Bistango promotes Ray Santi to director of operations

RAY SANTI has been promoted to director of operations at BISTANGO, an upscale Irvine restaurant. WIL-LIAM BANK and ALEX GIRENZ will assist Santi in his new responsibilities. Santi previously worked as Bistango’s general manager.


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 Cali-fornia 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 Medalion 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.

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.

Innovative, academically 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 academ-ic gains, closing the achievement gap and ensuring high levels of learning by engaging every stu-dent in the classroom.

Kagan Publishing and Profes-sional Development is actually the combined name of two com-panies – Kagan Publishing, in-corporated in 1989, and Kagan Professional Development, incorporated in 2001. 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 work-shops 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.

Managers are given budgets to provide impromptu cele-brations within their departments, take employees to res-taurants for meetings and coordinate team building activi-ties, 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 encour-aged 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 work-shops from other companies to improve their job skills.

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

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