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Nokia's attempt to keep pace with rivals hit a new nadir, as the Finland-based mobile handset maker lost the No.1 sales spot in its home market for the first time, to Samsung.

By John D. Stoll



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### nokia loses lead in home market



Nokia's Lumia 925 is displayed during its launch in London on May 14, 2013. Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

Nokia Corp.'s attempt to keep pace with rivals consistently snatching its global market share may have hit a new nadir, after an oft-cited research firm said Tuesday that the Espoo, Finland-based mobile handset maker has fallen out of the No.1 sales spot in its home market for the first time.

Nokia, traditionally the dominant player in Finland, lost the market-share crown to Samsung Electronics Co. during the first quarter, according to IDC. Samsung shipped 211,000 devices in the small Nordic country from January to March, compared with Nokia's sales of 196,000 devices, according to IDC.

Samsung has vaulted to top spot by taking a commanding position in Finland's market for smartphones, and now controls 36% of the Finnish market compared with Nokia's 33.5%, according to IDC. A year ago, Nokia had a 48% share of the Finnish market, compared with 28% for Samsung, the firm said.

IDC collects its data via its WW Mobile Phone Tracker service, and has been tracking mobile devices since 2004. Other independent firms tracking Finland device sales may have conflicting data because individual country sales aren't always disclosed by device makers.

"We never comment on third party analysis," Nokia spokesman Doug Dawson said, adding that the company doesn't break down market share by country.

The IDC numbers were first reported by Finnish news website Digitoday.fi on Tuesday, and Francisco Jeronimo, IDC's research director on European mobile devices, later disclosed the data in an interview.

Nokia's executive ranks have endured a series of hard knocks in recent

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years, and its performance in Finland—while not a massive market—could be considered a telling indicator of its relevance to even the most passionate Nokia enthusiasts.



The company has been a source of enormous pride in Finland, having grown from a lumber mill in the 1860s into a global electronics powerhouse employing thousands of Finns.

Even as its devices have fallen off shopping lists in many markets around the world, IDC figures suggest Nokia had until recently held a firm grasp on its home turf—holding a 65% share of the Finnish market as recently as 2010.

While Nokia continues to roll out new models under its Lumia smartphone line, it hasn't been able to keep up globally with Samsung's Galaxy phones, or Apple Inc.'s iPhone. Nokia has launched a range of feature phones as well, but some of those models have struggled recently as well.

Running Microsoft Corp.'s mobile Windows software, the Lumia line—first launched in late 2011—represented a shift from Nokia's history of developing its own operating systems.

Samsung sales rose 38% on a quarter-over-quarter basis, while Nokia sales declined 25%, according to IDC. Both device makers saw a volume decline compared with the first quarter of 2012, but Samsung's 15% decline was far narrower than Nokia's 36% decline over the period.

"Samsung is doing extremely well on smartphones," Mr. Jeronimo said.

He noted that Nokia sells about an equal split of smartphones and more basic feature phones in Finland, while 80% of Samsung's sales are smartphones.

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