

BlackBerry says new phones won't be sold in Japan

February 8 2013



The BlackBerry Z10 is displayed at the BlackBerry 10 launch event at Pier 36 in Manhattan, New York City, on January 30, 2013. The smartphone maker BlackBerry confirmed Friday that it has no immediate plans to sell its new handsets in Japan, but the company denied it was abandoning one of the world's most tech-savvy nations.

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Having fallen far behind Apple and lost ground to other [smartphone](#) makers such as Samsung, [BlackBerry](#) last week launched two new devices—the Q10 and the Z10—in a very public bid to revive its fortunes and gain market share.

The Canadian company also changed its name from [Research in Motion](#) (RIM), to the simpler BlackBerry as part of a relaunch that included the unveiling of a new operating system.

A spokesman at the company's head office in Waterloo, Ontario, however, said Japanese customers would not be able to buy the new [handsets](#), but insisted that the decision did not amount to a snub.

It "does not affect our key priorities in the market: to continue to provide BlackBerry service and robust support to BlackBerry's Japanese customers, both consumers and business users," the spokesman said.

"BlackBerry enjoys a constructive relationship with trusted partner, [NTT DoCoMo](#), and we will continue to support the carrier's ongoing BlackBerry sales in Japan."



A worker demonstrates the BlackBerry Z10's video feature at the BlackBerry 10 launch event at Pier 36 in Manhattan on January 30, 2013 in New York City. The smartphone maker BlackBerry confirmed Friday that it has no immediate plans to sell its new handsets in Japan, but the company denied it was abandoning one of the world's most tech-savvy nations.

The [Nikkei business](#) daily had earlier reported that BlackBerry would not be selling the new handsets in Japan.

The pair of smartphones—one with a touchscreen and the other with a keyboard—were unveiled last week at glizty events in major cities around the world, with the aim of heralding a global turnaround.

So far the phones have only been rolled out in Britain and Canada.

The Nikkei report said BlackBerry's share of the [Japanese market](#) had slumped to 0.3 percent from about five percent in the past. The paper gave no time frame.

Domestic shipments of smartphones soared 40 percent on-year to hit an estimated 14 million in April-September but BlackBerry sales were believed to be only several tens of thousands, the paper said, without naming its sources.

Given the falling share, the company judged it too costly to develop a Japanese-language version of the new operating system, the report said.

While BlackBerry helped create a culture of mobile users glued to the smartphones nearly a decade ago—dubbed "crackberry addicts"—many of those customers have since moved to Apple or Android-based phones.

The Wall Street Journal also cited a spokeswoman for BlackBerry, who said the new phone model would not be rolled out in Japan "at this time".

"We are in the process of launching BlackBerry 10 globally in key markets and we are seeing positive demand for the BlackBerry Z10 in countries where it has already launched.

"Japan is not a major market for BlackBerry and we have no plans to launch BlackBerry 10 devices there at this time," spokeswoman Amy McDowell was quoted as saying.

NTT DoCoMo, the carrier who started distributing BlackBerry in Japan in 2006, said it was discussing new product launches with BlackBerry while noting it would continue customer support.

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