

With week to go, iPhone fans already queuing in Japan

September 11 2013



A man sits outside a Tokyo Apple Store on September 11, 2013, ready to buy the new iPhone 5s, which will go on sale on September 20. Businessman Tetsuya Tamura said being there 'gets my adrenaline going'.

Another wave of iPhone excitement has swept Japan, where Apple fans were queuing Wednesday for the new handset, more than a week before it hits the shelves.

A 44-year-old Japanese businessman began lining up outside the Apple

store in Tokyo's glitzy shopping district of Ginza on Tuesday, hours before the US IT giant unveiled two new iPhones.

"I'm glad to have secured first place," Tetsuya Tamura told AFP, as he sat on a camping chair Tweeting on his iPhone 4, adding the number of people following him on the microblog has shot up by 1,000 since he began his vigil.

"Being here gets my adrenaline going," Tamura said. "I am using up my annual leave to be here, but getting the first handset will make it all worth it."

The iPhone goes on sale in Japan on September 20.

Apple on Tuesday unveiled its latest models to an expectant room in California. The company is offering the iPhone 5S, a slick new top-end model, along with iPhone 5C, a pared down version aimed at budget-conscious smartphone shoppers around the world.

Apple has suffered a decline in its global share of the lucrative market as Android-run models, led by Samsung, expand their presence.

The firm now has a window of opportunity in Japan, where the nation's biggest mobile carrier NTT Docomo will sell the gadget for the first time.

Although sales are now rocketing, Japan came relatively late to the smartphone, with many consumers preferring to stick to clam-shell models that have long-since looked outdated in other developed markets.



A Tokyo Apple store staff member chats with a man queuing to buy the iPhone, pictured September 11, 2013. Apple has 42 percent of Japan's mobile phone market.

While [mobile phone technology](#) in Japan initially raced ahead of other parts of the world, it developed in ways that never took off elsewhere, leading to a phenomenon dubbed "Galapagos-ization", which slowed the introduction of smartphones.

Docomo is now looking to reverse years of lost business after watching domestic rivals cash in on the iPhone bonanza.

The firm, which has about 42 percent of the Japanese market, has lost more than 3.5 million subscribers to rivals since 2008, when SoftBank first rolled out the iPhone in Japan, local media have reported.

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