

Taiwan's Foxconn to recruit 5,000 local technicians

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An employee of Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn walking along a street in the area surrounding the company's compound in Shenzhen, China on October 31, 2012. Taiwan's tech giant Foxconn will hire 5,000 technicians locally this year, many of them to work on factory robots to build its gadgets.

Taiwan's tech giant Foxconn will hire 5,000 technicians locally this year, many of them to work on factory robots to build its gadgets, officials said Monday, in a sign the firm is refocusing operations to its home island.

The announcement—one of the group's largest talent recruitment drives in Taiwan in recent years—comes as the [conglomerate](#) is slowing new hiring at its sprawling factories in China.

[Foxconn](#) said the move was due to increasing automation of manufacturing and assembly lines in China, where rising labour costs have squeezed [profit margins](#).

Some of the new employees are to work at a software complex in Kaohsiung, in southern Taiwan, spokeswoman Laura Liu said, while others will staff a robot research unit in the centre of the island, and a development unit at the company's headquarters outside Taipei.

Chairman Terry Gou told media that Foxconn—the world's largest maker of [computer components](#), which assembles products for Apple, Sony and Nokia—plans to use one million robots to do "simple" manufacturing work by 2014.

Foxconn already has 10,000 robots for painting, welding and other assembly tasks.

The company employs the vast majority of its workers in China, where it employs more than one million people, roughly half of them based in its main facility in [Shenzhen](#), which borders Hong Kong.

Foxconn has come under the spotlight in recent years over worker suicides, labour unrest and the use of underage interns at its Chinese plants.

It has taken steps such as raising salaries, improving working conditions and enforcing age restrictions to address concerns raised by an independent audit of conditions mandated by Apple.

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