BlackBerry Cancels Two Devices, Ends BlackBerry Live

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Following two quarters of gigantic losses, BlackBerry is making good on its retreat from the consumer market and canceling the release of two planned BlackBerry 10 devices.

In a filing with the SEC [1], BlackBerry refers to the infamous “Z10 Inventory Charge” that cost the company about $1 billion in its second quarter, as a primary motive for the move. BlackBerry attributes poor sell-through for BB10 devices to a maturing smartphone market, “intense” competition and delays in functionality for its BES 10 platform.

The filing does not specify which devices for 2014 were scrapped. Among the devices BlackBerry was rumored to have in the works for next year [2] were a larger, faster version of the Z10, the Z50, and a beefed up version of the Q10, the Q30.

Another big change for BlackBerry in 2014 comes with the announcement that its annual developer conference, BlackBerry Live, is no more [3]. In a blog post, the company describes that in place of the big event, it will be holding a series of more targeted events around the world.

New CEO John Chen has suggested that BlackBerry was returning to its roots [4], to focus on enterprise services, security and device management. Following staggering $4.4 billion losses in the third quarter, BlackBerry announced a multi-year agreement with Foxxconn, a significant manufacturer of Apple products. Foxxconn will develop and manufacture new BlackBerry devices. With two BB10 devices nixed, the focus will be on making a BlackBerry handset for Indonesia and other fast-growing markets.

BlackBerry’s strategy of throwing cargo overboard to keep the ship from sinking has extended to its executive staff as well. After recently scrapping plans to take BlackBerry private [5], CEO Thorsten Heins was replaced by Chen, a chief officer who had previously turned around software vendor Sybase. The BlackBerry CFO, COO and CMO were replaced shortly after [6].

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