

Sony books \$870mln quarterly profit

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A sign is seen atop the headquarters building of Japan's electronics giant Sony Corp. in Tokyo. Sony announced an October-December net profit of 870 million dollars, a result it said "significantly exceeded expectations".

Japanese electronics and entertainment giant Sony Corp. Thursday announced a third-quarter net profit of 870 million dollars, a result it said "significantly exceeded expectations".

The maker of PlayStation game consoles, Bravia televisions and Cyber-shot cameras is still emerging from the global [economic slump](#) but narrowed its full-year loss forecast to 70 billion yen from 95 billion yen.

"We did well across the board during the year-end shopping season," said Nobuyuki Oneda, Sony's chief financial officer. "It significantly exceeded expectations."

"Cost cutting efforts bore fruits. Improvements were also seen in our financial businesses," he told a press conference.

For the October-December quarter, [Sony](#) reported a net profit of 79.2 billion yen (870 million dollars) against a 10.4-billion-yen profit in the same period a year earlier. In the July-September quarter, it lost 26.3 billion yen.

Sales of [PlayStation 3](#) rose following a price cut and introduction of successful game titles, Oneda said.

Liquid crystal display televisions in Asia -- a key product group in an important market -- also boosted the operating profit during the quarter although lowered prices reduced overall sales value, he said.

Sony also reported an [operating profit](#) of 146 billion yen during the three months -- compared with an operating loss of 17.96 billion yen a year earlier -- on revenue of 2.24 trillion yen in the three months to December.

Sony continued to pursue aggressive cost-cutting measures, including shedding 20,000 jobs, Oneda said.

The company was on course to reducing cost by 330 billion yen and to close roughly 20 percent of its factories in the year to March, he added.

The result came days after Sony's competitors Sharp Corp. of Japan and [Samsung Electronics](#) of South Korea also reported they had returned to the black in the last three months of 2009 as the [global economic crisis](#) eased.

The robust performance in the third quarter led Sony to upgrade its annual earnings expectations to March.

The company halved annual its operating loss estimate to 30 billion yen, compared with an earlier loss projection of 60 billion yen.

Volatile prices of raw materials still posed risks going forward, although Oneda remained optimistic.

"We have a sense that the economy might be bottoming out. It's difficult to imagine things will again crumble down," Oneda said.

"We are keeping our eyes on prices of materials and memories," he added.

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