



...With one big difference.

In another lifetime, I produced movies.

While it might seem “glamorous”, the work mostly included adapting books into films, working with writers and directors, hiring cast and crew, and coordinating the logistical ins and outs of many million-dollar budgets. I spent years doing this work in the entertainment industry before coming home to Camp Chateaugay.

People often ask if running camp is different from film production.

They are more similar than you'd think, with one key distinction.

The Structures are Similar

Film productions work like this: for many months (sometimes years) you work with a small group of people. Writers, directors, a few key crew members. You're developing the script, planning shots, scouting locations, building the vision.

Then it's time to go into production and things scale all the way up.

Movie sets require hiring 100s of people like the cast, crew, production designers, line producers, assistant directors, sound technicians, and logistics coordinators. Everyone has an important and essential job to do. It all gets lined up and then someone screams “ACTION!”

Camp works almost exactly the same way.

In the off-season it's a small team planning developing programs, planning improvements, hiring staff, building the vision, getting ready for summer.

Then June hits and we scale up to 100+ staff.

Waterfront director, unit leaders, counselors, activity specialists, medical staff, kitchen crew. Each person has a specific role. Everything is planned, and then it's go time.

You can't run either operation without this level of coordination. Both require extensive pre-planning, clear role definition, and shared understanding of what we're creating.

No Script, But Shared Vision



Beside the Hollywood stars and cameras everywhere, there's a key difference between a movie set and camp → in film, you have a script.

At camp, there's no script for each kid.

A child's summer isn't predetermined and fully planned out. We don't script their friendships, their breakthroughs, or their challenges. We have no idea which activity will click for them or which moment will matter most.

But camp does have a shared vision. We speak about it a lot with the staff, the parents, the campers.

Everyone here understands the camp culture we're creating. Everyone knows the standards, the expectations, and the tone. We are training staff months and months before they even arrive at camp. By the time we yell "ACTION!", the entire team is aligned.

The experience can feel spontaneous (even magical) while happening inside a carefully aligned structure.

And when that happens you get this feeling of freedom and safety at the same time.

The A-List Team

In film, producers work with the same crew on multiple projects. They build a team they trust. People who know the vision and how to execute it.

Same thing at camp.

We have returning leadership year after year. They know the vision. They know the standards. They know how to execute.

This creates consistency in culture, consistency in safety, consistency in quality.

Parents notice this when the same head staff return summer after summer. That's not an accident. That's the team.

What Camp Actually Delivers



Oh, and there's one other key difference between a film and camp (except that kids don't call their agents).

Film is abstract. You're selling an artistic interpretation, an emotional experience, something you hope will move people.

Camp is concrete. The outcomes are measurable.

Kids show up shy. They leave speaking up in groups.

Kids arrive not knowing how to water ski. They leave knowing how.

Kids come to camp by themselves and go home with a cabin full of friends.

Kids don't think they can handle three weeks away. They leave knowing they can.

Film hopes to move you. Camp actually changes you.

What This Means For Your Child

Your child won't see any of the planning, coordination, or structure.

They'll just experience a summer that feels natural and fun.

But behind the scenes, we're running this like a production. Small team in winter, full team in summer, everyone aligned on vision, everyone executing their role.

Camp isn't a movie, but the summers are shot in Technicolor, scored by laughter, and edited by memory into something unforgettable.

See you this summer.

Mitch