



## CTIA Show Makes Changes, Expects Growth

By Joseph Palenchar -- TWICE, 4/23/2012

**NEW ORLEANS** – CTIA-The Wireless Association expects a lift in attendance at next month's CTIA Wireless 2012 because of later show dates and a return to the Crescent City, where the convention will boast its largest retailer-focused section to date.

Dealers will also find larger booths from Chinese vendors and no booths at all from such major past exhibitors as Nokia and RIM, both of which are struggling with declining market share. Nokia will host a meeting room, and RIM is focused on staging its own annual event, BlackBerry World, which will be held a week before the CTIA convention.

Handset vendors appearing at the show will continue to focus on themes raised at International CES and the Mobile World Congress, including smartphones with bigger screens and thinner chassis, quad-core processors in handsets and tablets, nearfield communications (NFC), a growing selection of phones with Android 4.0, and lots of 4G LTE phones as all four national U.S. carriers and many regional ones add the technology to their networks.

In addition, Nokia is expected to continue building buzz around its Lumia handsets and the Windows Phone OS, and Sprint could reveal more about its 4G transition this year from WiMAX to LTE. Attendees will also find water-resistant smartphones that hold up after falling in a toilet.

For its part, Samsung will likely bring its next Galaxy series smartphones to the show, having planned a May 3 unveiling in London a few days before the May 8-10 CTIA event.

Carriers are also likely to announce commitments to some of the products unveiled at CES and MWC, including Huawei's flagship smartphone, the Ascend P1, with a dual-core 1.5GHz processor, 4.3-inch super AMOLED 960 by 540 touchscreen, 8-megapixel rearfacing camera with 1080p video capture, Dolby Mobile 3.0+5.1 surround and MHL-HDMI connection.

Availability dates for HTC's new One-series smartphones could also be announced.

The product introductions will come at a time when North American handset-shipment growth

appears to be slowing or actually declining from year-ago levels, one analyst said. Although the analyst is still compiling statistics, “volumes seem to have slowed quite a bit,” he said. “The market is maturing, and moving forward, growth might just come in spurts around new device releases.” Another factor is carriers’ growing penchant to reduce incentives to trade up phones before a contract expires. “Carriers’ profitability has been impacted by historically generous subsidies, and they are looking for ways to protect margins while remaining competitive,” the analyst said.

New handsets and tablets won’t be the only products targeted to retailers at the show. Products that retailers will buy but won’t sell to consumers will include wireless POS solutions and fleet-management solutions, said Rob Mesirow, CTIA’s show director and operations VP.

Those solutions will be part of an expanded Retail Zone that has grown to include 247 exhibitors in 62,850 square feet, up from last year’s 201 exhibitors and 40,550 square feet.

Overall show attendance is also poised for gains over 2011’s 40,000 and 2010’s 39,000, Mesirow said. The total number of exhibitors will be around 1,000, as in recent years.

About 21 percent of attendees will be retailers and dealers as in years’ past, he noted.

Attendance levels are poised to grow this year in large part because the show dates were pushed back to May from their traditional March dates, Mesirow said. “We’ll see if it pays off, but early indications are that it has,” he said. The show’s new timing “works out better for product announcements, particularly in the U.S.,” he explained. Eighty percent of attendees are from the U.S.

The new show dates are more attuned to back-to-school and fourth-quarter retail cycles, Mesirow previously told TWICE.

The first quarter is also crowded with trade shows, including CES and MWC, he noted.

A return to New Orleans for the first time since 2005 is also playing a role in attracting attendees, Mesirow said. CTIA will evaluate the 2012 show’s demographics and the performance of the New Orleans infrastructure in determining whether the show will return to New Orleans after 2013. For 2013, the show moves back to Las Vegas.

“People are really eager to get back to New Orleans,” Mesirow said.

CTIA had chosen to leave New Orleans before the 2005 flood because there were fewer hotels and restaurants than there are now, fewer flights into and out of the city than now, and shortages of cabs when the show closed for the day, the association previously said. The city has also made improvements to the convention center since then.

A venue change isn’t the only change in store for attendees. The association is changing its show schedule to offer an afternoon keynote session for the first time. At the 4:40 p.m. to 6 p.m. event on the first day of the show, the CEOs of the four national carriers will appear at a roundtable

moderated by “Mad Money” host Jim Cramer.

On the morning of the first day, keynotes will be given by Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski, MasterCard president Gary Flood, Pandora president/CEO Joe Kennedy and CTIA chairman Patrick Riordan.

Keynotes on the morning of the second day will be delivered by Spotify CEO Daniel Ek, Mozilla CEO Gary Kovacs, Visa president John Partridge and Electronic Arts CEO John Riccitiello.

The third-day keynoter will be in the afternoon from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. That person is former President Bill Clinton.

CE and handset suppliers and distributors scheduled to exhibit include Belkin, Brightpoint, Brightstar, Cobra, Coby, Dell, Dolby, DTS, HTC, Huawei, Jabra, Kyocera, LG, Nokia, Novatel, Otterbox, Parrot, PCD, Polaroid, Haier Telecom, San Disk, Sharp, Sierra Wireless, Skullcandy, Wi-Ex, Wilson Electronics and ZTE. Carriers Tmobile, AT&T, Verizon and Sprint will also exhibit.