

What are the main challenges that might be encountered by a newly promoted supervisor in managing a team, and what strategies might they adopt? (6%, 500 words or equivalent)

As archaeology is diverse in many respects, there is a multitude of challenges that a newly promoted supervisor can experience. Though it may first appear difficult, such a supervisor can seek assistance from many different areas which may recommend appropriate strategies. There are a variety of individuals and organisations that are on-hand to help, ranging from professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and a recognised union to internal line managers. Some organisations also allocate specific Mental Health First Aiders to allow members of staff to talk to or to signpost to further services. To examine the main challenges that one may face succinctly, these will be divided into two main categories: managing members of the team and work-related challenges.

While rising to lead a team can at first seem daunting, a supervisor can adopt many different strategies to do so. Clear and effective communication is valuable all industries, not just archaeology, and allows work to be undertaken as smoothly as possible. Even if members of staff differ in experience and knowledge levels, communicating these and other aspects of the project is effective. Asking for and being open to feedback from the team shows that the supervisor is open-minded and listens, portraying an approachable nature. Many organisations provide internal training to achieve such a disposition. Some challenges brought about in team management may be of a more sensitive nature, such as those particular to minority groups.

The supervisor may facilitate understanding of such issues by communicating privately with such members of the team and allocating a member of the team that others may approach for further discussion. For example, many large commercial units institute period product

schemes. In my experience, employees who use such a scheme do not often feel comfortable talking about the scheme with individuals who do not use it. Addressing the matter, instead of simply avoiding it, is of benefit to all. Support for those working in the field is scarce but is becoming more available in the form of the likes of the ClfA Digger's Forum and the Archaeologists Branch of the Prospect Union.

Of course, there are more general and work-related issues that a supervisor may encounter. Archaeology, particularly its commercial aspect, is an industry of thin margins. As a result of this, those working on site often feel particular pressure to complete. A supervisor should be careful to avoid a trickle-down effect of management and client pressures, ensuring that those working on site are not unduly exerted and pushed beyond their limits of their own physicality. Management should ensure regular mental health check-ins with supervisors, encouraging them to have a healthy-work life balance. Many commercial organisations utilise discount schemes to leisure centres, assisting in healthy habits of exercise and relaxation.

It is the responsibility of all members of an organisation to ensure that their colleagues are coping and enjoying the work that they undertake. In archaeology, many work in the industry because it is a lifelong passion. Bridging knowledge and experience gaps kindly and patiently is pivotal in encouraging progression and general happiness in the workplace, not just in commercial archaeology.

Word count: 520