

Destination ImagiNation®

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Destination ImagiNation®?

MN DI strives to provide a safe and culturally rich environment that promotes creative problem-solving, team-building and leadership skills by encouraging students to build on their natural strengths and discover skills they may not realize they possess. To achieve this goal, MN DI has selected the Destination ImagiNation® program, for which it serves as the Minnesota Affiliate. MN DI is headquartered within Intermediate District 287.

Destination ImagiNation, Inc. is an international nonprofit organization based in Glassboro, New Jersey, that teaches life skills and expands imaginations through youth-centered, team-based creative problem-solving. Destination ImagiNation® is the world's largest creativity and problem-solving program for youth of all ages, with thousands of participants spread across 50 U.S. states and more than 40 countries, including Canada, China, and countries in South America, Europe and Asia. In 2007-2008, DI® celebrated 25 years of creative problem-solving.

DI® offers six competitive challenges annually, which are designed to stretch participants in many areas, and range in focus from Structure and Engineering to Theatrical to Community Service. We also offer the traditional DI experience to primary age students, age 6-9, through the non-competitive *Rising Stars!*® Challenge. Our sixth challenge this year is projectOUTREACH, a community service challenge geared toward nutrition, available to grades 6-12.

Minnesota has about 700 DI teams statewide, who participate in eight regions, each with its own Regional Tournament. Teams may advance from Regional to the State Tournament, and finally, to Global Finals in Knoxville, TN where they compete with teams from around the world.

Who is eligible to join?

All students from preschool through grade 12 may participate on a team of up to 7 members. Most teams consist of 5 to 7 members, and students are grouped by age. Competitive teams range in age from kindergarten through grade 12, while non-competitive *Rising Stars!*® teams are for students from preschool through grade 2.

MN DI ~ Kid powered, Team driven!

What does a team do?

Students work together during the year to solve their choice of one of six competitive challenges. The team then presents their rehearsed or improvisational solution in a 6 to 8 minute performance and solves an *Instant Challenge* (on-the-spot problem) at one of the eight regional tournaments held across Minnesota in February and March. If a team advances, they compete at our State Tournament in mid-April. First and second place teams earn the opportunity to travel to Global Finals held in Tennessee in May.

A team can start working on a *Team Challenge* as soon as members are recruited, but we recommend that the Team Manager (TM) participate in a Team Manager training. TM trainings are offered in most MN DI regions, and the MN DI office provides a day-long TM training in December. Teams have the opportunity to learn how to solve *Instant Challenges* by attending an Instant Challenger workshop in December, and to participate in a comprehensive *Power Tools* training co-hosted by The Brave New Workshop School of Improvisation in January. Team fees for these workshops help offset workshop and program expenses. These hands-on, interactive trainings may give teams a competitive edge. See our state website for details on training dates and fees at www.mndi.org.

How often do teams meet?

Once a team is formed, its members decide how competitive they want to be and how often they want to meet. Teams typically meet once a week, but as they approach their Regional Tournament date, they may meet two or more times a week. This is entirely dependent on a team's work style, other activities that compete for students' time, the goals the team sets, and the availability of the Team Manager. Some teams meet frequently for short periods, others get together less often but for longer periods, and other teams use a combination of these approaches. Some teams elect to work singly, in pairs, or in small groups between team meetings.

Who manages the teams?

Any adult 18 or older may manage a team. (Assistant team managers may be younger.) Generally speaking, TMs are one or two team parents, but a teacher or other interested adult may also manage a team. The solutions that students come up with *are their own*, not a Team Manager's or anyone else's outside the team. As a result, Team Managers need no special talents or skills—simply

an interest in young people, a sense of humor, and a willingness to help students stay focused.

Who evaluates teams at competition?

DI® is a volunteer, team-based organization at every level. Appraiser teams are assembled from trained volunteers to score student teams at regional and state tournaments across Minnesota. Appraisers commit to a one full day of training on a Saturday in January, and choose to appraise one or more full Saturdays at a regional tournament and State Tournament. Many of our MN appraisers also appraise at Global Finals. Training is provided by our State Challenge Masters.

What costs are involved?

Costs fall into four areas: domestic membership fees, Tournament fees, working materials fees, and training fees.

A domestic membership can be purchased by anyone. A school, school district, parent/teacher organization or other civic organization, or a home school organization can sponsor a membership, which can be a single team for \$135, or a 5-Team Pak membership for \$390. A group of parents or students, or a single group not affiliated with any organization can sponsor an independent team for the same fees as a single team as well. *Rising Stars!*® Primary team membership is \$35, when not included as part of a 5-Team Pak. 1-Pak memberships can be upgraded to 5-Paks, if more teams are created in an organization. School districts may purchase a 30-Pak for \$2250.

Minnesota regional tournament fees are \$50 for *Rising Stars!*® teams, and \$110 or \$135 for competitive teams. This is a one-time fee that is paid when teams register for their first tournament.

Team managers will usually request that parents of team members contribute a working materials fee to cover the cost of items used to practice *Instant Challenges* and to solve the *Team Challenge*. Parents may also be asked to bring snacks to meetings, gather working materials, and help transport students and props to their regional tournament.

Team Manager and team trainings fees range between \$20 per person and \$55 per team. See the MN DI website for a list of this season's trainings and workshops.

How do I join?

Recruit a team of between 2 and 7 members as soon as possible. A sponsoring organization or an independent team must purchase a membership by January 11. To purchase a DI® membership, go online to www.shopdi.org. Returning purchasers should click on

Sign In and enter the email address and password you used to set up your ShopDI account. If you are NEW to ShopDI, click on the *Sign In* tab at the top of the page and create an account by entering your email address, choosing a password, and filling in the *Information* section. Once payment is received and verified, a CD and one set of printed program materials are mailed. You may pay for membership by credit card, purchase order, or by check through the mail. You will also be able to access the program materials online.

Tournament registration forms will be posted on our state website (www.mndi.org). The contact person for each membership will be emailed when the forms are available. The Tournament registration deadline is January 9. Late registrants will be charged a \$40 late fee.

Although the membership purchase and Tournament registration deadlines for Destination ImagiNation® are in January, you will want to get your team started before then to take advantage of every training opportunity. In addition, we offer free online DIMail that provides tips, practice exercises and additional information throughout the program year. Our website is updated regularly, with tips and exercises released as the season progresses.

Note: It is not necessary to select a *Team Challenge* before recruiting a team. Ideally, this selection is made by the team during one of its early meetings. The team's challenge selection must be announced when the team registers in January for their Regional Tournament.

Where can I find more information?

Contact:

Pamela Schroeder, MN DI State Director
Email: pfschroeder@district287.org
Phone: 763-550-7212

Joan Cundiff, Appraiser Training Director
E-mail: jccundiff@district287.org
Phone: 763-550-7244

Kim Kallroos, Program Assistant
Email: kkkallroos@district287.org
Phone: 763-550-7245

MN DI Fax: 763-550-7356

Web sites

MN DI: www.mndi.org
Destination ImagiNation, Inc.: www.idodi.org

See our MN DIrectory listing all Regional Directors and State Challenge Masters at www.mndi.org.

