At Work Foreman's lax attitude should be reported

By Lindsey Novak Tribune Media

Tribune Media

Q: Our department foreman has
fooled management into thinking
he is qualified and in control of his
workers. In reality, he surrounds
himself with people who kiss up to
him, but are lacking in skills. He
also allows a few of his people to
drink on the premises, which,
because of the machinery, could
cosily cause someone to be injured.
It was one reported to his super-

It was one reported to his super-visor, who initially acted with great concern; but with only five years to retirement, he doesn't want to deal with the problem. If I quit because of the situation, I will have thrown away all the time I have put into this company. What can be done?

A: I understand not wanting to

be put in a dangerous position, but don't quit because of someone else' incompetence. Drinking on the job while working with machinery is too scrous to ignore. And five years to retirement is no excuss or your boss not to get involved. He's being paid as a supervisor and should act like one.

Because the drinking continued after it was reported, make sure it gets reported again (either directly or anonymously), but during a time when the top managers can catch their employees in the act.
They will certainly take it soriously, since the company will be held legally responsible for any injuries that occur. If that happens, your boss may be out of a job before his retirement date.

did. friends say to make up some did. My friends say to make up some story about being divorced with children that now live with their father, or having a failed business. I'd like to be honest, because the truth comes out easier. Any advice?

A: Not only would the truth serve you better, but more impor-tantly, could you continue living a lie? If you feel better telling the

mont.

Taking time off to grieve is understandable, especially after losing both your parents at once. Living off inherited money until it runs out is a bit short-eighted.

runs out is a bit short-sighted.
Depending on how you present
the situation, some interviewers
may still feel that you acted irresponsibly. But if you persist in
your job search no matter how
people respond, chances are you'll
find someone who is willing to give
you a chance.
NEW JOB SEEKER CRIES

NEW JOB SEEKER CRIES OUT, GIVE ME A CHANCE

LIVING A LIE IS NO WAY TO START A NEW JOB

Q: When my parents died together five years ago, I left the work force and lived on the money I was Jefn left with well and work record, but how will I explain my leaving the workforce. It me fraid employers will think I'm flanky for what I did.

It with, your sincerity will come 1993 and could only afford one through in an interview. But 1993 and could only afford one semester of college. Since then, I've deciding the semester of college. Since then, I've deciding to spen while using good judge one.

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A: There are many jobs available for people who did not attend col-lege - waitresses, telemarketers, retail store sales clerks, and cashiers at greecry stores, gas sta-tions, movie houses, etc.

If you have not been hired by anyone for two years, the reason is probably not due to lack of experi-ence. It might be the way you show

up for interviews. Even if a job does not require that you dress up, applicants should arrive neatly dressed and clean when they are interviewing. This does not mean you have to buy a designer suit, but you are going to be judged on how you preant yourself, physically and verbally.

Also, don't chew gun, don't carry food with you to much on as you go from one employer to the next don't walk in listing to music or headphones.

Having problems on the job?
Write to Lindsey Novak in care of
Tribute Media Services, Inc., 435
N. Michigan Avc., Suite 1500,
Chicago, Ill. 60611. She can
also be contacted at also be cont AtWorkbyLN@AOL.co

Keep Out: Separate private life from office space

Tribune Media

I have been slipping into bad
habits in my home office recently. Namely, going back to my
desk at about 8:30 or 9 p.m. and
working until midnight or 1 a.m.
Nothing is wrong with putting
in some nighttime hours when
you work at home. One of the
pleasures of working at home is
having a flexible schedule that
tenables you to work when it
suits your time frame. Summer
is a particularly great time for
this kind of schedule, if it frees
you up to engly being outside on

this kind of schedule, it it frees you up to enjoy being outside on beautiful summer days. The kind of pattern I have slipped into, however, is not so positive. The dangerous thing is positive. The dangerous thing is that I am starting to count on the nighttime hours to stay up to date with my work. I am semi-productive during the day, but

The downside of this habit is that it gradually trains you to be less productive during your weekdays because you count on the night or weekend to get loads of work done.

If you find yourself slipping into the same kind of pattern, you need to reclaim your work-days for your own. If you doubt the feasibility of criting out your nighttime work, keep in mind that you usually finished most of your work before a vacation, a long weekend when you will be out of town or your honeymoin.

long weekend when you will be
out of town or your honeymoon.
The following steps are my
plans for taking back my private
time. I hope they help you do
the same.
•Sketch out your day.
Nighttime work is often a result
of bad planning. Before you

items to complete. Each morning, make a short list of the items you must accomplish that day. Start on those first.

*Take control of interruptions.

If you let phone calls, staff or other distractions keep you from completing tasks during the day, start to control when they impinge on your work time. For example, tell staff that you are unavailable for the morning and ask them to save all questions for later in the day. Turn off the ringer on your phone and return calls every few hours.

*Ignore your house. Taking care of errands during the day is fine, but if they have become a larger and larger part of your.

larger and larger part of your-work day, you need to curtail them.

Make a conscious effort to go

often save proposal writing and other work for nighttime.

The downside of this habit is that it gradually trains you to be less productive during you weekdays because you count on the night or weekdays has even been such as a state of the night or weekdays because you count on the night or weekdays have a support of the night or weekdays have a for a few weeks without doing and porsonal errands or tasks during the day. This will break you of the habit. Once you have learned to handle these chore again, you can slowly reintroduce then into your counting duce then into your routine.

•Start earlier. The problem with working late is that then you sleep late and a vicious cycle is created. I broke it this week by forcing myself up early. Day one was tough, but it gets a little easier each day.

*Pull your personal life out of your office. If you keep your flight reservation for your week-end away, your personal phone numbers and items you are likely to need in the evening in your office, you will be lured back to your work area and may start burning the midnight oil.

Instead, have a place for writ-Instead, have a place for Writ-ing thank-you notes, storing per-sonal phone numbers and keep-ing other personal items orga-nized that is separate from your office.

*Put e-mail in its place. E-mail is a great productivity tool, and I rely heavily on it. However, it can also be a time sink if you let it run you, rather than the other way around. Have a few times of the day when you check e-mail, rather than logging on every hour to

when you check e-mail, rather than logging on every hour to see who is trying to reach you. Answer only essential c-mails during work hours, save social messages for the end of the day when you are winding down.

Check your priorities. If you simply cannot accomplish all of your work without regularly

working night and weekends for months on end, you may want to check your focus. Clearly defined goals will enable you to focus on specific items and tako extraneous stuff off your to-do

extraneous stuff on your or off.

I have created an A-list and a B-list. B is for items I want to get to; a is stuff that has to be done soon.

The difference: B doesn't keep

me at my desk at night.

Alice Bredin is author of the "Virtual Office Survival hand-book" (John Wiley & Sons) and host of The American Express' Small Business Exchange Web Small Business Exenange wer site http://www.americanexi-press.com/smallbusiness. You can write to her at Tribune Media Services, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611, or e-mail her at BredinA@aol.com

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