

# **Foxconn's Full Disclosure: We Can't Fix Everything**

William Foreman, Associated Press Writer

SHENZHEN, China (AP) — The head of Foxconn bowed deeply several times and apologized Wednesday for a spate of suicides at the factory that makes Apple iPods and iPhones, promising the electronics giant will try to stop more deaths.

But the usually media-shy executive, Foxconn Technology Group Chairman Terry Gou, cautioned there was only so much his company could do.

"We're a company, we are not a society," said Gou. "We have a company's abilities to do things but we don't have a society's abilities."

Foxconn on Wednesday opened up its sprawling factory complex in the southern city of Shenzhen to reporters, an unprecedented move from the normally super-secretive Taiwanese company still struggling to come to terms with the suicides of 10 young workers this year. The company has been a lightning rod for labor activists who say its working conditions cause misery for its vast work force.

The tour comes after the suicide on Tuesday of Li Hai, 19. He was the latest victim of the suicide surge, jumping to his death from a building at the world's largest contract maker of electronics, which also counts among its products Dell computers and Nokia phones.

Police said Li killed himself after working at the plant for only 42 days, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The suicide is the ninth at Foxconn's massive plant in Shenzhen, which employs more than 300,000 people. Two other workers have tried to kill themselves by jumping from buildings in Shenzhen but they survived. Another suicide occurred at a smaller plant in northern Hebei province in January.

The highest-profile Foxconn death happened last July when Sun Danyong, 25, jumped to his death after being interrogated over a missing iPhone prototype.

Gou said many of the deaths were most likely caused by a variety of factors including failed romance, an area difficult for the company to get involved in.

But he said Foxconn was consulting with a large group of mental health professionals who have been reviewing the company's personnel records.

Gou personally led six busloads of journalists through the industrial park, which employs 300,000 people and looks much like a small city.

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The palm-tree lined streets had fast food restaurants, bakeries and banks. Gou showed off the complex's swimming pool and a large mental health center, with a long row of women working hot lines.

Labor activists say the string of suicides back up their long-standing allegations that workers toil in terrible conditions at Foxconn. They claim shifts are long, the assembly line moves too fast and managers enforce military-style discipline on the work force.

But Foxconn has insisted that workers are treated well and are protected by social responsibility programs that ensure their welfare. The Shenzhen factory is perennially a popular place to work, with hordes of applicants lining up for jobs during the hiring season.

Foxconn is a major manufacturer for Apple Inc., and the American company told The Associated Press that it has talked to Foxconn's senior management about the suicides and believes the firm is taking the matter seriously.

"We are saddened and upset by the recent suicides at Foxconn," Apple spokesman Steve Dowling said. "Apple is deeply committed to ensuring that conditions throughout our supply chain are safe and workers are treated with respect and dignity."

"A team from Apple is independently evaluating the steps they are taking to address these tragic events, and we will continue our ongoing inspections of the facilities where our products are made," he said.

Dell Inc. also said it was also looking into Foxconn's situation.

"Any reports of poor working conditions in Dell's supply chain are investigated and, if warranted, appropriate action is taken," Dell spokesman Jess Blackburn told the AP via e-mail.

"We expect our suppliers to employ the same high standards we do in our own facilities," Blackburn said.

Nokia Corp. spokeswoman Louise Ingram declined to comment on specific suicide cases. "Nokia firmly believes that all employees have the right to ethical and legal treatment. We set strict requirements to all our suppliers, including Foxconn, and follow-up on them regularly," she said.

Tuesday's reported death came just three days after a 21-year-old man who worked in the logistics department jumped from a four-story building shortly after finishing the night shift Friday. His motivations were still not known.

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