

Organization: Destination Imagination, Inc.
Position: Executive Director
Reports To: Board of Trustees
Location: Cherry Hill, NJ (Philadelphia area)
Website: www.destinationimagination.org
Applications: DISearch@supportcenteronline.org

Background

Destination Imagination (DI) is a nonprofit organization that hosts educational Challenge programs and tournaments across the United States and in more than 30 countries. The DI program reaches more than 150,000 students and 38,000 volunteers worldwide annually and is designed to cultivate creativity, courage, and curiosity. It focuses on STEM fields, fine arts, social entrepreneurship, and service learning. Students undertake a hands-on and team-based creative problem-solving process in navigating the Challenges. Participants range from kindergarten to college-age, and successful teams work their way up from regional to province, state or country competitions, and to the Global Finals tournament, where over 17,000 people gather for “the world’s largest celebration of student creativity.”

DI was incorporated in 1982 when it took over the charter for the OM Association, Inc. In 1999, the name was changed to Destination Imagination, Inc. Since then, DI has impacted more than 2 million participants. Headquartered in Cherry Hill, NJ, 20 minutes from Philadelphia, DI has a staff of 22 located in NJ and working remotely around the U.S. In addition, a network of affiliates manages the Challenge program across the country and around the world. The organization has an annual operating budget of \$12M, \$10M of which is dedicated to the Global Finals tournament. DI’s current strategic plan was enacted in 2014 and is in effect through 2019.

Position Overview

Destination Imagination recognizes the changes to the educational services marketplace, the complexities of working globally across diverse educational systems, and the challenges of managing an organization reliant on affiliates and a large volunteer workforce. Discussions of the DI model within this environment will be a priority for the next Executive Director, as will leading and motivating a staff and board that have experienced leadership transition. DI is seeking an experienced business leader familiar with nonprofit management. S/he will have demonstrable skills in internal and external communications, and the ability to successfully lead a global team of full-time, part-time staff and volunteers. The integrity of process and consistency in execution are key hallmarks of the role, as is the ability to strengthen and diversify both programs and revenue streams.

The ED is appointed and employed by the Board of Trustees and will work closely with Board leadership, with responsibility for the overall direction, management, and effectiveness of the organization. The individual will provide strategic, collaborative and innovative leadership focusing on maximizing resource development and building awareness of Destination Imagination. This leader must maintain accountability for the overall operational and fiscal integrity of DI around the world.

Responsibilities

The ideal candidate is an inspiring, collaborative, communicative leader and able administrator, providing direction, and the opportunities for growth necessary for ongoing success. S/he will have respect for the decades-long program while shaping it to excel in the future. Specifically:

Vision: Working with the Board, staff and program partners, refine and execute a dynamic vision for the future of DI that builds on its legacy, anticipates the needs of an expanded community and enables it to deepen and broaden its relationships to stakeholders.

Leadership: Develop a culture of opportunity that supports and builds on the achievements of the staff and volunteers, maximizing available resources and including pathways for professional development. Proactively cultivate relationships with key decision-makers throughout the DI community and be an enthusiastic advocate to all audiences.

Sponsorships and Fundraising: Deepen existing relationships and partnerships while exploring new revenue streams to diversify the funding base of the organization; create a model of contributed income that supports the mission of DI throughout the year as it expands into additional, untapped areas of the DI community.

Communications and Marketing: Assume primary responsibility for clear, consistent and timely internal communication to staff, affiliates and volunteers around the world. Together with the team, develop marketing plans and messages that resonate with multiple target audiences and monitor efforts to diversify and expand that audience. Be the chief spokesperson and ambassador for DI, representing the organization at relevant conferences and functions, industry events and public meetings nationally and internationally.

Organizational Development and General Management: Continually assess DI's infrastructure – its operations, human resources, facility management, financial systems, information technology systems, processes and procedures, and make recommendations for optimal efficiency including quality control and performance measurement. Partner with staff and affiliated personnel to expand and strengthen the organization, and foster a working environment of accessibility, active listening, and accountability.

Oversee a complex system of affiliate and volunteer relationships, partnerships and sponsorships, contracts and license agreements, bringing business and nonprofit management experience to the preparation of budgetary processes, audits, cash flow management and financial analysis, ensuring that sound fiscal policies and practices are in place.

Board Relations and Governance: Be an active partner to the Board in all areas of governance, including board development and best practices, and manage a robust meeting calendar that meets the needs of an International board. Work to ensure that board cultivation includes new trustees whose talents, interests, and commitment will further the DI's mission and expand support. Serve as key liaison in operational matters that require Board awareness, input and/or action.

Facilities and Operations: Oversee the teams responsible for the smooth operation of Global Finals, including venue and event management, personnel, travel and lodging, related communication and post-event procedures.

Programming: Evaluate current programming plans and expand on the tested strengths of the program to introduce new elements that anticipate the needs of a rapidly changing community. Extend the reach of DI to engage students in all demographics and reinforce the benefits of excellence and curiosity in academics and interpersonal interactions across cultures.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate is an accessible leader who can motivate teams and be accountable for decisions and actions taken on behalf of DI; a professional with a passion for excellence and engagement that is grounded in practice, and a person comfortable addressing internal and external audiences with eloquence and enjoyment. Specific experience and qualifications should include:

- Senior-level experience successfully managing people, operations and the fiscal affairs of a significant nonprofit or for-profit organization (background in organizations with umbrella/affiliate/chapter structures helpful--experience with educational organizations is helpful though not required);
- A track record as a builder and entrepreneur who can incorporate legacy programs into new ventures; further organizational development and team building;
- Ability and demonstrated experience growing a comprehensive contributed and earned income program that includes individuals, government entities, foundations, and corporations;
- A strategic and global thinker who can navigate broad-based constituencies including children, parents, educators, business and community leaders, and government officials; the ability to generate awareness and enthusiasm, resulting in buy-in from diverse sectors;
- The expertise and understanding to work effectively with a board and dedicated volunteer corps;
- The presence and standing to serve as an effective spokesperson and ambassador for DI, maintaining good relationships and supporting all levels of the Destination Imagination organization.

Personal Characteristics

- An inspiring and effective leader: capable of invoking and maintaining a shared vision among staff and constituencies; able to develop a sense of team spirit and maintain an environment of mutual respect and collegiality;
- A goal-oriented problem solver who proactively resolves issues; understands the subtleties of motivating, directing and working with a group of strong, tenured personalities; and is skilled at consensus building;
- A diplomat who is an open-minded, patient listener who considers all points of view, communicates effectively and is decisive when necessary;
- A person of high integrity, courage, excellence, good judgment, and candor;
- An accessible and considerate manager who establishes trust and fosters performance; possesses high emotional intelligence and a good sense of humor;
- A supporter of education conversant in the issues and opportunities facing public, private and home schools who recognizes the value of lifelong learning.

Destination Imagination offers a competitive compensation range commensurate with the background, skills, and experiences of the candidate, complete with comprehensive benefits.

How to Apply: Please send a cover letter and resume, using the subject line "Your Name: DI Search" and email to DISearch@supportcenteronline.org. Applications will be acknowledged by an auto response and only those candidates selected to advance will be contacted further. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis through the end of July 2018. No telephone calls, please.

Destination Imagination is committed to providing equal employment opportunity without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, national origin, age, citizenship status, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.