

Riverside closes NuStef Baking add-on acquisition of Kii Naturals

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The Riverside Company has acquired Kii Naturals Inc. and merged it with its NuStef Baking platform.

Riverside acquired Mississauga, Ontario based NuStef Baking Ltd., a manufacturer of Italian-inspired pizelle waffle cookies and artisan crackers under the Reko brand, in January 2017. Kii Naturals is first add-ons to NuStef.

Founded in 2010 by Sujay Shah, Vaughn, Ontario based Kii Naturals manufactures all-natural artisan crackers. The company is recognized as one of Deloitte's Best Managed Companies in Canada. It has built a loyal following thanks to its high quality, healthier organic and non-GMO offerings, as well as its innovative flavor combinations.

"Kii makes delicious crisps that meet the increasing demand for unique flavors and better-for-you snacks," said Riverside Managing Partner Suzy Kriscunas. *"This addition delivers a great brand and line of products to NuStef in an adjacent market that is poised for continued strong growth."*

Kii's on-trend, clean label offerings are on the leading edge of a product category that customers are discovering and increasingly demanding, said Riverside Partner Meranee Phing.

"Kii is well positioned to outpace competitors due to industry trends towards healthier alternatives and snacking," said Phing. "The company has been quickly adding product lines and customers across various channels. Most importantly, consumers love these delicious and innovative artisan crisps."

Riverside plans to drive growth at both Kii and NuStef through leveraging a strong distribution network in both Canada and the United States, existing broker/retailer relationships, cross-selling and developing new products and flavors, among other strategies.

"Riverside is the ideal group to take Kii to the next level," said Shah.

The companies will also benefit from the industry relationships and experience of Riverside Senior Food & Beverage Advisor Richard Lan, who spent most of his career in North American baked goods manufacturing.

Working with Kriscunas, Phing and Lan on the deal for Riverside were Vice President Caroline Shettle, Senior Associate Jon Gross, Associate Connor Ryan, Operating Partner Ron Savelli, and Operating Executive Hayden Cotterill. Regional Director, Origination Cheryl Strom sourced the deal for Riverside. Partner Anne Hayes helped secure the financing for the transaction.

Ted Liu

Ted Liu, M.Sc. (Mining, Queen's), MBA (Finance, Toronto), is the Editor of Private Capital Journal, CanadaMetals.ca, TechWire.ca, and the former Editor of Canadian Private Equity. Ted has been passionately tracking Canadian private capital industry since 1992, having most recently served as Research Director for The Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (CVCA).

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