. (1 Corinthians 9:19)*

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” (African Proverb)



CORE  
BELIEF

**A Grip-Birkman coach facilitates an ongoing conversation to build unity in the team as they learn about and celebrate their combined strengths and differences and maximize these to lead more people to faith in Jesus Christ.**



Group Discussion:

***What is the attitude of Jesus that must be present in a healthy team?***

One of the most significant uses of the Grip-Birkman Process is in the building of fruitful teams. A good team building process enables a team to...

- Live out of a greater awareness of self and others.
- Submit to one another and to the unique gifts and perspectives each teammate brings.
- Appreciate and utilize the diversity that God places in the body and on specific teams.
- Create an environment where God-given diversity works to unify rather than divide.
- Steward well the unique contributions of each team member.

The power of team building is not necessarily found in a specific product, but rather in the process that creates both unity and an appreciation of diversity within the team. Remember, as a facilitator for a team building process, your role is to create an environment for discovery and dialogue. You are not “building the team.” You are enabling the team to **“Move from I to We.”**



## The Stages of Team Development

Teams go through five commonly recognized stages of development, as described by Bruce W. Tuckman:<sup>1</sup>

**Stage 1: Forming** – The first stage takes place as the team first meets each other. There is excitement as they get to know one another and start their project or assignment. Some anxiety might also exist as they have questions about the project and their role in accomplishing the team’s purpose. During this stage of team growth it is important that the team leader provide clarity about the team’s goals and direction. It is important at this stage that all the members are involved in determining roles and responsibilities and establishing healthy team norms. During the *forming* stage team energy is focused on defining the team, so the accomplishment of task might be relatively low.

**Stage 2: Storming** – As the team begins to work together, they will move into the *storming* stage. This stage cannot be avoided. Conflict is a natural part of life and relationships. In fact, conflict brings growth and strength to a team. Team members may compete for status and acceptance of their ideas. They may begin to discover that the team cannot live up to their early expectations. Frustration and anger may arise with the team’s processes or lack of progress. During the *storming* stage disagreements about goals, expectations, roles and responsibilities may be openly expressed. The politeness evident during the *forming* stage may turn into some team members arguing or becoming critical of the original mission, goals or even of a teammate. Redefining team goals, roles and tasks may help during this time of frustrations as well as the practice of healthy conflict resolution principles.

**Stage 3: Norming** – During this stage of team development the team members begin to resolve the discrepancy they felt between individual expectations and the reality of their team experience. Acceptance of team diversity increases as team members gain a deeper trust and comfort to express their real ideas and feelings. Constructive criticism becomes possible and as a result members start to feel a more connected to the team and gain a greater sense of unity in the midst of diversity. Rather than competing against each other, the team members are now helping one another as they work toward a common goal. During the *norming* stage the team starts to make progress toward their goals and begin working more effectively together.

**Stage 4: Performing** – In the *performing* stage the team is functioning at a high level. The focus is on fulfilling the team’s mission. The team members know one another, trust one another and rely upon one another. The members of the team have become interdependent and are motivated to get the job done. They are more aware of their own and each other’s strengths and needs. Roles on the team may have become more fluid as members take on necessary responsibilities according to their strengths and gifts. Differences among the team are appreciated and used for the team’s effectiveness. Just because a team reaches the *performing* stage, however, does not mean it will remain there. Teams will revert to another stage as they continue to develop. For example, whenever a new member is added, the team will show signs of reverting back to the *forming* stage. It may revert back to the *storming* stage if one member begins to withdraw and work more independently. Tuckman’s team development model illustrates the constant growth of a team as it adapts to changes and challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce W. Tuckman, “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 65 (6), 1965: 384-99.

**Stage 5: Adjourning** – No team remains together and focused on the same goal forever. Tuckman’s updated model added what is referred to as a mourning *or adjourning* stage.<sup>2</sup> The team’s commission might come to an end or some team members begin to move in different directions. This stage emphasizes the well being of the team as opposed to managing the team through the process of the first four stages. During the *adjourning* stage the team should focus on three tasks: 1) the completion of any remaining team work, 2) evaluation of the team’s process and product, with a focus on identifying “lessons learned” and the passing on of these insights to future teams and 3) the celebration of the accomplishment of the team and the specific contributions of team members. We often do not celebrate God’s work through his people appropriately. A healthy process of celebration provides for closure and a positive transition to the team member’s next assignment.

The Stages of Team Development can provide the facilitator and the team with a helpful framework for recognizing a team’s behavioral patterns as revealed in the Grip-Birkman team conversation. It helps the team building facilitator avoid boxing the team into a “diagnosis.” Remember, team development is not always a linear process. As a Grip-Birkman coach you can help the team identify and understand the underlying Needs and Expectations that affect their behaviors, regardless of their developmental stage, as you help the team improve its process and productivity.

### The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Patrick Lencioni provides another helpful team building model in his book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* in which he describes the **five enemies of healthy teams**:<sup>3</sup>

- The *Absence of Trust* - The fear of being vulnerable with team members prevents the building of trust within the team.
- The *Fear of Conflict* - The desire to preserve artificial harmony stifles the occurrence of productive, ideological conflict.
- The *Lack of Commitment* - The lack of clarity or buy-in prevents team members from making decisions they will stick to.
- The *Avoidance of Accountability* – The need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from holding one another accountable for their behaviors and performance.
- The *Inattention to Results* – The pursuit of individual goals and personal status erodes the focus on collective success.

#### Healthy, *cohesive* teams:

- Trust in one another
- Engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas
- Commit to decisions and plans of actions
- Hold one another accountable
- Recognize that results are collective, not individual.

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce W. Tuckman and Mary Ann C. Jenson, “Stages in Small Group Development Revisited,” *Group and Organisation Studies* 2, 1977: 419-427.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Lencioni. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Together, Tuckman's and Lencioni's models provide a helpful perspective of a healthy team.

- *Forming* – includes the building of trust and identifying a shared vision.
- *Storming* – involves dealing with conflict in a healthy way.
- *Norming* – calls each team member to commit to a plan and an agreed upon process.
- *Performing* – demands that the team becomes accountable to one another.
- *Adjourning* – healthy teams celebrate each member's contribution to their accomplishments and affirm each other as members leave.

It is important for the team building facilitator to have a picture of a healthy team to properly develop the environment in which a team can steward the gifts and relationships provided by God.

### **The Process of Team Building Utilizing the Grip-Birkman**

**Preparation:** It is important for the team coach or facilitator to make a commitment to preparing well for your team building event, even though it may be different from other types of workshops. The preparation for a Grip-Birkman TeamBuild is focused on gaining an understanding of the uniqueness of the team being considered, their current situation, the team leader's desired outcome for the TeamBuild and the stage in which the team finds itself.

- ***Pray and Involve the Team in Intentional Prayer*** – Bathe the process in prayer. Give the team leader and the entire team guidance on focused prayer in preparation for the team-building event.
  - *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. (James 1:5)*
  - *The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5:16b)*
  - Encourage the entire team to pray the prayer of surrender, that God would open their hearts, provide them with the vulnerability and openness to receive what He alone can provide. Ask God to make their strengths and needs clear to each individual and to the team.
- ***Interview the team leader.*** Listen to his or her perspective, desired outcome for the TeamBuild and for their evaluation of the team. Consider the following sample questions as you clarify the need and expectations for the TeamBuild with the team leader.
  - What is the primary purpose and goals for the team?
  - Describe each team member's role on the team?
  - Provide a brief evaluation of each team member's contribution?
  - What are the strength and weaknesses of your team?
  - Describe your strengths and weakness of your team leadership.
  - What major concerns do you have about the function of your team?
  - What other team building experiences have you
  - What are your desired outcomes for this teambuilding event? What do you want your team to have as a result of our time together?
  - Be curious and develop your own questions as you listen to the team leader.
- ***Administer the Grip-Birkman Profile*** to each team member. Make sure that you order the Grip-Birkman profiles for each team member well in advance of the teambuilding event. This will allow you to have sufficient time to process the profiles.

- **Provide Individual Coaching to Each Team Member before the TeamBuild, if possible.**
  - It will be helpful to have an hour to an hour and a half individual coaching time with each team member. This will provide them with the familiarity with their individual profiles before beginning to process together with their team.
  - Have each team member identify their top ten observations from their Grip-Birkman Profile. Encourage them to begin thinking about the important insights from their profile that it is important that their team understand about them.
  - Get each team member's feedback regarding his or her desired outcomes for the teambuilding experience.
  
- **Process each Team Member's Profile and Look at the Team's Combined Profile.** Take time to review each profile and the team's composite profile.
  - Process the team's Leadership Grip Profile. Ask yourself:
    - What does the team member's Leadership Grip reveal about his or her strength, weakness and need in fulfilling their role on the team?
    - What spiritual gifts, team styles and bodybuilding roles are strongest on the team? Which ones are missing?
    - What do the Need Areas of each team member reveal about themselves and the team as a whole.
  - Process the team's Birkman Map. Look at the team member's interest, usual styles and needs/stress plotting points. Ask yourself:
    - Where is this team strong?
    - What does this team lack?
    - What are the similarities between each team member?
    - What are the differences between each team member?
    - What questions do you have for the team based upon the team's Birkman Map?
    - **Remember your purpose is not to "diagnosis," solely based upon your observations from the team profiles. Identify areas of potential strengths, possible misunderstandings and concerns and craft your questions help the team discovery and confirm the reality of their team dynamics.**
  - As you process the team's profiles focus on *concentrations, isolations and gaps* that you see in their combined team report.

**Implementation** – A teambuilding event may allow for 3 hours or 3 days. Use the time you are given to focus on the significant areas that will be most helpful for the team and their current situation. Don't fall into the trap of setting a rigid schedule that you must follow. This will cause you to focus on facilitating *the schedule* rather than facilitating a *team building process* for the benefit of the team. Remember, you are guiding a process for them, while they are responsible for the content. Remain in your facilitator/coaching role and allow the team to reveal the insights, issues and action steps they need to pursue. Here are some suggestions as you facilitate the team-building event.

- **Ask yourself how can I serve this team?** Don't be a slave to the material or your desire to cover everything you have noticed. Ask what are the major issues, concerns and needs of this team. How can I best create an environment for them to join God and one another to address these areas?
  
- **Create a environment to for all to listen to the Lord, themselves and one another**
  - Do not rush too quickly to the content and exercises. Spend time in prayer, Scripture and sharing of desired outcome for the time together.

- Some find it helpful to have a short, fun icebreaker experience to begin the process.
- During the event if there are times of tension, a significant break-through or lack of clarity, don't be shy to stop and pray together. Ask God to provide you with wisdom.
- **Start with the area in the profile where the team will be most receptive.** This can create more openness, vulnerability and building the team's confidence that this process can be fun and helpful.
- **Choose the essential and most helpful exercises.** Some suggestions to consider are...
  - As you have done in this GB Coach Training, have each team member create their **Grip-Birkman Poster** and hang them on the wall. This will refresh their memory regarding the assessment tool and create a visual profile for team members to consult during the team build.
  - Process **The Leadership Grip**. Remember to emphasize the questions:
    - 1) where am I strong
    - 2) where am I weak and
    - 3) therefore, who do I need?
  - You can also focus on **The Team Player Styles**. On a flip chart, put the four-team styles across the top. Two-thirds down the page write, "Needs." Each will then write their initials under their top two-team styles and then under "Needs," they will write their initials under the team style that they are weakest in and therefore the one-team style they need. Have the team review all of the team styles and facilitate their discussion of "what they see, who they need and their team balance."
  - Utilize **The Birkman Map – Floor Exercise** you experienced in this training. Recreate the Map on the floor and have people stand in the location of their asterisk, diamond, circle, and square. Ask good coaching questions to stimulate conversation and awareness between teammates.
    - Focus on the need (circle) to help team members share expectations about the support they need in comparison to the needs of others.
    - Another adaptation of the floor exercise is to move the team leader to their circle/square (need/stress). Then move the rest of the team to their diamond (usual style). This allows each team member to see how their individual usual style (diamond) relates to the leader's need. You can reverse this by having the team stand in their area of need and the leader in his usual style.
- **Help the team identify S.M.A.R.T. goals or action steps**
  - **Specific** – Action steps are written in a clear, unambiguous way as a finished result.
  - **Measurable** – Action steps must be measurable or observable.
  - **Attainable, yet a stretch** - An action step that is realistic, yet challenging.
  - **Relevant** – Meaningful action steps increase the team's inner motivation.
  - **Time-limited** – Increases the likelihood that the team will accomplish it.
  - **Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound** goals or action steps for each individual and for the entire team will help them to take their insights and turn them into behavioral changes.
- **End the team building time with affirmation** – You can have each individual share their strength as they see it or from the one-page Birkman Strength Insight. Each team member will then affirm

what they see as strengths, their best contribution to the team and their mission. Use the following ground rules for the affirmation session:

- Speak to the person – not about them.
- No backhanded compliments.
- Only one affirmation at a time.
- When receiving affirmation you may say “thank you.” Please do not disagree, argue, or expand.

**Following Through after the TeamBuild** – Facilitate the team and team leader to find ways to use the experience to continue team building. Some suggestions might include:

- Schedule a debriefing time with the team leader to evaluate the process and help them to establish some realistic action steps to continue to build upon their experience.
- Have them take their Grip-Birkman Profile posters and place them on their office walls as continual reminders.
- Encourage the team leader to bring GB conversations into meetings on a regular basis.
- Encourage the team to share their profiles in an appropriate way with each other and find ways to integrate their awareness of self and others into their relationships and ministry.
- Consider scheduling a follow-up team building time to build upon the insights gained.

**As you enjoy facilitating TeamBuilds, remember that your job as a Grip-Birkman coach is to create a space for the team to speak to one another in ways that they may not normally experience. Keep in mind that the goal is to build unity in the body of Christ so more people will know Jesus.**



*“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:20-26)*

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*







