Apple’s Cook Talks Up New iPhone Deal with China Mobile

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Apple CEO Tim Cook had nothing but good things to say about his company’s new iPhone deal with China Mobile [1].

Cook told an audience including the *Wall Street Journal* that Apple already sold a record number of iPhones in China during the company’s still-unreported fiscal first quarter. With reports surfacing that Apple supplier Foxconn shipped 1.4 million iPhone 5Ss to China Mobile [2] last week ahead of the iPhone launch Friday, Apple could keep seeing huge smartphone sales emerging from China. As the Wall Street Journal pointed out, analysts have predicted a China Mobile deal could assist Apple in moving an additional 10-30 million iPhones per year.

Cook also touted the iPhone’s new support for TD-LTE—needed to run on China Mobile’s LTE network—saying that combined with support for FDD-LTE makes the iPhone a “world phone.”

Cook also praised China Mobile’s distribution channels and speculated that the widespread availability of Apple products the deal will facilitate could help to stymie the thriving gray market in China for smuggled iPhones.

Cook shot down questions about why the deal took nearly six years [3], saying key meetings in the fall of 2012 and early 2013 were what really got the ball rolling. But he assured the crowd that every meeting between the two companies since 2008 had at least been “good,” and that great relationships “are not built on always agreeing, they’re built on mutual respect.”

When asked about Apple’s concern over lower-priced devices snatching up market share in emerging markets, Cook reconfirmed his company’s commitment to building the best devices in the world. That sentiment slightly conflicts with new reports that Apple is relaunching its 8 GB iPhone 4 in India [4] after giving way in the market to competitors like Samsung.

Still, despite the China Mobile deal’s potential for huge sales numbers, Cook stuck to his guns and said Apple continues to only focus on selling the best devices, not the most.

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