

BlackBerry CEO slams T-Mobile over 'inappropriate' marketing offer

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John Chen is not pleased with T-Mobile. BlackBerry's new chief executive took to the company's blog to slam the wireless carrier, which last week targeted BlackBerry users in an email offer that encouraged them to switch to the iPhone 5s.

Chen said he was "outraged" and noted that the Canadian smartphone maker was not notified before or after T-Mobile launched the "clearly inappropriate and ill-conceived marketing promotion."

"As we were never told of their plans in advance, I can only guess that T-Mobile thought its 'great offer for BlackBerry customers' would be well received," Chen said in the blog post Tuesday. "T-Mobile could not have been more wrong."

Many BlackBerry users took to social media after receiving T-Mobile's email to ask the carrier if it was discontinuing sales or support of BlackBerry.

The flurry of tweets prompted T-Mobile CEO John Legere to respond over the weekend, tweeting: "BlackBerry users, I'm hearing you loud and clear. Let me work with the team and get back with you."

Legere later tweeted that T-Mobile would still continue to support BlackBerry. He cautioned that the company "may still send emails w/ device choices, but you don't have to give up your BB."

Still, that wasn't enough to placate Chen. He thanked loyal BlackBerry customers for their commitment to the company and said their "passion motivates us every day as we navigate our turnaround."

"By expressing your outrage directly to T-Mobile through tweets, calls and comments in the media and on blog posts, you sent a powerful message that T-Mobile could not ignore," he said. "Your partnership with our brand is appreciated by all of us at BlackBerry, and draws a sharp contrast with the behavior of our longtime business partner."

Chen also hinted that BlackBerry had a special offer "in the works" designed specifically for loyal BlackBerry customers on the T-Mobile network, although he didn't provide additional details, other than to say the offer would be revealed soon.

"Finally, to T-Mobile, I would like to remind you that our long-standing partnership was once productive and profitable for both BlackBerry and T-Mobile," Chen said. "I hope we can find a way forward that allows us to serve our shared customers once again."

Although BlackBerry continues to struggle, its stock has performed well since Chen became CEO in early November, rising 46 percent. On Tuesday, its stock closed at \$9.46, up 5.4 percent.

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