

MEDIA SYNOPSIS

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ZDNet

Localization is key for mobile phone-makers to remain competitive

With increasing competition, it is vital for mobile phone-makers to differentiate themselves through innovative industrial design. Through tailoring handset designs such as screen size, button layout and add-on hardware features, phone-makers will be well-positioned to gain consumer buy-in and market share.

Many phone-makers are starting to recognize the needs of their target markets. For instance, phone-makers are including the dual-SIM functionality in emerging markets that are predominantly based on prepaid subscriptions, such as India, as consumers tend to switch service providers for marginal price gains. On the other hand, phone-makers, such as Samsung, are introducing an extra extension antenna for consumers in Japan; allowing access to local mobile terrestrial digital audio, TV and data broadcasting services.

Phone-makers should listen and pay attention to the habits and wants of the local users to find out on the areas to improve on. For example, Sony Mobile Communications works on device localization through examining the consumers and the markets they live in. They found that the Japanese

consumers prefer devices with higher water resistance and durability, whereas there has been an increasing demand for LTE-enabled handsets in the United States. As such, it is important for phone-makers to “both evolve their design alongside consumer preference and also introduce them to new design elements”.

In addition, phone-makers can also differentiate themselves by pre-installing local content and services on mobile phones. China handset manufacturers can consider having pre-installed content from Youku, Tudou and Baidu, as well as applications such as Sina Weibo and Tencent's QQ social network, onto the mobile handsets to further entice consumers.

Leon Perera, Chief Executive Officer of Spire Research and Consulting, opined that localization is more of a necessity than a bonus in some instances. One good example would be Nokia's Lumia smartphone. It has attracted much negative attention from its branding, as "Lumia" translates to “prostitute” in Spanish-speaking countries – a definite deterrent for consumers when purchasing the handset.

Link to article on ZDNet:

<http://www.zdnet.com/localize-handset-design-content-to-be-competitive-700006309/>

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