

The Right Blend

Five years ago, the exclusive Center Club Orange County embarked on a quest to find more middle-management business executives who wanted to join a club for networking purposes rather than social-climate entertainment.

What emerged was the creation of C39, a private group run by business executives age 39 and younger.

Initially, the club's committee tinkered with the idea of only having 39 year olds and younger as members. No one older. Howev-

C39 is one of the premier networking groups at the Center Club Orange County that brings together young and seasoned business executives in an unparalleled professional environment.

er, with the wisdom and life experiences possessed by business execs 40 and over, and the desire to merge all these groups together, the value of opening the club to all ages was too appealing, says Rob Selway, Chairman of C39.

“That’s part of the beauty of it – the mix of our members and people who come to our



C39 members (L-R) Steve Diamond, Chuck Bankoff and Rob Miller.

events is great,” says Selway, an Assistant Vice President of Citizens Business Bank in Laguna Hills. “What’s great about C39 and our events is you have the ability to really meet impactful people outside of your regular networking circle.”



Article By Rick Weinberg, California Business Journal

C39 monthly events at the Center Club Orange County are typically packed. “The group has great attraction and we’re consistently growing -- every event seems to draw

“We’re all centers of influence for each other. Relationships are forged that result in deals and partnerships.”

— Kris De La Pena, C39 Board Member

bigger crowds,” Selway says.

The C39 committee reels in community partners like ProVisors, a preeminent professional networking group in SoCal, educational institutions like Chapman University, as well as local organizations, alumni clubs, chambers of commerce and non-profits.

“The opportunity to meet with a group like ProVisors is very valuable. That’s why I’m here tonight -- to be with a group of people who are all about networking,” says Carlos Trillo, a Center Club Orange County member and CEO of Evinex, a leading firm in web design, branding, online marketing and mobile apps. “Normally, you just don’t have this type of valuable opportunity.”

Especially for free.

Yes, there aren’t any fees to attend C39 events – and there are even complimentary



appetizers, craft beer or wine tasting, all tied to the theme of the month.

“C39 is definitely unique,” says Adam Coughran, who is on C39’s committee. “Not only do we have young, driving, motivational, successful people in this group, but we are also changing the viewpoint of millennials -- the ‘I want everything now, I don’t want to work hard for anything’ generation.”

Funny but Coughran is a millennial himself ... sort of. “I actually fall at the top of millennial or at the bottom of the Gen-Xers,” says the 34-year-old CEO of Standards Training and Consulting in Mission Viejo, Calif. “I associate more with Gen-Xers because of my personality type. To me, it seems like the Gen-Yers have been lost in time and all the focus has been on millennials.”

C39 merges all these groups together -- along with baby boomers. “We show Gen-



Center Club OC members (L to R) Jon McClintock, Lawren Ramos and Bob Hartmann.

Business Feature

Xers in their 40s that ‘Yes, we are successful. We do work hard. We do have value. Not everyone is the stereotypical millennial. We’re a perception changer,” Coughran says.

The heart and soul of C39, Selway says, “is to bring these groups together at social networking events and break down that gap so they better understand each other and gain that mutual respect from both sides.”

Many significant business connections have been made at C39 events – some multi-million deals have been consummated. For instance, C39 member Dave Rolander, a financial advisor, introduced Selway to a couple unable to secure a multi-million loan for a multi-family real estate investment. Selway got it done – at a lower rate to boot.

“We’re all centers of influence for each other,” says Kris De La Pena, a financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services who is on C39’s committee. “Relationships are forged that result in deals and partnerships.”

At C39 events, “there is a sense of security, a sense of stability,” Selway says. “When you’re next to someone at this club, you’re paths will eventually cross. There is a sense of trust and respect that I never found at other networking events or organizations.”

Each month, C39 also offers a special society dinner, where a diverse group of members get together and discuss current events, such as a Harvard Business Review article.

“It’s more cerebral conversation,” says Jon McClintock, a long-time Center Club Orange County member.

The Center Club Orange County is located on the garden level of the Center Tower, adjacent to the Segerstrom Center for the Arts at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa.



C39 Chairman Rob Selway (right) with members Carlos Trillo (L) and Alexis Hernandez (center).

Its water and sculpture gardens and dining rooms were created by Peter Walker to provide a sense of inspiration and beauty. Two original sculptures by renowned Swedish artist, Carl Milles, and a notable collection of California impressionism art add to the elegant drama of the Club, which also features supreme cuisine, superior vintage wines, gracious and exceptional service and exquisite elegant surroundings.

The Club is an ideal environment for entertaining clients or friends and for holding private social and business meetings. It also offers members a variety of speaker programs, special events, pre-theater dinner on performance nights, outings and children’s events.

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