

ULTRA ACCESS

Scaffolding Tip: Moving into “the office”

How to transition from a scaffolder to scaffolding management

Scenario: You're 45, you have been a scaffolder for 25+ years and now it's starting to hurt. Arms, legs, knees, shoulders, back, etc - one or all of those parts of your body are knackered. Whats the realistic options?

Painkillers: of course, you could dose yourself up to the eyeballs with ibuprofen 3 times a day and whatever else you can get your hands on.

You'll last maybe another 5 years before needing an operation...

Operations: yes, a feasible option. But these take time to get booked in, might cost a fair amount of money depending on if you go “private” or NHS, and could take many months of time off work, potentially without any pay due to needing time to heal and possible physiotherapy.

After about a year in recovery, you might be able to get to your mid-50's / 10 years, until more operations are needed.

Grit your teeth and bear it: another option, but the longer your time “on the tools” continues, the more damage you are causing to said body parts...

Good luck, and eventually you'll end up eating painkillers like smarties, bringing you back to the above 2 options.

Moving into Scaffold Supervision/Management/Inspection roles: so, what about using all those many years of hard earned experience in a new role away from the physical aspect of scaffolding?

This option would be the one with the more longer term sustainability and could take you all the way to retirement, into your mid/late 60's and possibly longer.

What is/are the main things that you would need to have, to even get the chance of applying for those rare “scaffolding office roles”?

Firstly, you would almost certainly need to have some “reasonable” experience in using a PC. Reading, writing, replying to and sending suitably constructed emails is something that you would be expected to have a good understanding of, and experience in.

You would also be expected to have at least a basic understanding of Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

As well as having decent(ish) phone manners and to be able to suitably conduct yourself whilst doing site visits and speaking to your clients site/project/senior management, etc.

Secondly, you would probably need to have a good knowledge in a whole range of sub-disciplines, within the scaffolding industry, with Residential (social-housing, streetwork, etc), Commercial (refurbs, reclad, etc) and New-Builds (sitework, development units, etc) being the usual 3, so that you can adapt your approach as and when your employer secures these types of projects. Infrastructure (rail, motorways, etc), Industrial (oil, gas, etc), and Events (shows, festivals, etc) would be the others to have some experience in.

Thirdly, a CISRS Advanced (Gold) Card, SMSTS, First Aid, and the ability to read a Scaffold Design Drawing and to be able to Scaffold Estimate (up to a point) would also be very handy in securing that role away from “on the tools”.

And again, that magic word - **PROACTIVE** plays a big part in getting yourself ready to move into management.