

# SHOOT FOR THE STARS

AS THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO CASEY KAUT, THE COUNTRY CLUB'S GENERAL MANAGER, DANA LUNDBLAD IS GETTING THINGS DONE WHILE STILL DREAMING BIG.

BY ASHLEY RYAN

Dana Lundblad has made herself a chameleon of sorts, shifting her attention wherever she is needed most. For now, that is as the executive assistant to Casey Kaut, the Newport Beach Country Club's general manager.

"I'm kind of his liaison; I'm his proxy," Lundblad says. "If ... [the members] catch me out and about on property, and they need to get a message to him but can't nail him down, I'm the person that they can flag down and I can assist with that." In addition to serving as a spokesperson for Kaut, Lundblad says she is the

gatekeeper of his calendar and has enjoyed learning about the financial side of operations since starting the position a few months ago.

However, Lundblad is not new to the club. In fact, she has been with International Bay Clubs (the parent company of both Newport Beach Country Club and Balboa Bay Resort) for over a decade, taking on numerous roles since she first started in room reservations at the resort in 2008.

Although she earned a degree in kinesiology from Sonoma State University and worked in a physical

therapy clinic before landing her job with IBC, the hospitality industry has provided her with the chance to learn and grow. From room reservations, Lundblad transitioned to the Balboa Bay Resort's back-of-house staff, working in human resources for many years. "I got to really meet the team members and relate to them, and I found that I could help them almost on a greater level than I could the guests," she explains. "I enjoyed relating to them and hearing their stories."

She transferred to the Newport Beach Country Club two years ago, starting off as Human Resources Manager Sarah Blanco's assistant. "Now I'm kind of back in the front-[of-]house position as ... [Kaut's] assistant, but it's ... a perfect blend."

Lundblad still moonlights in the human resources department, assisting with everything from staff recognition and employee events to chairing the club's safety committee. And while she says there are tasks she feels strong in and others that are a bit more difficult, her job is always made easier by other staff members. "I think the best part of working here is knowing who to go to because everybody's got a job and they're so skilled and qualified at it," she explains. "... Your ideas are welcomed; your suggestions are welcomed and it's a really fun atmosphere because you feel like you're empowered to do your job."

This empowerment goes all the way up to Kaut himself. "Casey is really focused on not doing the status quo and not comparing ourselves to everybody else," Lundblad

says. "He's like, 'If you have an idea, I want to hear it.' Because things only ... improve if people speak up and share their ideas."

She says it's easier for her to get things done in this type of atmosphere, as opposed to some of her previous roles. And, as she moves forward, Lundblad aims to help elevate the club, noting that she would love for the property to be talked about in the same category as the finest clubs in the world, like the Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia or the Riviera Country Club.

While her dedication to NBCC is apparent, Lundblad has an active life outside of work as well, citing volleyball, flag football, dancing and running as some of her favorite activities. She also has a fraternal twin sister whom she enjoys spending time with. "We're really close—she's my best friend. It's like the greatest gift just being able to have her. It's a really awesome relationship," she says.

But, both at work and outside of it, Lundblad's passion still lies with helping people. She hopes to apply the leadership, business and financial skills she has learned to a managing role someday, possibly for a nonprofit dealing with environmental conservation, anti-bullying or female empowerment. But that doesn't stop her from dreaming about other hobbies. "I think if I could 'poof' myself into any job, I would either be on a search and rescue team or a nightclub jazz singer. ... Maybe I could do both," she jokes. "Helicopter rappelling by day and sequined-dress, jazz singing by night."

