

Leading the Way

Newport Beach Country Club General Manager Robin Shelton, Assistant General Manager Melanie Stacklie and Clubhouse Manager Sarah Sanchez are helping educate the next generation of club managers.

By Ashley Ryan



Three Newport Beach Country Club leaders are leaving their mark on the industry in an exciting way, leading the next generation of club managers through specialized Business Management Institute (BMI) programs.

These BMI programs are required learning for the Club Management Association of America's professional Certified Club Manager (CCM) designation, which the organization says helps enrich skills, provide credibility in the field and demonstrate deep commitment. This can be crucial for anyone looking to gain a promotion at their club or even just prepare for future challenges, offering important knowledge and business tools to enhance impact.

The CCM certification got its start back in 1965, with the BMI programming following in the 1980s—though it's been about two years since NBCC's general manager, Robin Shelton, started teaching.

"I love teaching and preaching," he explains. "When you get to talk about a subject that you love and are passionate about, you always want to do it. I wouldn't do something that would ever detract from the club; I would never be on a speaker circuit or tour. But it's nice to have some variety and feel like you're contributing to the development of others, your industry and your organization."

Shelton—along with Sarah Sanchez, NBCC's director of food & beverage—leads the BMI Food & Beverage Management program twice a year in Houston, Texas. These sessions take a deep dive into club food and beverage operations, in respect to both management and control, offering participants the chance to visit local clubs and enjoy a wine/beer and cheese tasting.

Since getting involved, Shelton says that he has also learned new things that he can



incorporate once he returns to NBCC, allowing him to give back to club members in addition to future club managers from the U.S. and beyond.

"I get takeaways of something that landed with these people that may resonate with our staff as well. ... A lot of idea sharing comes up, and ... it gives me more confidence that, hey, we're doing the right things," Shelton adds. "And I think our staff also appreciates knowing that there's some industry

affirmation that the leaders of their club are well-respected enough to educate future leaders."

In addition to Shelton and Sanchez, NBCC's assistant general manager, Melanie Stacklie, is also one of the program's leaders, traveling to Los Angeles multiple times per year to teach sessions on BMI Leadership Principles.

"I speak on the topic of women in leadership, an important discussion within



the private club industry," Stacklie explains. "While the number of women in leadership roles remains relatively low, I am fortunate to work at a club where the general manager and ownership actively support and promote women into these positions. This experience allows me to share firsthand insights into working in an environment where women make up the majority of the leadership team. My hope is to contribute to the ongoing conversation and encourage further progress in the industry."

Stacklie went through the same program herself while pursuing her own CCM certification, noting that stepping into this role has been a full-circle moment in her professional journey.

"Serving as a speaker for one of CMAA's Business Management Institutes is an incredibly meaningful experience for me, as it provides an opportunity to give back to the private club industry," she says. "... It is a privilege to get to share the knowledge I have gained with others who are on a similar path."

As these three NBCC leaders influence the next generation, the experience further reinforces their belief that they're doing things right here in Newport Beach. "Our peers in the industry look at our club as setting the standard—they look to us and want to know what we do," Shelton says. "I think that's really cool and sets us apart from other clubs, too."

He also notes that it's rare enough to have one or two professionals teaching for CMAA, let alone three. "It speaks volumes to what we're doing here at the club," he adds, "and the caliber of people that we have on our staff here."