

Legos On The Plant Floor?

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We've all probably heard about the incredible [perks](#) [1] that Silicon Valley technology companies give their employees. According to a recent [AP story](#) [2], that includes some superfluous perks that sound like they belong more at home in a daycare facility than a multinational technology firm. Apple's campus-in-progress will feature an orchard for engineers to wander through, while Facebook is wrapping up work on campus that features a B-B-Q shack, a sushi house and a bike shop. At the same time, Google is offering ping pong tables, video game arcades and Lego stations.

It all sounds too good to be true. Except that it's absolutely the new reality for Silicon Valley companies. Anything less, and engineers won't apply, and that's a real problem, because anyone with know-how in that world is aware that engineers can't be hired fast enough. Bubble or not, things are growing faster than ever.

And it *is* too good to be true, because those benefits are anything but — they're ploys to keep workers not happy, but working.

For the most part, these engineers aren't the kind of people who would otherwise work in manufacturing, so their constant migration to the Bay Area isn't particularly troubling to our industry. But there must have been some who, at least in passing, must have considered working in manufacturing. And maybe, in comparing the benefits of working on a plant floor against the benefits of working at Facebook, they chose the latter. Because let's face it — OSHA wouldn't be too happy to see a ping pong table alongside the stamping machine.

It's said that young people today are more family-oriented and less fiscally-driven than ever before. They want a good work-life balance, and they don't want to work too much. But based on how they're flocking to these Silicon Valley firms, or at least cherishing them as best-in-class places to work (and work and work), there seems to be quite the contradiction. It's no secret that these perks, along with free meals, laundry and haircuts, give more incentive for workers *not* to find that ideal work-life balance.

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[1] <http://www.impomag.com/videos/2013/04/tech-firms-offer-perks-recruit-retain-talent>

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[2] <http://www.manufacturing.net/news/2013/04/the-many-perks-of-working-in-silicon-valley-tech>

[3] http://www.manufacturing.net/blogs/2013/04/legos-on-the-plant-floor?et_cid=3184603&et_rid=280322625&linkid=http%3a%2f%2fwww.manufacturing.net%2fblogs%2f2013%2f04%2flegos-on-the-plant-floor