



## CASE STUDY

"We did our first kick-off Birds session during the early design stage with a group of folks who are learning to work together, including the owner, designer, owner's advisor, and ourselves ... They liked it so much that when we initiated the construction phase, they essentially demanded that we do that session again because there were some new people 'joining the flock' at that point."

**Allen McCullough**

Vice President,  
Ulliman Schutte

## Building Stronger Teams Through Partnering Sessions:

Ulliman Schutte and Velocity Advisory Group

### THE ORGANIZATION

Ulliman Schutte is a national leader in the construction and renovation of water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, including treatment plants, pump stations, flood protection systems, and pipelines. Founded in 1997 by Herb Schutte and Matt Ulliman, the company is headquartered in Miamisburg, Ohio, and has offices in Virginia, Kentucky, and Colorado. The firm executes projects through design build, construction manager at risk (CMAR), and traditional general contracting, with a portfolio spanning water treatment, conveyance, pipe rehabilitation, distribution, and more.

## THE CHALLENGE

For Ulliman Schutte, a leading construction firm specializing in water and wastewater infrastructure, the complexity of their projects presents unique communication and coordination challenges. Their work involves facilities that must remain in service during upgrades, making collaboration between design teams, owners, and operations staff essential to project success.

As Allen McCullough, Vice President, explained: “The facilities have to remain in service while we’re completing the upgrades, which means the on-site stakeholders are key players in these construction projects.”

With utilities, design partners, and contractors working together on high-stakes, collaborative projects like progressive design builds and CMARs, teams are often formed quickly, and include members across different organizations, bringing different groups together in nontraditional roles, McCollough explained.



The company needed a structured, repeatable way to build cohesion and communication across these multi-organizational teams.

## HOW VELOCITY HELPED

**Ulliman Schutte’s relationship with Velocity Advisory Group began more than a decade ago with communication training.**

“We have a long history together, which has been fantastic. We started with internal training sessions on the Birds [DISC] assessment probably 10 years ago,” McCullough shared.



“We’ve made that [the Birds] a standard for all of our new folks as part of their onboarding process.”

Building on that foundation, Ulliman Schutte turned to Velocity for partnering sessions that combined Velocity’s Birds workshop with structured goal setting as a way to help the teams communicate

better. “That [the Birds] has become more of a kick-off for a partnering session,” McCullough explained.

They start the day with the Birds as a team-building element. “Everyone enjoys it and it’s insightful,” McCullough continued. “The second half of the session becomes a partnering session with a goal-setting approach to establish charters and build a foundation to keep the team functioning at a high level.”

One standout example took place in Woodbridge, Virginia, where Velocity facilitated both the design and construction kick-offs:

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McCullough emphasized the sessions’ value: “It really helps the stakeholders form connections with each other and form relationships before the actual project takes off ... We find that they function better together.”



## RESULTS

### The impact of Velocity's partnering sessions is clear:

Teams communicated more effectively, new members integrated faster, and utilities new to collaborative delivery models gained the tools to work more efficiently.

"Our team members are very collaborative, but the partnering sessions and the Birds training helps the team get there faster," McCullough said. "It helps break people out of their silos."

The sessions have become an important part of Ulliman Schutte's project kick-off process to set goals, build trust, and accelerate team performance.



**In conclusion, McCullough stated: "I would recommend partnering sessions with Velocity, particularly for more complicated and/or collaborative delivery projects. We think it's a key part of setting the projects up for success."**





## ABOUT VELOCITY ADVISORY GROUP

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Velocity Advisory Group delivers strategic support and development opportunities that senior leaders need to align their teams and lift their organization. Our team brings extensive experience in strategic consulting, executive coaching, and developing talent through intentional culture initiatives and people insight technology. Since 2009, we have been committed to building momentum across organizations by equipping leaders with the tools and intelligence needed to elevate culture, eliminate inefficiencies, and propel strategic action.

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