

Gartner: Smartphone Sales Stall in Q4 2018

Written by Alice Marshall
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According to Gartner, global Q4 2018 smartphone sales total 408.4 million units-- essentially flat results showing all of 0.1% Y-o-Y growth, with Apple recording the worst quarterly decline since Q1 2016.

Table 1

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Vendor in 4Q18 (Thousands of Units)

Vendor	4Q18 Units	4Q18 Market Share (%)	4Q17 Units	4Q17 Market Share (%)
Samsung	70,782.5	17.3	74,026.6	18.2
Apple	64,527.8	15.8	73,175.2	17.9
Huawei	60,409.8	14.8	43,887.0	10.8
OPPO	31,589.9	7.7	25,660.1	6.3
Xiaomi	27,843.6	6.8	28,187.8	6.9
Others	153,205.0	37.5	162,908.8	39.9
Total	408,358.5	100.0	407,845.4	100.0

Due to rounding, numbers may not add up precisely to the totals shown

Source: Gartner (February 2019)

“Demand for entry-level and midprice smartphones remained strong across markets, but demand for high-end smartphones continued to slow in the fourth quarter of 2018,” the analyst remarks. “Slowing incremental innovation at the high end, coupled with price increases, deterred replacement decisions for high-end smartphones. This led to a flat-growth market in Q4 2018.”

iPhone sales hit 64.5m units in Q4 2018, a decline of -11.8% Y-o-Y. The double-digit decline is the biggest in the quarter among the top 5 smartphone vendors, as iPhone sales are down in all regions except N. America and mature Asia/Pacific. For 2018 as a whole, iPhone sales are down by -2.7%, reaching just over 209m, as Apple deals with buyers delaying upgrades while

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facing compelling high- and mid-price smartphone alternatives from Chinese vendors.

At the high end, Samsung smartphones such as the Galaxy S9, S9+ and Note9 struggle to drive Q4 2018 growth, leading to -4.4% Y-o-Y sales declines for the S. Korean giant and market share loss in W. Europe, Greater China and L. America. Overall 2018 Samsung sales are down by -8.2%. Meanwhile Xiaomi and Huawei continue to grab more market share from the midtier. Huawei Q4 2018 sales reach over 60m units, with the strongest growth among the top 5 vendors of 37.6% Y-o-Y.

Table 2

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Vendor in 2018 (Thousands of Units)

Vendor	2018 Units	2018 Market Share (%)	2017 Units	2017 Market Share (%)
Samsung	295,043.7	19.0	321,263.3	20.9
Apple	209,048.4	13.4	214,924.4	14.0
Huawei	202,901.4	13.0	150,534.3	9.8
Xiaomi	122,387.0	7.9	88,926.8	5.8
OPPO	118,837.5	7.6	112,124.0	7.3
Others	607,049.0	39.0	648,762.7	42.2
Total	1,555,267.0	100.0	1,536,535.5	100.0

Due to rounding, numbers may not add up precisely to the totals shown

Source: Gartner (February 2019)

In 2018 as a whole, global smartphone sales are up by 1.2% to 1.6 billion units. N. America, mature Asia/Pacific and Greater China record the worst declines of the year, at 6.8%, 3.4% and 3% respectively. Gartner says smartphone demand in mature markets depends on the appeal of flagship smartphones from the top 3 brands-- namely Samsung, Apple and Huawei-- and the 2 biggest vendors recorded declines in 2018.

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