

Acer eyes Japan growth with new cheap laptop

May 22 2009, By YURI KAGEYAMA , AP Business Writer



(AP) -- Acer Inc. of Taiwan said Friday it plans solid growth in the previously hard-to-crack Japanese market with a new slim, lightweight laptop that boasts an eight-hour battery life and a cheap price.

Japan has long been dominated by its own big-name electronics makers, and outsiders have had a relatively hard time making headway, even Acer, the world's third-largest vendor of PCs after Hewlett-Packard Co. and Dell Inc.

But that's gradually changing as Japanese consumers look for bargains amid a deep recession, and become less brand-conscious about some products. For years, Japanese had a reputation for favoring pricey luxury brands for status and perceived quality.

Bob Sen, managing director of Acer Japan Corp., said Acer hopes to jump from No. 6 in market share to No. 5 in Japan, with the June 5 introduction of its Aspire Timeline series.

The [laptop](#) starts at under 90,000 yen (\$960) - about half the price of rival offerings.

Acer now trails Japanese makers NEC Corp., Fujitsu Ltd., [Dell](#) and [Toshiba](#) Corp., and Hewlett-Packard of the U.S. in market share here. But even the top makers control only at most a fifth of what is an intensely competitive market.

Acer's Aspire Timeline, already on sale in the U.S., China and Europe, promises an eight-hour battery life, is under an inch thick and is relatively light at 1.6 kilograms. It also doesn't get hot because it uses [Intel](#) Corp. cooling technology for jet engines, according to Acer.

"We have big ambitions for the Japanese market," Sen said at a Tokyo hotel. "We hope that we can not only boost market share in Japan but also help revive the PC market that has been hit by the recession."

Acer Chief Executive J.T. Wang said Acer plans to grow in China, Japan and the U.S., despite the recession.

"We think we have a good opportunity to grow," he said, noting that [Acer](#) products have begun to sell well in [Japan](#) last year with its mini-laptops known as "netbooks."

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