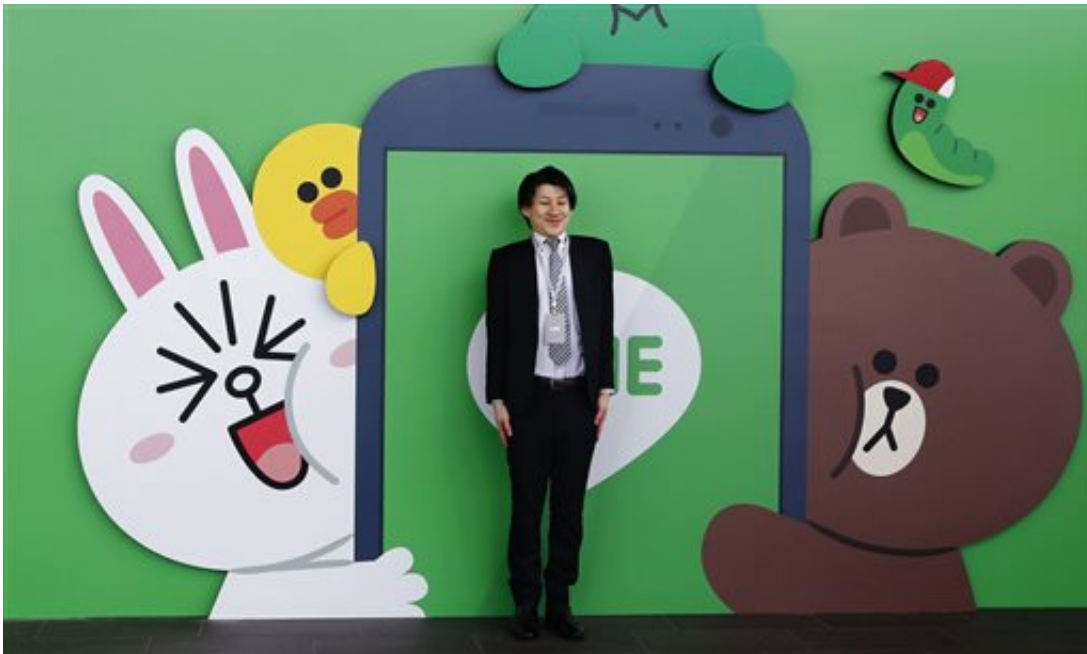


Message service Line entering carrier business in Japan (Update)

March 24 2016, by Yuri Kageyama



A man poses for a photo in front of a Line Corp. logo with its popular animal characters during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Although social media companies have struggled to gain revenue, Line, now used in 230 nations, including Asia, South America and Africa, has succeeded in unusual ways, such as merchandising of its mascot-like characters as dolls, which are sold in real stores. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition as it grows its platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping.

Tokyo-based Line, founded five years ago, already has a billion global registered users, 215 million of them active each month on average. That makes it bigger on mobile than Facebook or Twitter in Japan.

Line executives outlined the company's future strategy Thursday at a suburban theater, and also highlighted some achievements, such as racking up 120.7 billion yen (\$1.1 billion) in sales last year.

Jun Masuda, chief strategy and marketing officer, told reporters that the mobile carrier service will be launched in a few months, starting at an affordable 500 yen (\$4.40) a month and offering reliable connectivity using the telecommunications infrastructure of major Japanese carrier NTT DoCoMo.

In Japan, many mobile users pay four times that much or more a month for data transmission and voice calls. Line said users will get unlimited use of Facebook and Twitter, plus Line communication, calls, chats and music.

Although social media companies have struggled to gain revenue, Line, now used in 230 nations including Asia, South America and Africa, has succeeded in unusual ways, such as merchandising of its mascot-like characters as dolls, which are sold in real stores.



Line Corp. President & CEO Takeshi Idezawa speaks during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. Tokyo-based Line, founded five years ago, already has a billion global registered users, 215 million of them active each month on average. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

It also sells sticker images that are sent with Line messages called "stamps" in Japan, some of which are free but many that come at a small price. Some 2.4 billion such stickers are sent each day, with sales reaching 25.3 billion yen (\$224 million) last year, according to Line, a subsidiary of Korean Internet company Naver Corp.

It remains to be seen whether users outside Japan would be as willing to pay for such perks. Line has been rapidly growing in some parts of Asia, such as Indonesia.

Line has signed on major advertisers, like Toyota Motor Corp, and plans to expand its clientele, using its knowledge of users' interests to devise advertising that will appeal to them, said Shintaro Tabata, another Line executive.

Line says it plans to make online payments easier, partnering with a major Japanese credit card company and offering its own cash cards that can be charged at a convenience store chain. Online Line purchases will accumulate "points" that can be later converted into cash.



Line Corp. President & CEO Takeshi Idezawa speaks during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)



Visitors pose for a photo in front of Line Corp. logo and its popular characters during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Although social media companies have struggled to gain revenue, Line, now used in 230 nations, including Asia, South America and Africa, has succeeded in unusual ways, such as merchandising of its mascot-like characters as dolls, which are sold in real stores. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)



Line Corp. President & CEO Takeshi Idezawa speaks during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)



Line Corp. President & CEO Takeshi Idezawa speaks during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)



Line Corp. Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer Jun Masuda speaks during a press conference of Line Conference Tokyo 2016 in Urayasu, near Tokyo, Thursday, March 24, 2016. Line Corp., which offers a popular mobile message and online voice-call service, is entering the mobile carrier business in Japan, promising to underprice competition, as it plans to keep growing as a platform for news, music, games, live streaming and online shopping. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Message service Line entering carrier business in Japan (Update) (2016, March 24) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-03-message-line-carrier-business-japan.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.