



FAMILY-FRIENDLY FACTORY: MORNING LIGHT'S BLUEPRINT FOR WORKFORCE SUCCESS

AT A GLANCE



Industry:

Packaging and Printing



Joined ESCP:

2006

CHALLENGES

- High employee turnover
- Lack of childcare facilities
- Meeting international compliance standards

SOLUTIONS

- Family-Friendly Factory program
- Post-certification training and support, including Progress Visits

HIGHLIGHTS

- Childcare benefitting 60+ families
- Recognition from local government, media and the community as a model employer, including Family-Friendly Factory Award in 2023

“Collaborating with ESCP has had a positive impact for us across so many areas. They’ve been brilliant for us in supporting the balance between achieving long-term economic growth and fulfilling social responsibility goals.”

Man Huang

HR Manager

**Dongguan Morning Light
Printing Co., Ltd**

Dongguan Morning Light Printing was founded in 1987 as part of the Morning Light Intelligent Printing Group Limited. With over a thousand employees, the company provides state-of-the-art printing and converting services, catering to major global brands like Hallmark and the LEGO Group.

While the company’s investments in technology are a key driver of its success, it has also made significant investments in its workforce since becoming an Ethical Supply Chain Program (ESCP) member. It’s an approach that has addressed critical challenges, improved employee satisfaction, and fostered a more harmonious corporate culture, says Man Huang, HR Manager, who has worked at the company since 2005.





OVERCOMING RETENTION AND COMPLIANCE CHALLENGES

While meeting the responsible requirements of its global customers has been central to the factory's growth, Morning Light also recognised that improving the safety and well-being of its workers would enhance employee satisfaction and strengthen its reputation as a socially responsible employer.

"I first heard about ESCP during an audit," recalls Miss Huang. "As I began to understand more about how membership could not only reduce supply chain risks and save on costs, but also help us to address labor challenges and establish a positive social image, I knew it was something we had to be part of."

As well as offering industry-leading social compliance audits and certification accepted by 98% of global brands and retailers – removing the need for multiple audits and making approval by new customers quick and easy – ESCP gives access to a range of worker well-being initiatives that are proven to boost retention.

"The ESCP team has been a strong pillar of support throughout our journey," says Miss Huang. "They've helped establish the framework for us to successfully implement several initiatives aimed at making life better for our workforce. They've done this by listening to our needs and working with us in an incredibly professional and practical, way."

CREATING A FAMILY-FRIENDLY FACTORY

Central to Morning Light's mission to support its workers has been becoming a Family-Friendly Factory. Faced with recruitment and retention challenges, it recognised that the lack of affordable, safe and accessible childcare was a root cause of problems for its staff during school summer vacations.

"There was a huge amount of annual leave being taken during the summer holidays, as well as a lot of parents leaving their jobs permanently, because of their need to take care of the children," says Miss Huang.

Set up to address exactly this kind of issue, ESCP's childcare program equips factories with the knowledge and resources to provide free childcare for the children of workers during the summer months. These childcare spaces provide a secure environment for children to play, access learning opportunities and develop social skills while their parents are at work. Such facilities enable parent migrant workers and their children to spend valuable time together during lengthy holiday periods.

SOLUTION



"This solution was perfect for us," says Miss Huang. "Staff turnover had become a big problem, with employees having more career choices and mobility these days. ESCP came to talk with us and guide us through all the steps needed to create a dedicated childcare area and get a summer programme set up and running smoothly."

Between 50 and 65 children aged six to 11 have attended Morning Light's daily childcare program each summer since 2019 (except during Covid in 2020). As well as creating a supportive environment for families and contributing to the developmental needs of children, Miss Huang points out that the scheme has improved employee engagement on all levels:

"I've received a lot of feedback from colleagues who genuinely feel the company's care and support," she says. "There's no doubt that we've really strengthened the sense of belonging and morale within the factory. Turnover rates have fallen and training costs have also come down thanks to fewer new hires."

There have been wider benefits in terms of the positive effect on the company's reputation, with the local government organizing factory visits for business leaders in the city to observe the program – "We're seen as a great example of workplace innovation," says Miss Huang – as well as an appearance on local television. And, in 2023, Morning Light won a Family Friendly Factory Award from the town's Women's Association in recognition of the difference it has made to employee well-being.

Such accolades not only reflect the success of the childcare initiative but also demonstrate the power of embedding social responsibility into business practices. By prioritizing employee well-being and aligning its operations with the expectations of both workers and global clients, Morning Light has positioned itself as being committed to ethical and sustainable practices.

Summing up the transformative partnership with ESCP, Miss Huang concludes: "Collaborating with ESCP has had a positive impact for us across so many areas. They've been brilliant for us in supporting the balance between achieving long-term economic growth and fulfilling social responsibility goals."

PROGRESS VISITS SUPPORTING FACTORIES AT EVERY STEP

Post-certification follow-up, support and guidance lie at the heart of ESCP's commitment to giving the best value to factories and upholding the highest standards. Progress Visits provide an opportunity for ESCP to further engage with factories, helping them to identify and address the root causes behind any issues.

"Progress Visits are an essential part of our practical approach," explains Eric Leung, Program Support and Engagement Manager at ESCP. "We help factories like Dongguan Morning Light Printing to prepare for audits and improve their systems, making sure that they have what they need to address any new challenges. It's not just about helping them to maintain their ESCP certification, we're also here to support the business in meeting the specific requirements of their customers."



Reflecting on the impact of Progress Visits, HR Manager Huang Man says: “This support is very important to us. The ESCP team often discovers issues that we weren’t aware of ourselves. They are also very mindful of our specific circumstances and the requirements of our customers. One example was when they recommended training for around 100 of our manager-level staff to equip us with the knowledge and resources demanded by one of our major global clients.

“At first, there was some resistance to the idea of this training. Many colleagues questioned why it was necessary, feeling we’d been handling these tasks for years. But during the sessions, it soon became clear to everyone that the training was really useful and there’s no doubt that this kind of support from ESCP is key to reducing our business risks.”

The Ethical Supply Chain Program offers industry-leading social compliance audits, trusted supplier certification, and unique tailored support to factories.

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What Happens in a Progress Visit (PV)?

Opening meeting and Q&A session

PV Specialists will introduce the progress visit objectives and provide advice to factories on issues raised in the questionnaire submitted prior to the PV.

Factory tour

A factory tour will be conducted to assess the risks.

Document review

Next, there will be a document review, which includes pay records, personnel files, official certificates, production records, and emergency procedures. The PV Specialist will also review completion of previous corrective action plans (CAPs), as appropriate.

Worker survey

The PV Specialist will then survey 10-15 workers, depending on the factory size.

Closing meeting and discussion

The closing meeting will facilitate a discussion where factories can share their challenges. PV Specialists will work with factory management to identify root causes, and share best practices and any policy updates. The CAP will be signed off and next steps agreed.

