

# Alibaba CEO Calls 996 Working Time a "A Huge Blessing"

Zoe McAlister April 13, 2019



Alibaba Chairman Jack Ma speaking during the Hongqiao International Economic and Trade Forum in the China International Import Expo November 5, 2018 in Shanghai, China. Photo: Lintao Zhang

**They work 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, and their billionaire chief, boss Alibaba, tells them: "This is a huge blessing for you."**

([Newswire.net](http://Newswire.net)-- April 13, 2019) -- Hong Kong - Jack Ma, billionaire and founder of Alibaba, has tried to defend the long overtime work that exists in many Chinese technology companies, including his, calling it "a huge blessing" for young people, [Reuters reports](http://Reuters.com).

This well off entrepreneur took part in a debate about the balance between a career and a private life and the fact that many companies require their employees to remain at work for long hours if, after a sudden success, the profit of the company starts falling.

In a conversation with Alibaba employees, Ma defended the "996" business policy, which actually means that employees work from 9 to 21 hours, six days a week.

"I personally think that being able to work 996 is a huge blessing," Ma said in remarks posted on the company's WeChat account. "If you don't work 996 when you are young, when can you ever work 996?" Ma argued.

The statement triggered a heated debate, where many workers listed examples of numerous and hard overtime work that individual companies demanded.

Ma, a former English teacher, who became one of the founders of "Alibaba" in 1999 and is now one of the richest people in China said that he and his eldest associates in their time also worked overtime.

"In this world, everyone wants success, wants a nice life, wants to be respected," Ma said. "Let me ask everyone, if you don't put out more time and energy than others, how can you achieve the success you want?"

Defending the 996 work time, the tech-giant founder referred to the fact that in the tech industry many people are unemployed or working in companies that are close to bankruptcy.

"Compared to them, up to this day, I still feel lucky, I don't regret (working 12 hour days), I would never change this part of me," he said.

This month, the activists at Microsoft's GitHub launched the 996.ICU project (996 intensive care), where workers named "Alibaba" as the company with some of the worst working conditions. On Thursday, a Chinese newspaper published an article claiming that "996" violated the Chinese Labor Law, which states that the weekly working hours must not exceed 40 hours.

The comments regarding the Chinese tech giant who said that Alibaba needs workers prepared to work 996 continued on social networks. In those comments Alibaba was named among top listed companies which abuse staff by demanding uncompensated overtime.

Source: <http://newswire.net/newsroom/news/00109263-alibaba-ceo-calls-996-working-time-a-blessing.html>