

Nintendo chief: Seeking growth sources as Switch sales slow

February 1 2019, by Yuri Kageyama



In this June 19, 2018, photo, a logo of Nintendo hangs at Panasonic center in Tokyo. Nintendo, the Japanese video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises, is reporting a 25 percent jump in fiscal third-quarter profit, boosted by the popularity of games for its Switch console. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

Nintendo's president says the Kyoto-based video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises is counting on business outside the game sector for future growth as sales for its Switch console machines fall short of forecasts.

Shuntaro Furukawa told reporters Friday that sales in the current quarter are still going strong though they will likely be 3 million machines less than earlier estimated, at 17 million units.

"It was not the pace we had aimed for, but sales are going at a good pace," Furukawa said of Switch sales over the last several months.

Nintendo Co. has been diversifying its business. It plans to have its own theme park facility at Universal Studios in Osaka, Japan, finished in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. It plans a similar facility for the U.S.

Nintendo also expects to open an event space in Tokyo's Shibuya this year.

Products like Pikachu dolls and other merchandise featuring Nintendo characters, such as a Monopoly board game starring Super Mario, are some examples of how the company hopes to cash in on its rich content.

Also Friday, Nintendo announced a partnership with Japan-based Line Corp., an online service company, to develop a game for smart devices, set for release later this year.

Nintendo officials acknowledged challenges of getting more people to play games. "Pokemon Go," played on cellphones, has proved a giant hit around the world. They said Nintendo hasn't fully taken advantage of that to get people to buy the Switch, a hybrid [game](#) machine that works both as a console and a tablet that went on sale two years ago.



This June 19, 2018, photo, visitors walk around a figure of Super Mario of Nintendo at Panasonic center in Tokyo. Nintendo, the Japanese video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises, is reporting a 25 percent jump in fiscal third-quarter profit, boosted by the popularity of games for its Switch console. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

Cumulative global sales of the Switch total 30 million.

Among hit software for Switch is "Super Mario Bros. Ultimate," whose sales have totaled 12 million units since it went on sale in December.



Japanese video game maker Nintendo Co. President Shuntaro Furukawa prepares to attend a news conference in Tokyo Friday, Feb. 1, 2019. Furukawa says the Kyoto-based video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises is counting on business outside the game sector for future growth as sales for its Switch console machines fall short of forecasts. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



Japanese video game maker Nintendo Co. President Shuntaro Furukawa, center standing, is introduced to the guests and media during a news conference in Tokyo Friday, Feb. 1, 2019. Furukawa says the Kyoto-based video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises is counting on business outside the game sector for future growth as sales for its Switch console machines fall short of forecasts. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



Japanese video game maker Nintendo Co. President Shuntaro Furukawa speaks during a news conference in Tokyo Friday, Feb. 1, 2019. Furukawa says the Kyoto-based video game maker behind the Super Mario and Pokemon franchises is counting on business outside the game sector for future growth as sales for its Switch console machines fall short of forecasts. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



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