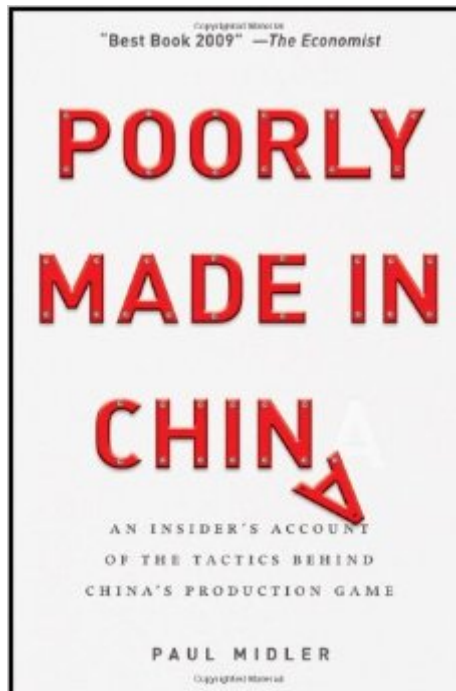


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Poorly Made In China: An Insider's Account Of The Tactics Behind China's Production Game



Synopsis

Praise for *Poorly Made in China* "This fast-paced travelogue through the world of Chinese manufacturing is scary, fascinating, and very funny. Midler is not only a knowledgeable guide to the invisible underbelly of the global economy, he is a sympathetic and astute observer of China, its challenges, and its people. A great read." —Pietra Rivoli, author of *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy* "Paul Midler takes us for a ride through the fastest-growing economy in the world, revealing what can—and sometimes does—go wrong when U.S. companies shift production to China. Working in the heart of China's export hub, in the country's southern region, he has the advantage of a front-row seat to the no-holds-barred games played between manufacturers and importers. He introduces us to a cast of real-life characters and tells his story with a mix of affection and skepticism for what is taking place in China today. Midler delivers a revealing and often funny tale of life and commerce in a country whose exports touch nearly everyone on the planet." —Sara Bongiorni, author of *A Year Without 'Made in China'*

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Wiley; 1 edition (April 6, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0470405589

ISBN-13: 978-0470405581

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (188 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #209,235 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in Books > Business & Money > International > Global Marketing #60 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Manufacturing #67 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Industrial Relations

Customer Reviews

I have done business in China since 1986. I know from experience how tricky and dangerous it is, especially for the newcomer. Curiously Mr. Midler refers to suppliers in Shantou (Canton Province) and I too have many suppliers there. Apparently this behavior amongst the Chinese is across the board no matter what product you work with. And they don't care no matter what threats or promises you make. I actually had one supplier who told me he would no longer sell to me because "you complain too much"! No loss to me, easily replaced you can be sure. Communists or not, the

almighty greenback is king in China but as Mr. Midler makes very clear, it is not going to get you what you think you contracted for. Something close, maybe, but not right on target. The Chinese screwed up so many of my shipments that I got the distinct impression that the translators were interpreting my directions, not translating them. So I spent years learning to speak Mandarin. I am totally fluent now, have often been mistaken for being Chinese on the telephone by those who had not yet met me. No matter, I told them straight out what I wanted in their own language and STILL they basically did it wrong to shave off a few bucks to their advantage. I could never understand that way of thinking, in America we keep the customers happy to perpetuate our business with them, we do not consistently antagonize them. This book will open your eyes if you want to do business in China and if you are already there you cannot help but agree with everything he says. Pay close attention, he knows what he is talking about. They will go behind your back and try to deal directly with your customer, they will yes you to death and then do whatever they please without any regard for you or your customer. I can offer dozens of examples but the one that most illustrates this is the supplier who sent the advance samples for approval, they were perfect. He then went and made the million piece order to his own liking. It was a Halloween item to be made in Orange and Black, the 1000 piece advance samples were right on the money. When the order came in, it was made in Red and Blue. They told us the factory boss thought Orange and Black was a terrible color combination so he made what he thought was pretty. Hence we had a million red and blue product with ghosts and goblins and all printed on them, in red and blue and the words "Happy Halloween". THAT is when we transferred half our entire production of all products to India. We still do some business in China but had I read this book twenty years ago I never would have gotten involved in China at all!! I highly recommend this book, it is all true and frightening so use it well and be aware. Be very aware.

Doing business in China and visiting factories there, I have witnessed many of the tactics that the author describes. While reading this book, I thought to myself over and over - "How True!". My business experience in China is limited to one type of industry that has nothing to do with any of the industries listed in this book. Finding out that the Chinese employ the same tactics in completely different manufacturing settings was a wake up call for me. I believe the manufacturing arena in China is a type of "business culture" that is not fully understood in the West. My experience has been dealing with small factories. We were not ordering hundreds or thousands of containers. These larger operations may be different (but I doubt it). After reading this book I started thinking about how I once bought an item that was made fairly well. I bought the same item a year or so later and noticed a few things seemed to be made of less quality. Then another purchase a year or so

later showed the item was barely worth owning. The quality had degraded in such a way that I decided to never buy again. This book explains how this happens when dealing with manufactures in China. I recommend this book to anyone involved with doing business in China or someone who just wants to be educated on the subject.

I really enjoyed this book. I control the quality of shipments in China myself, so I recognized many situations that I previously encountered. The book is peppered with excellent insights about Chinese culture. It is also often funny, and it is very easy to read. I would specifically recommend this book to people who are curious about the manufacturing environment in China. They will discover a whole new world. The only downside is that the book only describes situations where importers are unprepared and fall in the traps of unscrupulous Chinese suppliers. It is not perfectly representative, but it does a great job explaining why so many quality issues originate from China.

Midler weaves his thoughtful and timely commentary in a provocative and thoroughly enjoyable format, using personal anecdotes and experiences to support significant conclusions regarding American business with China. As China rushes to expand trade, it is repeating many of the same mistakes made by U.S. manufacturers in our economic development. Midler's tales of aggressive cost reduction methods recalled the 'Muntz TV,' fabled in engineering circles for its approach to cost margin improvement: parts would simply be deleted until the TV barely functioned. The quality problem is less cultural than a reflection of intense cost competition. It demonstrates the need for China to develop consumer protection laws, OSHA-like rules, and stringent quality control if it intends to expand export trade with developed nations. Equally important, it demonstrates that American consumers need to insist that adequate standards and regulations be imposed on imported goods, from China and other 'low-cost' sources.

I've been to China twice and I love Chinese cars for their quirkiness. Paul's book gave me a clear explanation on why Chinese industrialists behave the way they do. There are a lot of amusing, eye-opening and just plain frightening stories included. Once you read the book, you will have to ask a very tough question yourself: are you willing to participate in the dangerous game, where in the name of cost cutting your health will be in the hands of Chinese entrepreneurs? And more importantly, can you avoid this fate at all? And best of all, you can quote some of the funniest stories as anecdotes in pub banter :))

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