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## Li Feng Trademark Manufacturing, Ltd.

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*For this report, Li Qiang interviewed three people. The interviews were conducted in January 2000.*

### Profile

Location: Shangyuan Industrial Park, Dongguan

Employees: around 1500

Product: Trademark labels for Nike, Reebok, and many other Chinese brands.

### Introduction

The factory forbids workers to pass in and out at will. During hours that are not permitted by the factory, workers must show notes issued by the authorities in order to enter the factory.

› During busy season a worker works 13 hours a day, 7 days a week, 30 or 31 days a month. Under normal circumstances, a work has two days off per month.

› The factory only hires girls between the age of 18 to 25. It does not hire male workers except for special types of work.

› The factory does not sign contracts with workers. A hired worker must pay a deposit of Y55. Worker gets the first month's salary after 55 days.

› The factory uses methylbenzene. Workers don't know that methylbenzene is toxic. The factory building is filled with bad smelling, irritating gas.

› Worker's hourly rate is Y1.25 (\$0.19). overtime rate Y3 (\$0.37), an 11-hour day's pay is \$2.60.

› There a lot of female workers between 18 and 19 years of age. They stand on their feet during work every day.

› The factory has a lot of strict rules. Workers are fined severely if they violate those rules.

› The factory provides workers with no medical insurance nor pension.

› Over 20% of workers are fined every month.

### Hours

There are two shifts, day and night.

Daytime shift in winter:

8:30-12:30 (in busy season, starts at 7:00)

12:30-13:00 lunch break

13:00-17:00

17:00-18:00 dinner time (in busy season, only half an hour for dinner)

18:00-21:00 overtime

Nighttime shift in winter:

21:00-1:00

1:00-1:30 meal time

1:30-7:00

60 percent of all workers have to be on their feet while working.

Workers are not allowed to get in or out the workshops as they please. They must first secure a permit from their supervisors to leave the workshop, unless at times designated for personal business by the management, which is from 17:00 to 23:00.

One day off only after a worker has been working continuously for at least 13 days. But in busy season, some workers work continuously for 50 days without any day of rest. In busy season, workers work 13 hours per day, seven days per week, 30 or 31 days per month, normally with only two days off.

#### **Gender Issue**

Unless it is looking for special kinds of work, the factory recruits only females of 18-25 years old. Female workers older than 25 are considered physically unfit for the tough working conditions. Only the sections where male labors are unavoidable have male workers present. Among the 1,500 workers, only 200 are male.

#### **Pay**

Pay: \$0.19 per hour. \$1.50 for 8 hours. Overtime wage: \$0.37 per hour. \$1.10 for three hours of overtime. Daily wage for 11 hours: \$2.60. \$36.40 for 14 days.

Night shift workers are paid \$22.40 for 9 hours of work. Per month: \$58.40. Per year: \$700.40.

#### **Housing**

16 rooms each floor. 12 workers each room. One bathroom and one restroom each floor.

Lodge and board is free, but a monthly fee of \$1.50 for welfare and a monthly fee of \$2 for maintenance are taken off workers' monthly pay.

#### **Sign-up and Quitting**

No contract between workers and the management. A deposit of \$6.50 to the management by workers at the time of being hired is a must under the name of "training fee." In fact, workers start to work on their first day with no training necessary. Such a deposit is charged only out of the concern on the part of the management that the workers might leave too soon under such harsh working conditions. Workers cannot get back the deposit if they quit the factory within 90 days of being hired; first payment of wage is after having worked for 55 days.

#### **Punishment of Violation of the Rules**

Any violation of the rules set by the management is to be punished harshly. Every month, more than 20% of all workers are punished because of violation of the rules.

Disciplinary warning: a fine of \$1.20 (such as playing poker in dorm)

Serious offense: a fine of \$11

Minor offense: a fine of \$6 (such as not sleeping in the dorm)

For example, if playing cards in the dorm, the fine is \$1.20. Leaving the dorm in the night, \$6.

At the modeling workshop, a fine of \$6 is to be imposed on the worker if his/her rejection rate is higher than 3%.

#### **Welfare**

No medicare, pension, or insurance for workers. There is a medical clinic at the factory, but any medication is at the expense of the worker. In Sept. 1999, a worker called Tong Weijun had one part of his index finger cut off while at work. After paying the medication for him, the management gave Tong two choices, a lighter assignment at the workshop without any compensation for his on-job injury, or a compensation of \$750 but a stipulation that he must leave the factory. He chose the latter.

#### **Toxic Chemicals**

Workers work with poisonous materials such as methylbenzene every day without even knowing they are poisonous. No necessary protection is provided.

### **Union**

No union and workers know nothing about it. Strikes and protests have happened but the workers are fired very soon afterwards.

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