

# **BALANCE YOUR BRILLIANCE!**

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## **“IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NEED (AND EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY HIRE) FOR RUNNING THE BUSINESS OF THE BUSINESS OF CAMP”**

**Skills, Areas of Knowledge & Work Behaviors that:**

- **Directors really use**
- **Directors & Owners Identify as Important to Success**

**(In other words, what you really need to know how to do...and be good at doing...)**

### **FINANCE**

- Financial skills and understanding ALL of the fiscal processes
- Budgeting
- Be able to read and understand financial documents, such as spread sheets, reports, statements, etc
- Computer skills, including accounting programs

### **CRITICAL/ANALYTICAL THINKING**

- Ability to understand and generate statistical data
- Analytical thinking
- Critical thinking
- Ability to see the “whole picture” in decision making

### **ORGANIZATION/PLANNING/TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Record Keeping: must be able to organize information, track information, and keep good records
- Strategic Planning
- Time Management
- Attention to Detail
- Being able to juggle a lot of balls at the same time
- Be able to work in an environment where multitasking is an on-going never ending process
- How to prioritize issues

## **COMMUNICATION: PUBLIC SPEAKING/PR**

- Must be able to communicate the mission clearly
- Must be able to be the “face” of the organization
- Strong skills in Public Speaking
- Ability to make high-impact presentations

## **COMMUNICATION: EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS/CUSTOMERS**

- Be a good listener
- Be able to praise the work of others
- Be able to give constructive feedback
- Negotiation skills
- Tact
- Ability to solve problems
- Strong phone skills

## **COMMUNICATION: WRITTEN**

- MUST have excellent skills in this area!
- Must be able to write in a manner that is professional and correct!
- Clearly understand that Email, IM, & text messaging language is not appropriate in a professional setting!!!
- Ability to write policies, procedures, manuals, etc

## **MARKETING**

- Must be able to “sell” the program
- Be Internet savvy for the purposes of marketing camp
- If customers are children: Must have strong communication skills with parents and develop marketing that shows an understanding of the viewpoint of parents

## **CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

- Being able to study the marketplace, understand your customers
- Understand customer relations
- Be able to work in a way that delivers best services to customers
- If you are serving children: Ability to think like a parent!

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

- Personnel management skills
- Ability to train staff to ensure that they have the tools and resources to successfully do their jobs
- Interviewing skills
- Understanding of employment law
- Skills to supervise the work of others
- Must be able to develop policies
- Ability to enforce regulations/policies
- Behavior management
- Recognition
- Decision Making

## **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**

- Ability to establish a rapport with others-including those younger, older
- Ability to relate to others, motivate others
- Enjoy working with others
- Ability to praise the work of others, positive reinforcement
- Ability to keep business as business; it's not personal
- Ability to deal with complaints
- Mediation skills
- Teambuilding
- Tone setting
- Honesty
- Dependability

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS**

“You need to be able to keep your staff from killing each other”

- Knowledge and skills in the area of Conflict Resolution
  - Ability to recognize problems early on and deal with them
  - Maturity to solve problems
- (If you are the type of person who avoids conflict, you should not be in a role as a supervisor)

## **RISK MANAGEMENT/LEGAL**

- Clear understanding of Risk Management
- Be aware of legal aspects: local ordinances, state standards, employment law, OSHA, regulatory, insurance, standards, etc for all aspects of the operation

## **A CLEAR DETAILED UNDERSTANDING OF EVERY ASPECT OF THE CAMPS OPERATION**

Specifics will vary depending on the operation, however this may include such things as:

- Understanding of, and ability to work with, health department, state and local regulatory organizations, compliance with building codes, OSHA, standards, etc as they apply to all aspects of the operation
- Understanding of the operational aspects of the property, ability to manage property/facility
- Ability to work/communicate with outside contractors, vendors, etc
- Restaurant/Food Service Management
- Health Service management
- Knowledge of programs being delivered, including all regulatory issues, certification for supervision, etc.
- Knowledge of participant registration functions
- Transportation management
- Accounting functions, processes
- Etc...specific to the organization

## **AND-**

### **IF ALSO A NON-PROFIT/RAISE MONEY**

- Understanding of various types of fundraising
- Ability to solicit funds, work on development
- Grant writing ability
- Ability to manage the administration of funding from various sources

### **IF CAMP/ORGANIZATION HAS A BOARD**

- Board/staff relationship
- Board development
- Understand structure of organization, responsibilities of the board verses those of staff

### **IF CAMP/ORGANIZATION HAS VOLUNTEERS**

- Skills required for working with paid staff are different than those required for working with volunteers
- Volunteer recruitment
- Accountability, supervision of volunteers

## **The Top 10 Skills/Areas of Knowledge Used Most by Camp Directors in the Day-to-Day Job**

*(not listed in any specific order...)*

- Finance & Budgeting
- Human Resources (hiring, supervision, training, etc)
- Marketing
- Business Management
- Planning
- Time Management
- Public Relations
- Communicating (in a wide range of venues, methods)
- Customer Relations
- Risk Management

## **EDUCATION**

### **IF YOU ARE GOING TO COLLEGE TO BE A CAMP PROFESSIONAL... THE RECOMMENDED MAJORS & MINORS**

	<b>Major In:</b>	<b>with a Minor In:</b>
#1	Business Management	Education, Child Psychology or Counseling
#2	Non-Profit Administration/Management	Education, Child Psychology or Counseling
#3	Education	Business Management
#4	Hotel/Restaurant Management	Education, Child Psychology or Counseling
#5	Outdoor Recreation and Parks <u>Management</u>	Education, Child Psychology or Counseling

### **AND, IN ADDITION TO ABOVE...**

#### **TAKE EXTRA COURSEWORK, WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS IN THE FOLLOWING:**

- Property Management
- Accounting
- Customer service
- Marketing
- Sales (how to sell)
- Child Development
- Counseling
- Public Speaking
- Finance
- Statistics
- Public Relations

### **Why isn't outdoor recreation or outdoor education on the list?**

This particular topic was repeatedly addressed as an area of concern by Directors and Owners.

There are strong feelings that a degree in "general" recreation or outdoor education has too much of a focus in "programming" and "activities", versus a degree in recreation or outdoor education management, which has a stronger focus in administration. The issue is that while outdoor recreation/education type coursework is great for general or lower level staff, it won't translate well to the business operational side of camp. The ability to deliver a program is not part of the typical day-to-day work reality of a Camp Director or Administrator; was not identified as a skills area critical to being a Camp Director.

Unless the course work in recreation or outdoor education has a strong, predominant focus on MANGEMENT, it is recommended that a student interested in a career as a camp professional should major in something else, the number one recommendation being business management.

# MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM CAMP STAFF TO ADMINISTRATOR

## CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIPS

The single biggest difficulty identified for staff who are transitioning from being a counselor or other staff member to being a supervisor is understanding, accepting, and working through, the changes that must occur in your relationships with the other staff. You may now be supervising staff who are your friends, or someone you may have dated, or may have been drinking buddies with...

In order to make a successful transition you must clearly understand-

**You are no longer their peer. You are no longer their pal. You are their boss.**

This does not mean that you can not be friendly, but you do need to create and maintain a professional “distance” between yourself and those who you supervise. It’s a hard lesson to learn and an even harder path to walk.

## Are You Ready To...(Can You/Will You/Do You...)

- Understand the change in role from your prior position to new job as SUPERVISOR?
- Recognize that you are moving in to a professional role and can no longer have the same friendships that you had in the past, and seek a new peer group with your new position?
- Truly understand that you can no longer “be one of them”
- Recognize that the staff (staff group) who you are now supervising is your new “cabin group”?
- Have the skills to coach, reprimand, and create positive performance changes with staff and still be respected (but not expect to still be liked)?
- Make decisions in a manner to get the job done, not in order to be everyone’s friend?
- Understand that you will have to make unpopular decisions?
- Make a decision, be firm, and stick to it?
- Separate yourself from the summer staff and the “social aspects” of camp?
- Understand that you will be doing a job that probably does not include praise for yourself (and where you will be expected to give a lot of praise to others!)
- Deal with correcting staff in a way that keeps the focus on dealing with the issue(s), rather than the “personalities” (It’s work- It’s not personal)?
- Understand that there may be times when your obligation as a supervisor has to take priority over your desire to reach out and “grow people”?

Concern with awareness level of Young Professionals of the time commitment and personal commitment required to succeed in this industry.

## **REALITY CHECK!**

### **BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A DIRECTOR, UNDERSTAND THAT....**

- **Running a Camp IS Running a Business**

And this includes non-profits. No matter how warm & fuzzy the mission statement, the reality is that running a camp requires the same types of skills that one needs to run any other business, such as knowledge of finance, HR, marketing, accounting etc. There should be a very clear understanding that skills like hiking, camping, swimming, arts & crafts, ropes course....have little if anything to do with the day-to-day reality of being a camp director or manager! Directing camp is not all fun and games. As a Director, you will be required to operate, and maintain an image of being, a professional business in all aspects of what you do, no matter what type of camp you are.

- **Camp is a lifestyle...not a 9-to-5 job**

“Camp is a lifestyle means that your work impacts your life and that your life impacts your work”  
And for a full time, year round professional, this means every aspect of your life. And you need to know what “year-round” means... A commitment to camp as a professional means that you should be prepared to work long days and weeks, including weekends & nights (and for no extra pay), to be called at 2:00 am because a water pipe broke (and possibly to be knee-deep in ice-cold mud fixing that water pipe and 2:30 am...). The responsibilities, workload, and long hours will impact your relationships with others, including family/significant others. (It is not uncommon for Directors to plan the birth of their child around the camp season!) If you have children, your work will impact the time you have to spend with them, and how that time is spent. If you live on-site, expect that there will be challenges in balancing private/family time with work. And having a job that is a lifestyle can pose extra challenges if your spouse/significant other is not also a “camp person”. Much like a marriage, or joining a religious order, making a decision to commit your life to camp should not be entered into lightly...

- **A Director Must Embody the Camps Mission and Philosophy**

Clearly understand that the camp's/organization's mission will impact everything that you are doing. You should be able to tie everything that you say & do back to the mission. As the mission will be part of that “lifestyle”, your personal life- activities, personal appearance, conduct-may be impacted, as you are the “face” of the camp. As a Camp Director, you will be expected to have a “mission mentality” and be driven by business thought processes that apply to the mission. You will be expected to have the proper attitude and respect for the goals, policies and procedures of the organization that you are joining. In your day-to-day work, you will have to ask yourself “how does what you are doing apply to what you say that you do?”

- **Being the Director is Often the Least Fun Job In Camp**

Before you jump in to this job, you need to know that being a Camp Director, while rewarding in many respects, is a tremendously stressful job! The responsibility of being a Camp Director is intense. The other staff-especially summer staff- typically don't understand what really goes on, or see the stress that a Director has. There are no breaks when you are in the care of other peoples children!

- **A Director Must See “The Big Picture”**

As a Director, you must be able to see the “big picture” of the **total operation**. Unlike being a summer staff person or staff of an area, the Director must widen the scope of responsibility and concern; they can’t be focused on one or two areas only.

- **A successful Director must have an understanding and demonstrate knowledge of the entire operation**
- Being a Director also requires decision making that focuses on how it will affect the camp as a whole.
- You must also have a clear understanding of the camp’s policies and procedures in all aspects of the operation.

- **“The Buck Stops Here”**

The “buck stops with you”; as a Director/Manager, you are totally responsible for all of (or your portion of) the operation. You will no longer have the “safety net” that someone else made the decision or is in charge. You can no longer “pass the buck” or blame the “higher ups”; you **ARE** the “higher ups!”

It’s all you, and you have to be mature and capable enough to deal with that responsibility!

- You will have to make decisions that are not popular.
- And be able to stick to the decisions that you make....
- You will have to be prepared to deal with complaints. This is an industry where the “product” you are working with is human; expect that there will always be a customer (parent of a camper, volunteer, camper, user group, etc.) who is not 100% happy with everything that they experience.
- You will be the one who has to address tough situations with campers, staff, parents, users... (and, if you are the type of person who runs away from conflict, this is not the job for you!)
- You will be expected to set an example of camp policies.

- **A Director Must Demonstrate Initiative, Planning & Responsibility**

As a Camp Director, expect that no one is going to tell you “now do this next” or “plan for this for next week”... You will be expected to be able to plan ahead- from the next day, to two weeks from now, to a month from now, to a season ahead... You must have planning ability to be able to work several weeks/months/seasons ahead, and manage your time accordingly. Additionally as a Director, you will be expected to take initiative and get the job done. And, that there will be an expectation that you will step in or step up to resolve problems before they occur!

- **Working at Camp for a Couple of Summers Will Not Prepare You...**

Having worked at camp as a counselor or program staff for a couple of summers does **NOT** make you ready to be a Camp Director! Knowing what you need to know to step in to the job of being a Camp Director means knowing a LOT more than working a couple of summers at camp. Even if you are a long-term staffer, don’t expect that you know everything (or anything) about what it takes to be the Camp Director (unless you have really spent some time doing the day-to-day job for an extended period of time before moving to the job).

## AND A COUPLE OF OTHER THINGS TO HELP YOU ALONG THE PATH...

- **Get Supervisory Experience in More than One Camp Setting!**

Try to gain supervisory experience in at least two distinctly different camp settings. Ideally those seeking to move up should have experience in multiple camp settings, not just their “home” camp. While the thought of leaving your “home” camp may have some emotional pull, there is a lot of merit to learning about more than one camp! (Especially in the eyes of prospective employers) When hiring a Director or upper level administrator, camp owners and operators are looking for someone with a wide range of experience, and broad body of knowledge. If all of your experience in camp is in the same setting, your knowledge is going to be limited to “how we do it here at camp abc...” Certainly, staying at one camp for more than one season before moving to another camp is fine; however, make sure that you are gaining experience in supervision and administration, not just programming.

- **Get Out Of The Woods And In To The Office!**

Yep. You heard this right. If you have made a choice to have a professional career in camp administration, then you better start learning about camp administration. Hard core reality is that programming and activity skills-like teaching swimming, arts & crafts, target sports, ropes course, or being a cabin counselor-have little, if anything, to do with what it takes to operate, and be the Director of, a camp! Get a job, internship, or volunteer, in an area of the camp where you can learn as much about the behind-the-scenes operation of the camp as possible. Help in the accounting office, answer the phones and talk to parents, learn the registration system, help with marketing and promoting the camp to customers, etc. If possible, shadow the Camp Director (or better, create an internship, or volunteer, as their personal assistant...talk about hands-on, day-to-day reality!). Or get a job where you manage an aspect of the business operation, such as the store manager (in a large camp where the camp store is a profit center operation), food service, health care, transportation, or other aspect of the administration of the camp.

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## **TID-BITS OF RANDOM KNOWLEDGE...**

Camp Directors and Owners were given opportunities to “add stuff”...think of these as words of wisdom, pit-falls to avoid, good stuff to know....

### **Know that you don't know everything.**

Be on a continuous upward improvement slope. Be aware that owners/operators are turned off by a young professional who arrives with an “I know it all” attitude. (Be aware too that a counselor or program person who is already employed by the organization who has a “know it all” attitude will experience difficulty in being able to move up in to a position of supervision or be given additional responsibility!)

### **Find a Method of Supervising Others that Works for You**

Understand that there are multiple ways to supervise the work of others. Find the ones that fits your style, and the needs of the group who you are working with/supervising.. Recognize that not everyone working for you responds to the same methods of supervision and communication in the same way. You must be able to build a relationship with those who you supervise in such a way that will allow you to understand their personality, learning styles, strengths etc, and then use that information when you approach them.

### **Learn to understand your own weaknesses and hire, or partner with, other people who will cover those areas.**

### **A Better Way to Reply...**

When responding to the questions of others, give full answers, with explanations of “why”, sharing the thought process, etc... Too often, Young Professionals gives a quick “yes” or “no” answer, without any explanation, etc. By taking a few minutes to explain why the answer was “yes” or “no” opens a window of opportunity for dialog with staff, and helps support satisfaction and understanding, and goes a long way to avoiding a disgruntled staff member.

### **Networking to Learn**

A large number of the Directors and Owners responded that they felt that they have learned more from the Directors of other camps, and camp leaders, than they ever did from books or courses. They recommend that the Young Professional attend as many training and educational events and activities as possible, including those offered not only by camp professional organizations, but also those of kindred or related groups, and business organizations. And to get out there and network with other camp professionals, including visiting camps, and talking with Directors about what they do in their job.

### **Talk with Camp Directors About “The Lifestyle”**

There are some serious concerns that many YP's entering the camp profession really don't get it about what it actually takes to make it in this industry. There is tremendous time commitment and personal sacrifice. Young Professionals are encouraged to have some frank, unvarnished talks about the lifestyle of being a camp professional with Directors and Owners.