

Huawei targets premium segment with new phone, watch

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Chinese electronics giant Huawei took aim Tuesday at the premium segment dominated by Apple, unveiling a new large-screen smartphone along with a tablet and luxury smartwatch.

As it unveiled its latest flagship smartphone called the Mate 8 at the Consumer Electronics Show, Huawei said it sees a path to becoming the number two global vendor in the sector—a spot now held by US-based Apple.

"Every year, every month, we are increasing our market share," said Huawei consumer devices chief Richard Yu.

"Within a few years we believe we can be number two."

At CES, Huawei announced the launch of its premium flagship phone claiming better performance and battery life than rivals made by Apple and Samsung.

With a six-inch display, it still has a smaller overall footprint than similar smartphones, said Kevin Ho, who heads Huawei's handset operations.

The Mate 8 will launch in 30 countries—but not the United States—starting at 599 euros (\$650), in line with flagship models from Apple and Samsung.

The first wave of markets where the Mate 8 will be launched are in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

Ho said the new device has a [battery life](#) of more than two days. It has a fingerprint identification system for payments, improved camera audio and microphone technology.



Swarovski zirconia Huawei watches are displayed January 5, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada ahead of the 2016 Consumer Electronics Show

Huawei designed its own chipset for the device, ensuring it stays cool despite high performance, Ho said.

"High performance does not always mean hot," he said.

Huawei boosted its global smartphone [market share](#) to 7.7 percent in the third quarter behind Samsung and Apple, according to research firm Gartner.

It has taken a leading position in China ahead of Samsung, but its US offerings have been limited until its recent agreement to produce a Nexus phone for Google.

Yu said Huawei's total consumer device revenues grew 70 percent in 2015 to more than \$20 billion as it shipped 108 million handsets.

He added that Huawei has in the past few years boosted its global brand awareness and trust from consumers. Huawei's image was tarnished several years ago amid concerns over its ties to the Chinese government.

"We regained trust from consumers," Yu said.

Huawei also unveiled a 10-inch tablet which appears to be designed as a rival to the iPad.

The MediaPad M210 will be sold in the US and more than two dozen other markets starting at \$349.

The company also unveiled two new versions of its smartwatch—called Jewel and Elegant—which appear aimed at the luxury segment occupied by Apple Watch.



Aimed at women, the two new models start at \$499 and \$599. The Jewel is made in collaboration with Swarovski and features the European company's diamond-emulating glass stones known as Zirconia circling the face.

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