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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

By ANGELA RATZLAFF
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Bistango promotes
Ray Sanii to director
of operations

RAY SANII has been promoted to director of operations at **BI-STANGO**, an upscale Irvine restaurant. **WILLIAM BANK** and **ALEX GIMENEZ** will assist Sanii with management duties. Sanii previously worked as Bistango's general manager.



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- THIS WEEK'S FEATURED EMPLOYER -

Going to the
Head of the Class

By BILL QUINNAN
FOR O.C. REGISTER SPECIAL SECTIONS

Engagement is more than just a buzzword at Kagan Publishing and Professional Development. Through the instructional strategies it develops and shares, Kagan helps teachers boost the engagement and achievement levels of students in the classroom. The company is also dedicated to keeping its own employees engaged in the workplace.

Based in San Clemente, the company offers professional-development opportunities for educators, including workshops,

Publishing company known for instructional strategies helps teachers boost the engagement and achievement levels of students while keeping its own employees engaged in the workplace.

institutes, academies and hands-on classroom coaching, as well as products and tools for classroom management. The firm is known for its research-based

cooperative-learning strategies, as well as classroom structures that can be applied to virtually any curriculum.

According to the firm, its products and services generate proven results, boosting academic gains, closing the achievement gap and ensuring high levels of learning by engaging every student in the classroom.

Kagan Publishing and Professional Development is actually the combined name of two companies – Kagan Publishing, incorporated in 1989, and Kagan

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ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER
**TOP
WORK
PLACES**
2013

TOP 100

COMPANY
STATS

Kagan

- Industry: Media
- Employees in region: 59
- Headquarters: San Clemente
- Founded: 1989
- Website: KaganOnline.com

AWARDS:

- Top Workplaces – Orange County Register, 2013. Medallion Award for Meaningfulness.
- Best Places to Work – Orange County Business Journal, 2012, 2014.

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES SAY ABOUT THE COMPANY:

Every day I am challenged, no two days are alike, and I work with a great group of people with a vision for making the world a better place through education.

The fairness of the administrators, the kindness, appreciation of the administrators, and the overall enjoyment of being a part of an employment that is doing something for our world.

Kagan cares about its employees and cares about its important mission in improving and equalizing education.

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Professional Development, incorporated in 1993.

The companies were founded by Dr. Spencer Kagan, who began his career as a clinical psychologist and then spent 17 years as a research psychologist for the University of California in the departments of psychology and education. His research, and that of others, demonstrated dramatic achievement gains with the use of the cooperative-learning instructional strategies he devised. The strong demand for his workshops led to the founding of the company.

“Every employee at Kagan Publishing and Professional Development feels part of a mission to make it a better world. They know that when teachers teach with the Kagan cooperative-learning strategies, students not only acquire the academic content better, they acquire also social skills and character virtues that make them a better and more successful person,” said Kagan.

Kagan Publishing and Professional Development was among the companies named to the Orange County Register's Top Workplaces list for 2013. The company was also awarded a Top Workplaces Medallion for Meaningfulness.

The firm's leadership makes engagement of employees a priority within the firm, incorporating team building activities into each staff meeting, empowering employees to make decisions and using the firm's own instructional strategies, such as brainstorming, prioritizing, and decision-making.

Managers are given budgets to provide impromptu celebrations within their departments, take employees to restaurants for meetings and coordinate team building activities, such as kayaking, bowling, whale-watching and laser tag. Managers also administer a company complaint policy that encourages employees to channel their complaints and issues to the appropriate person, while also working with human resources to correct negative behavior.

The workplace environment within the organization is upbeat, friendly, and positive, Kagan said, with a culture built on teamwork, appreciation and respect. As a result, the company strives to hire individuals who communicate well and can work effectively in teams.

As a firm in the professional-development business, the firm encourages the development of its own employees in a number of ways. Personal growth is encouraged through a bonus of up to \$100 per year that employees may use toward their individual learning goals, which might include ski instruction, flying or skydiving lessons or a scrapbooking class.

As for professional development, managers are encouraged to provide their employees with internal and external training in order to improve their skills and knowledge. The firm's information-technology department provides employees with computer training in Word and Excel. The company will also pay employees to take courses and workshops from other companies to improve their job skills.

The company strives to promote from within whenever possible, searching internally for qualified candidates to fill vacancies before looking elsewhere.

“A recent example is one of our receptionists who was promoted to customer service and then later was promoted to event coordination. Lots of seasonal, temporary workers have gone on to secure a permanent position with our company,” said Kagan.

The company offers a rich benefits package for employees, including half-day Fridays; a pension profit-sharing plan in addition to a 401-K plan; staff and department activities; an anniversary bonus; a recreation bonus; paid time off; nine paid holidays; and medical, dental, and life insurance. The firm also closes at year-end to allow family time.

The organization uses its learning and development strategies and resources as a means of serving the community, hosting several “Kagan Gives Back” events at its headquarters, at which deeply discounted professional development workshops are held.

The company matches the charitable contributions of employees dollar-for-dollar, up to \$100 annually per employee, which is often given to local charities. Employees of the company also participate in annual charity drives such as Toys for Tots, Laura's House and FAM (Family Assistance Ministries).

Bill Quinnan is a freelance writer who lives in Orange County. Readers can send e-mail to him at bquinnan@sbcglobal.net. Bill cannot provide job leads.