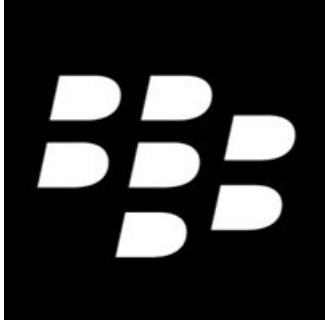


BlackBerry kills off its classic smartphone

SAN FRANCISCO: BlackBerry on Tuesday said that it is killing off its Classic smartphone with a physical keyboard as part of an effort to modernize its lineup.



"The hardest part in letting go is accepting that change makes way for new and better experiences," BlackBerry chief operating officer Ralph Pini said in a blog post.

"We are updating our smartphone lineup with state-of-the-art devices."

BlackBerry Classic and its iconic physical keyboard will no longer be part of the Canadian company's product portfolio, according to Pini. Classic and its predecessors have been "incredible workhorse" devices for users, but their lifespan is at an end, Pini said.

The company will promised to continue to support BlackBerry 10 mobile operating software with updates.

Blackberry continued bleeding red in the three months ending May 31, extending a two-year losing streak as the smartphone maker restructures, according to quarterly financials.

The Waterloo, Ontario-based company posted a loss of US\$670m while revenues plunged to US\$424m -- about two-thirds of last year's take during the same period.

Excluding hefty asset write-downs and restructuring charges, however, BlackBerry broke even in the fiscal 2017 first quarter. Its smartphone handset sales continued to stagnate in the face of competition from Apple and Android phones.

BlackBerry has released its own smartphone powered by Android software, which is made available free by Google parent company Alphabet. BlackBerry chief executive John Chen said his aim is to make its smartphone business profitable this

fiscal year.

BlackBerry, one of the early pioneers of smartphones, has been struggling for years. It has made several efforts to find new customer niches, with low-cost devices, tablets and by shifting its emphasis to software and services.

BlackBerry have issued a response to this article with the below statement:

BlackBerry's device strategy is based on a cross-platform model where we'll continue to support our BlackBerry 10 platform while expanding our device offering to include Android-based devices. We are focused on software updates for BlackBerry 10, with version 10.3.3 scheduled for next month, and a second update to follow next year.

Similar to many other device makers, we are changing the lineup of smartphones as we innovate and advance our portfolio. And, we are updating our smartphone lineup with state of the art devices. As part of this, and after many successful years in the market, we have informed our US carriers that the manufacturing cycle of only our BlackBerry Classic will cease. However, we have informed our customers to check with their respective carrier for device availability or purchase Classic unlocked online. We continue to actively support sales of our BlackBerry 10 smartphones to customers in most markets. And for customers choosing our Android device as their next smartphone, there will be a seamless transition without any compromise to the security of their mobile platform or operations.

We believe that being truly cross platform – which includes support for BB10, Android, iOS and Windows Phone – will allow us to best serve our customers across the world.

Source: AFP

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