

## Disney streaming czar leaves for TikTok after missing on CEO job

Kevin Mayer, the architect of Walt Disney Co.'s direct-to-consumer video strategy, is leaving the entertainment giant to join TikTok, three months after getting passed over for the job of chief executive officer.

Mayer, 58, will become CEO of the fast-growing Chinese social-media app that's popular with teens and other young people, starting on June 1. His appointment was announced by ByteDance Ltd., TikTok's parent, where he will also serve as chief operating officer.

The departure, though not unexpected, is a loss for Disney's streaming effort at a time when other businesses — including its film studio, theme parks and TV networks — are bearing the **brunt** of the coronavirus-related shutdown. Besides leading the company's online video push, Mayer was the strategist behind numerous Disney deals through the years, such as the acquisitions of Lucasfilm and Marvel.

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Mayer joins TikTok as it's building an entertainment business and seeking to generate advertising dollars from its large user base. The company has been staffing up in Los Angeles with executives from Hollywood and the music industry.

Mayer said it wasn't an easy decision to leave Disney, which he first joined in 1993. "I would never have left ever if I thought it would put the rollout of Disney+ at risk, that's my baby, " he said. "The team there knows how to do this. We developed a playbook and it works really well."

"Opportunities come when they come, " he said. "ByteDance needed someone for this role, and I felt Disney+ was in good hands."