



# The China Price: The True Cost of Chinese Competitive Advantage

By Alexandra Harney

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In this landmark work of investigative reporting, former *Financial Times* correspondent Alexandra Harney uncovers a story of immense significance to us all: how China's factory economy gains a competitive edge by selling out its workers, environment, and future. Harney's firsthand reporting brings us face-to-face with a world in which intense pricing pressure from Western companies combines with ubiquitous corruption and a lack of transparency to exact a staggering toll in human misery and environmental damage. This eye-opening expose offers, for the first time, an intimate look at the defining business story of our time.

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### **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #526708 in Books
- Brand: Harney, Alexandra
- Published on: 2009-01-27
- Released on: 2009-01-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .75" w x 5.52" l, .65 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages



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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Dreaded by competitors, the China price has become the lowest price possible, the hallmark of China's incredibly cheap, ubiquitous manufacturers. *Financial Times* editor Harney explores the hidden price tag for China's economic juggernaut. It's a familiar but engrossing tale of Dickensian industrialization. Chinese factory hands work endless hours for miserable wages in dusty, sweltering workshops, slowly succumbing to occupational ailments or suddenly losing a limb to a machine. Coal-fired power plants spew pollutants into nearly unbreathable air. Migrants from the countryside, harassed by China's *hukou* system of internal passports, form a readily exploitable labor pool with few legal protections. The system is fueled by Western investment and, Harney observes, hypocrisy. Retailers like Wal-Mart impose social responsibility codes on their Chinese suppliers, but refuse to pay the costs of raising labor standards; the result is a pervasive system of cheating through fake employment records and secret uninspected factories, to which Western companies turn a blind eye. But Harney also finds stirrings of change; aided by regional labor shortages, rising wages and intrepid activists. Chinese workers are demanding—and gradually winning—more rights. Packed with facts, figures and sympathetic portraits of Chinese workers and managers, Harney's is a perceptive take on the world's workshop. (Mar. 31)

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### Review

"Presents the inconvenient truths about China and globalization that flat worlders have overlooked."

-Clyde Prestowitz, author of *Three Billion New Capitalists*

"Anyone running a company that outsources manufacturing to China, or is thinking of doing so, needs to read this book."

-*Financial Times*

"The gritty, corrupt reality of the Chinese economic miracle is the great business story of our time and Alexandra Harney has got it."

-Karl Taro Greenfeld, author of *China Syndrome*

### About the Author

Alexandra Harney was a reporter and editor at the *Financial Times*. She has reported from Japan, China and the United Kingdom, among other places. From 2003 until early 2006, she was the FT's South China correspondent based in Hong Kong, where she still lives. A 1997 cum laude graduate of Princeton University with a degree from the Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs, Alexandra was born in Washington, DC and currently lives in Hong Kong. This is her first book.

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