

A NEW FOCUS

NEWPORT BEACH COUNTRY CLUB RECENTLY LAID OUT ITS GOALS AND STANDARDS IN A NEW OPERATING PHILOSOPHY THAT EXUDES WARMTH, EXCELLENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS.

BY ASHLEY RYAN

In a service-oriented business like Newport Beach Country Club, it's important to remain united. Every word and every action that a staff member performs leaves a mark on members, with the power to completely elevate the experience and create lasting memories.

Over the last year, the NBCC team came together to craft a

brand-new training and service philosophy, filled with everything from the club's mission statement and vision to specifics like non-negotiables and the "Three M's." This philosophy, or "philo" as the team refers to it (pronounced phée-lo), is formally titled the property's Operating Philosophy, informing employees on how to act, how to respond to

members and how to provide the best service possible.

Though it was perfected and laid out this summer, the creation of the philosophy has been a long time in the making. "Over the course of the first year [since the new clubhouse opened], the entire team contributed to the creation of the operating philosophy," General Manager Casey Kaut explains.

Because it was a team effort, the country club was able to ensure that it had exhausted every avenue and idea imaginable. The result is an array of guidelines that are sure to help make Newport Beach Country Club a special place for members for many more years to come.

BREAKING IT DOWN

There are four pivotal parts to the new operating philosophy at Newport Beach Country Club. Serving as a reference for both managers and employees of the club, the words printed on the handy philo card serve to remind staff of their responsibilities and to emphasize what members should expect on each and every visit.

The club's vision is succinctly laid out: "To be the standard for the

next generation of club, where relationships elevate experiences, where tradition meets the future, where life happens, one family, one member, one moment at a time."

"The first line in our vision is the most pertinent," Kaut notes. "... We are not trying to follow in anyone's footsteps. We are intentionally different, and we are striving to create something that the rest of the industry will seek to emulate."

But the club's philo isn't the only place where it reveals its differences. The mission statement listed on the same card notes, "Newport Beach Country Club is an entirely unique contemporary club that embraces the comfortable and active Southern California lifestyle. A place that balances innovation with a rich history and excellence in service, where an empowered staff actively engages with members to create memories that last generations."

Staff members throughout Newport Beach Country Club agree that calling the club "entirely unique" couldn't be more accurate. Executive Assistant Danielle Sayer says that the club combines the active Southern





California lifestyle with an understated elegance, saying, “Each team member at NBCC strives to deliver an experience unparalleled by any other club.”

The club’s Accounting Manager Melanie Stacklie adds that the club is unique in that it has an amazing mix of ideas. “Oftentimes, a mix like that can be confusing or contradictory,” she says. “Here, it just seems to work. We manage to blend concepts like tradition and innovation; young families and lifetime members; golf, food and beverage, and recreation, just to name a few.”

Another important component of the new philosophy are the “Three M’s”: **members first**, **model operations** and **make improvements**. These three notes help to remind employees that No. 1, members are the club’s top priority and, No. 2, that the club’s facilities and systems will always be optimal, and No. 3, that the staff is empowered to do whatever possible to address deficiencies and make

things better for the member.

The final portion of the Newport Beach Country Club philo lists 14 statements that are considered the club’s non-negotiables—meaning they are things that simply must happen. Though three of these statements contain the Three M’s, others detail actions that staff members should take, including immediately acknowledging members by name, supporting other employees through teamwork, ensuring a safe environment, maintaining accountability for one’s own actions, communicating in a cheerful and timely manner, keeping a polished appearance, and building lasting relationships with members. One standout non-negotiable is also to seek out a “moment of truth,” or an opportunity to creatively assist members while showcasing expertise.

Because this philo card is designed for employees to tote around with them, it’s easy to keep an eye on and ensure that each

component is being demonstrated from one day to the next.

“I feel that the mission statement really explains where the club comes from and where it is going. I think it is great that it mentions both history and innovation as well as talks about creating memories to last generations,” Stacklie says. “... The main way the mission statement benefits our members is that it lets them know how important we feel it is to make lasting memories for and with them, and that our staff has been empowered to make every single experience here the very best it can be.”

MAKING A STATEMENT

While creating a new philosophy and mission statement has been in the works for a while, there’s no denying that its recent launch is connected to the new clubhouse that opened up last year at Newport Beach Country Club.

“The new clubhouse ushered in an entirely new era for NBCC,” Kaut says, “and with it came an

entirely new level of expectation among the members and community. The team needed to create a foundation for service in this new era and a touchstone set of principles to build from.”

In order to determine these principles that would govern the club moving forward, Kaut says he and the rest of the management team sequestered themselves in the Ocean Boardroom for several days in early June. During that time, they worked tirelessly to determine the specifics of what is now the operating philosophy.

“Each and every one of our leaders participated and provided input,” he adds. “The net result of the effort is a set of principles that was created with genuine collaboration and a true team effort.”

Sayer was there as well, and says she felt fortunate to be a part of the construction of the mission and vision statements. “The energy in the room was incredible,” she recalls. “We were genuinely excited to declare what NBCC represents for both members and our team. There was a lot of pride in the room as we drafted these statements and we knew we were part of something very special.”

Throughout the drafting process, the management staff was inspired by a number of sources, including past experiences with members and goals for the future. Kaut notes that he drew inspiration from his time with the PGA Tour’s Tournament Players Club Network and the credo card that The Ritz-Carlton has used for decades, but that the details and distinct language are 100 percent unique to the club.

Stacklie says she was inspired to find the perfect way to explain how amazing the club is—both for members and employees. “It was also to make sure everyone knows that we are constantly striving to be the best we can be,” she adds.

Feedback from the project has been positive among staff members



OUR VISION

To be the standard for the next generation of club, where relationships elevate experiences, where tradition meets the future, where life happens, one family, one member, one moment at a time.

OUR MISSION

Newport Beach Country Club is an entirely unique contemporary club that embraces the comfortable and active Southern California lifestyle. A place that balances innovation with a rich history and excellence in service, where an empowered staff actively engages with members to create memories that last generations.

“THE NEW CLUBHOUSE USHERED IN AN ENTIRELY NEW ERA FOR NBCC, AND WITH IT CAME AN ENTIRELY NEW LEVEL OF EXPECTATION AMONG THE MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY. THE TEAM NEEDED TO CREATE A FOUNDATION FOR SERVICE IN THIS NEW ERA AND A TOUCHSTONE SET OF PRINCIPLES TO BUILD FROM.”

— CASEY KAUT

so far. As Sayer notes, “The new mission statement reminds us to stay current with the wants and needs of our members. It encourages us to keep improving and continue to seek ways to deliver a better experience.”

Kaut, too, sees the positives that philosophy has already enacted. “The payoff here is the construction of an ingrained and perpetual culture of service and excellence that will get stronger and more foundational over time,” he says,

which has been the goal all along.

As the operating philosophy continues to influence the hearts and minds of both managers and staff, and be reflected in the service members receive, Sayer says that the whole process has been important for the future of the club. “The club has a totally new look and it was time to point us in the direction of the future,” she explains. “Success is not an accident; it is planned. The mission statement is our roadmap.”