



Eastern North America Candidate

Chris Grap

Vice President of Experiential & Entertainment
Mall of America
Primary Location: United States
Running for 2nd term



ABOUT THE APPLICANT:

Current TEA Eastern Division Board Member
MarCom Committee Eastern Division
Financing Committee Eastern Division

Career highlights? Hmm...

2015 Webby Award Winner - Experiential/Innovation Social for #Twizzard

I got Mall of America to close on Thanksgiving and create a new national retail trend...
<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/mall-of-america-closed-thanksgiving> and brought a sense of ceremony, tradition and celebration back to Black Friday. Mall of America owns Black Friday. While other retailers have struggled, we continue to thrive.
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/25/economy/black-friday-mall-of-america/>

I worked with Hotopp to reinvent the standard "Mall" visit with Santa Claus with the Candy Cane Institute.
<https://attractionsmagazine.com/santas-elves-are-recruiting-helpers-at-the-virtual-candy-cane-institute/>

I am part of the design team for Mall of America's waterpark expansion, Mystery Cove.

I was selected as one of Blooloo's Top 50 Theme Park Influencers in 2022.

My team created the first and only Kenny Loggins themed attraction with the Kenny Loggins Chute.

We also just worked with Ed Sheeran's team to have him work a shift as a brick specialist at the Lego store to surprise guests. Tons of fun stuff!

Honestly, all my personal interests are relevant. Theme parks, water parks, live music, live events, crafting cocktails...

VISION FOR THE TEA

I was truly on the fence about running again (thus the delayed entry) but hearing incoming president Matthew Cross speak about his hopes for not only our divisional board but the TEA in general aligns much more with my hopes and vision as well.

I work in an area that is largely unaware of the TEA and themed entertainment in general. I love to talk to people on the outskirts about how they can find benefit from joining this community. We have to find ways to grow, and it isn't constantly approaching the same companies time and time again. We have to expand the circle so other businesses can see exactly where they fit and could benefit from being aligned with one of the coolest organizations in the most creative industry in the world.

I would like to spend far more time on big picture planning, succession planning in the industry which dovetails into growing the base and opportunities for young professionals. I want to spend far less time talking about name tags for events.

The structure Matthew has outlined and shared with us will get us a lot closer to achieving big things while effectively mitigating the smaller things.

SKILLS AND CORE COMPETENCIES

I oversee more than 400 live events a year at one of the largest themed entertainment destinations in the world. I work as an owner, operator, designer, and developer in a location that hosts over 35 million guests a year. I collaborate with IPs holder such as Paramount, Crayola, Merlin, Mattel, and Netflix while also developing our own IP for projects (Candy Cane Institute, Mystery Cove, Moose Mountain Adventure Golf). I work with multiple e-gaming companies to hold competitive live e-gaming events. I work with the Minnesota Department of Education and several non-profits on STEAM programming in Mall of America and our owned attractions such as Nickelodeon Universe and Crayola Experience.

I also know a water-skiing squirrel.

Point is, I have to maintain multiple perspectives all the time, work smarter and work faster while understanding all the tools available to me to achieve goals effectively. With clear goals, I am extremely effective. I need to know the "Why?" to be able to deliver and the incoming leadership has demonstrated to me that is a major component of their approach.