

## TOP 40 UNDER 40 BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

*Emerging developers, brokers, lawyers and public officials  
who are helping to shape San Diego's future.*

TOP 40 Under 40

### Melissa Deen

#### Sunrise Management

Title: Vice President of Marketing

Age: 36

Deen was raised in Connecticut and, in a familiar story, visited San Diego to see a college friend and fell in love with the place. "It was March and snowing back home," she recalled. "I moved here for the weather, the lifestyle and the healthy environment." She found early jobs in marketing and communications. "I loved doing front-end marketing for the building industry," she said. "There are a lot of good people in it, and I built a network."

When homebuilding struggled in the recession, she saw a chance to move to real estate management. Speaking of the units her company works with, she said, "I do multifamily properties, renovations, and rebranding. We take older properties, our clients put money back for renovations and we target millennials on the new product." Renters in that group have definite preferences, and Deen is on it. "They want a high level of service and social interaction. They want easy. They want to pay their rent online, make maintenance requests online. Wi-Fi. Dog happy hours. The target group is definitely changing, and we are adapting."

Deen is credited with reinventing Sunrise's marketing program. "Most real estate management companies don't focus



on marketing," she said. "We are driving performance for our clients. When I got here, I was the only one doing marketing. Now we have a team of four."

The company's program has become more robust and metric-driven with an emphasis on customer service, a basis for expanding Sunrise in Arizona and entering new markets in Sacramento and Las Vegas. Deen participates in strategic planning, corporate innovation and identification and implementation of industry best practices.

The company's portfolio has grown by more than 70 percent in fewer than five years.

Deen is active in the community through her membership in the Building Industry Association of San Diego. She is past president of the BIA's Young Generation Leaders Council. She is on the board of directors of the San Diego County Apartment Association and for six years has been an active supporter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the annual Walk MS.

— John Roemer