

Sony Ericsson: Expect More From Us

Company execs said consumers can expect better music software and more phones for T-Mobile and Cingular subscribers.

Sony Ericsson will be expanding its cell phone line in the US with the company's "largest set of devices for North America ever," Sony Ericsson president Miles Flint said at the CTIA trade show today.

In a wide-ranging discussion with PC Magazine , Flint and other Sony Ericsson execs also said Sony Ericsson will be improving the Walkman phones' ability to sync music with PCs, and developing more products for both Cingular and T-Mobile.

"We're committed to T-Mobile," Flint said.

Sony Ericsson consistently gets high marks from our annual Service & Reliability reader survey , but up until now they've been seen as a niche manufacturer in the US. They don't make CDMA phones, so they're locked out of Verizon, Sprint, and Alltel; most of their phones have appeared on Cingular and on smaller, regional carriers.

Yesterday, Sony Ericsson announced [two handsome new US phones](#): the Z750, a flip phone with a 2-megapixel camera which will work on Cingular's high-speed HSDPA network, and the W580, a very slim slider phone with the Walkman music look and branding. That's just the beginning of the announcements this year, the execs said.

To support T-Mobile, Sony Ericsson will be developing phones that work on the new 1.7 Ghz "AWS" frequency band that T-Mobile bought quite a lot of last year, the executives said. That makes Sony Ericsson the third manufacturer to mention 1.7 Ghz products to us, after Nokia and i-Mate. They're also producing phones that work with T-Mobile's "MyFaves" interface.

Alas, Verizon and Sprint users will be saddened to hear that Sony Ericsson has "no plans to go back to CDMA," according to Flint.

Walkman, Cybershot - Now Bravia?

Sony Ericsson has already extended the Walkman music and Cybershot camera bands into phones. Sony's Bravia TV brand is next, with the introduction of a Bravia TV phone in Japan, Flint said. But Sony Ericsson is holding off from developing US TV phones for now, with execs saying that they haven't seen sufficient consumer demand yet.

The Walkman phones, meanwhile, have excellent music quality, but have fallen behind in syncing music with PCs. The PC software is going to get a "big revolution" in 2007, with a major upgrade that improves music syncing and adds video syncing with PCs, the execs said. Support for Microsoft protected music, such as music from Napster and Yahoo! music stores, is on Sony Ericsson's roadmap as well.

You may also see more innovative software on Sony Ericsson phones in the US, as carriers become more comfortable allowing Google's Blogger platform, and other third-party Sony Ericsson deals, to remain on phones. That will result in more data use and more profits for the carriers, as well, Flint said.

"We're having more and more of a dialogue about how to get to consumers," he said.

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