



Foxconn: The Work and Sweat of Youth Building an OEM Empire

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China Labor Watch (CLW) is a New-York based non-government organization. CLW views Chinese workers' rights as inalienable human rights and is dedicated to promoting workers' fair redistribution of wealth under globalization. CLW has been following the development of Foxconn in the past ten years.

Between June 2010 and September 2010, China Labor Watch conducted a series of comprehensive investigations at several factories of the Foxconn (Hong Hai) Group, including the Shenzhen Longhua plant in Guangdong, Kunshan plant in Jiangsu, Wuhan plant in Hubei, Zhengzhou plant in Henan and the Langfang plant in Hebei. According to the investigation, although some improvements have been made since 2006, labor conditions at Foxconn are still not acceptable.

- Workers on an HP Printer assembly line are required to complete an operation every 3 seconds.
- Most workers are required to stand to work for 10 hours per day.
- The majority of workers work 270 hours per month.
- The assembly labor cost of an HP Deskjet 300 Printer is only \$0.50 each.
- Labor workers' wage is from \$0.66/hour (Zhengzhou) to \$1.00/hour (Shenzhen).
- Any production error may cause workers to face castigation, verbal rebuke or physical beating by supervisors. Some workers are forced to write a report of at least 500 words after work, and the report is posted on the wall with the worker's photo attached. Others may be required to stand still for 30 minutes to 4 hours.

The keys to the success of Foxconn are low-margin and high-yield. *"It relies on quasi-militaristic management practices to contain and channel its workers' youthful energy. The speed of the company's production line exceeds the limits of what its employees' bodies can withstand. Only the youngest workers can take this kind of pressure."* Li Qiang, Executive Director of CLW said, *"Although the workshops at Foxconn are bright and tidy, Foxconn remains a sweatshop: a sweatshop hidden in the modern world."* A survey in the Foxconn Shenzhen plant shows that the average age of workers is only 21.5, and 81% are young workers below age 25. This number is obviously abnormal for a factory that has been in operation for over 22 years. CLW believes the reason is that Foxconn consistently and deliberately replaces the "aged workers" with younger workforce.

CLW holds that Chinese workers' challenges arise from a trading system created by a triad of sub-contracting companies like Foxconn, multinational corporations, and the government. We cannot naively condemn Foxconn alone, but as the industry leader, it bears special responsibilities. We look forward to the end of this trading system.

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