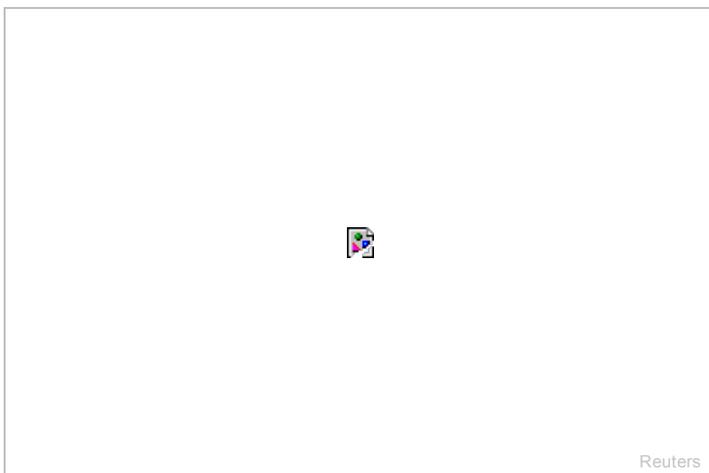




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Nokia placing a bet on Windows 8



Nokia Corp. later Wednesday will launch devices that run on Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 8 software. The Finnish telecommunications firm has high hopes that these new products will reinvigorate the company's image once again as a leader in the mobile-phone market. Here are what some industry experts have to say about how significant this unveiling may be:

Geoff Blaber, senior analyst at CCS Insight

“This really is a make-or-break time for Nokia in terms of their Windows strategy and partnership with Microsoft. We saw the strategy announced in February 2011, and this time last year, Nokia did really well with its first round of Lumia products. But this will be the first time we're seeing the official combination of Nokia and the Windows 8 platform. This is Nokia's chance to show that they can differentiate from the competition. The big question is whether there is consumer appetite for another platform. Nokia and Microsoft have got a chicken-and-egg situation — they need a big commitment from carriers to push a Windows phone, but carriers are loathe to do that because consumer demand is far from certain.”

Nick Jones, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner, Inc.

“This [launch] is very significant for the company. Nokia is betting its smartphone future on the Windows phone, so it has to be good. They're trying to be the first on the market with the Windows 8 phone, and they're entering a frighteningly competitive market. This autumn is one of the most competitive points we've seen in the mobile market in a long time, with a lot of things happening together. The iPhone launch and Apple's dispute with Samsung...these can be an opportunity for Nokia but only if its products are successful. At this point, good isn't enough. You have to be great.”

Neil Mawston, executive director of wireless device strategies at Strategy Analytics

“I would say this is perhaps Nokia's most important launch ever. Nokia has been on a downswing for the past few years and this is one product to try and initiate an upswing and recovery, and it's extremely important for the future of the company. The main thing Nokia has to achieve is a recovery in the U.S. market. If you can crack the U.S., you can crack the globe. But they've got relatively low brand recognition and limited distribution there. Nokia has few relationships with major operations or major retailers. They also have to convince consumers that they have a product that is different and good enough to stand apart from the competition. I think the product is king for Nokia — if they can get the total product offering right now, everything will follow after that. The phone must look good...you've got a 5 second window when you first unveil the device to make a first impression. We're also looking at how Nokia is integrating devices with the Microsoft ecosystem, and how they will leverage Microsoft's expertise in services to rival its competitors. For

example, if the devices can combine with Microsoft's Xbox gaming system, it will give Nokia another boost forward."

Francisco Jeronimo, research manager at IDC

"The launch is extremely significant because it comes at a really important time. Nokia has gone through a significant reorganization period and its market share has been declining over the past two years. It has laid off thousands of people and cut factories to adjust to the new reality of the market and its new strategy. Now, it is time to start delivering. This is the time for Nokia to grow themselves over the next couple of quarters, and to prove to shareholders and consumers that they are a good competitor to Samsung. The U.S. ruling against Samsung in favor of Apple will help Nokia because it stands as a strong alternative to Android platforms and avoids risking further lawsuits from Apple. Also, people are familiar with the Microsoft interface. If they can have a similar experience on their PC and smartphone, consumers will value this as something they already know. And there is good feedback from consumers on the existing Lumia phone. Nokia has the best maps platform in the world. Everything is in place. Now its time to sell, there are no more excuses."

Ahead of the Nokia event later in the day, the firm's shares were up 1.8%.

Separately, Nokia Chief Executive Stephen Elop said in a video interview with The Wall Street Journal that the launch of the Windows 8 phone is just one step in its turnaround effort. [Watch the interview with Elop.](#)

Nokia is just one of [several tech companies unveiling products](#), kicking off a [smartphone storm](#) ahead of Apple Inc.'s much anticipated Sept. 12 event, when the company may announce its latest iPhone.

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