

Ex-Apple chief plans mobile phone for India

April 19 2014, by Penelope Macrae



An Indian Sikh devotee takes a photograph on her mobile phone in the front of the illuminated Sikhism's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar on the April 18, 2014

Former Apple chief executive John Sculley, whose marketing skills helped bring the personal computer to desktops worldwide, says he plans to launch a mobile phone in India to exploit its still largely untapped smartphone market.

Inflexionpoint, an information technology supply company co-founded

by Sculley, will start selling the smartphones next month in India under the new Obi Mobiles brand, the Singapore-based firm said in a statement emailed to AFP Saturday.

"The smartphone share in India is only 20 percent, leaving the larger part of the ground with opportunities yet to be tapped," said Sculley, 75.

Sculley, who served as [chief executive](#) of Apple from 1983 to 1993, famously clashed with technical visionary Steve Jobs over strategy, leading to the Apple co-founder's exit from the company.

Jobs, who returned to head up Apple in 1997 and turned out a string of blockbuster products, died in 2011 after battling cancer.

Inflexionpoint plans to set up a supply chain, design centre and offices in India, producing "affordable smartphones with superior technology", Sculley said.

Smartphone shipments in India tripled from 16.2 million in 2012 to 44 million in 2013, International Data Corporation says, and analysts expect similar growth this year.

"We feel there's an opportunity to build another brand in India that would combine global branding skills... (and) go into price points more like the local brands—in the 5,000 to 8,000 rupee (\$83 to \$133) range," Sculley said.

He gave few details of the devices which will be joining a crowded range of offerings except that they will boast the "latest technology" and will be sourced from China."

After setting up in India, the company aims to expand to other growing markets in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Latin America.

Sculley added his old company, Apple, now faced a dilemma over whether to lower product prices to compete in emerging markets.

"Either they miss the (emerging) market where 70 percent of the industry is, or risk the falling of their stock price dramatically if they go after the market," the Economic Times newspaper quoted him as saying on its website Saturday.

"But one company's dilemma is another company's opportunity."



An Indian shopkeeper arranges freshly arrived snap-on mobile phone covers at his shop in Mumbai on April 2, 2014

Sculley said this year would be a big one for Apple in terms of products but added that it was "not clear they're going to demonstrate a creative leap" in 2014.

But he added that it was unfair to expect such a leap every two years.

"Steve's creative leap came every five years," he said.

Sculley told The Times of India that he had long regretted Jobs' exit from Apple, calling it "a mistake".

"But Steve in 1985 was not the same as Steve in 1997. By the time he came back, he was a much more matured and experienced executive while back in the eighties, he was still a young, learning executive," he said.

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