

# Low-wage workers

[Business](#), [Work](#)



It is not easy being a low-wage worker. In my case, I am a family man. I have a wife who just stays at home without any source of income and two kids who go to school. Sad to say, I am among the 30 million workers who earn less than \$9 an hour. The truth is I do not want to be a low-wage worker but I do not have a choice. I never went to college. What kind of jobs is in store for high-school graduates only? If you want to know the answer, just look at me now.

I was hired because I was referred by a friend who used to work for the company I am working for at present. Not that I did not have the qualifications for the job, but nowadays, referrals help a lot. After filling out the standardized bio-data, I was called for interview directly. Drug tests were not required. My employer is Chinese and runs a family business, so most of the higher positions are held by family members except for some employees who have worked their all their lives.

The one who interviewed me was the Executive Vice-President of the company who happens to be the wife of the President. She was kind. Not the type I expected to be. She was very calm in asking questions, as if I have known her for a long time. I did not feel very uncomfortable. She encouraged me to speak my thoughts, which was good because I need not worry too much about what to say. Our relationship at present is fairly good. But still my sentiments of a low-paying job with almost no benefits remain to cause me more difficulties in life. I keep on asking myself, “ When will I get out of this dead-end job?”

My fellow employees come in two categories: the well-paid workers with benefits and those who are like me with minimal benefits. I am not counting the employed family members because of course, they get good pay. Those who have higher positions usually have graduated from college with good to excellent scholastic record. These are the employees who possess innate, learned, and transferable skills. There was some who just finished high-school but they have special skills which are indispensable in the company.

The ones like me are graduates of high-school only, with limited skills and abilities except for some. This is the reason why after working for 10 years in this company, I hardly get a raise. If I or any of my family members get sick, we simply incur debts to be able to attend to our medications.

In terms of the working conditions, it is quite disappointing. The warehouses where I work are not well-equipped. They do not even have a decent comfort room. We share lockers, too. Our break room is close to dilapidation so rest periods can be hardly called rest at all. As to breaks, we have 30-minute lunch breaks from 12:00-12:30 then 2 bathroom privileges, one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

My employer, I think, is a large corporation because it has seven branches in the country though each establishment is not really as big as other large companies. It has hundreds of employees so maybe it is indeed a big investment.

During working hours, we rarely talk with my co-workers. However, we get to discuss some topics while taking our breaks such as our family lives. Usually

they are family problems and we can only share them to the people at work to at least ease out a bit. We also chat about current events, latest happenings inside and outside the workplace, entertainment, and just about anything under the sun.

Labor unions have declined over the past few years. But at times we talk about it. Generally, my co-workers especially those who have worked for a long time in the company, have always wanted to form a union where we could express our sentiments to our employers. Maybe, this would have improved our status in this company. Nevertheless, no one has really had the guts to lead us. Inasmuch as I wanted to help, I chose to have a job rather than not having one at all. I am scared of being jobless. I am still thankful even if I am only a low-wage worker.

## **Works Cited**

Hansen, Randall. “ Surviving and Moving Beyond Low-Wage Jobs: Solutions for an Invisible Workforce in America.” Quintessential Careers. 28 June 2007 .