

How Come Nokia Never Made an iPhone Killer?

Written by Marco Attard
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Did you know Nokia came up with a phone with a colour touchscreen and a single physical button 7 years before Steve Jobs revealed the iPhone? Then again, how come the company never got close to fighting the current smartphone champions until launching the Windows Phone 7-powered Lumia 900?



The Wall Street Journal has some interesting revelations from former Nokia chief designer Frank Nuovo-- such as how internal squabbling shot the company right in the foot.

"Oh my God... We had it completely nailed," Nuovo remarks while referring to Nokia designers' late-90s ambitions of touchscreen-enabled smartphones able to handle emails, gaming and more.

Of course, Nokia is not the only mobile market loser-- RIM also used to rule, before enterprise customers started preferring iPhones and Androids to Blackberries.

However while RIM fails to make products the public wants to buy, Nokia was on the right track-- before shifting focus from smartphone development to basic handsets by merging smart and dumbphone operations in 2006... just before the iPhone shifted the market around.

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Nowadays Nokia has one thing-- a 30000-strong patent portfolio worth an estimate of nearly \$6 billion. Investors value Nokia's total worth as \$6.42bn... you can surely do the math.

CEO Stephen Elop (the man who led company in a partnership with Microsoft) says Nokia might sell some patents, telling the WSJ "elements of [the patent portfolio] could be sold off, turned into more immediate cash for us— which is something important when you're going through a turnaround."

What kind of patents does Nokia have? Elop provides an example-- one for bigger letters popping up whenever one touches an on-screen keyboard.

With a patent war waging on in the smartphone arena, a Nokia patent sale might provide very handy ammunition to the vendor with the ready cash...

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