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Huawei sees high-end phone boost in Apple challenge

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Huawei's third-quarter smartphone shipments rose 63 percent year-on-year, helped by growth of its mid-to-high-end range of devices, as it looks to challenge the likes of [Apple](#) and [Samsung](#).

Total smartphones shipped by Huawei for the three months ending September 30 hit 27.4 million units, it said Tuesday. The Chinese device maker's figures come amid an overall slowdown in the global smartphone market, with worldwide shipments expected to increase just 10.4 percent year-on-year in 2015, according to research company IDC.

Huawei highlighted the success of its mid-to-high end handsets – those that retail over 2,000 yuan (\$315) – as it looks to shrug of its image of being a cheap Chinese manufacturer. It said these devices saw a 7 percent growth in shipments from the previous quarter and now account for a third of its total shipments.



Arjun Kharpal

"They have been implementing a very steady and consistent strategy in terms of improving the portfolio where they can start looking at higher price points and moving away from the view that Chinese phones need to be cheap and low-end," Francisco Jeronimo, research director for European mobile devices at IDC, told CNBC by phone.

"Huawei are showing they can manufacture and offer a device that looks good in terms of design and is very competitive in comparison to the top-end from the likes of Apple and Samsung."

Premium devices

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The news highlights Huawei’s move to become a more recognized brand across the world. The company has invested in a sports team and launched new devices in Europe rather than China.

Huawei has a broad portfolio of smartphones, from cheaper devices released under its Honor brand, to [the premium Mate S](#), unveiled in September. It billed the Mate S as a luxury device and even had a pressure touch screen feature before Apple released its iPhone 6s and 6s Plus.

Interestingly, Huawei’s growth comes at a time when some of its rivals, such as [Sony](#), [HTC](#) and even Samsung, struggle. On Tuesday, ratings agency S&P said it expects LG Electronics to see weakened profitability “over the next two or three years because of the fierce competition, saturated demand, and declines in the selling prices of its key products” such as smartphones.

100 million target

Huawei’s smartphone shipments to Europe and the Middle-East-and-Africa regions grew by 98 and 70 percent respectively year-on-year.

Shipments rose 81 percent year-on-year in China. In its home market, Huawei knocked Xiaomi – often dubbed “China’s Apple” – off the top spot in the third quarter, [according to research firm Canalys](#). It currently is the world’s third biggest smartphone maker by market share, according to IDC.

“At this rate, we are confident in our ability to reach our smartphone shipment target of 100 million units by year’s end,” Richard Yu, CEO of Huawei’s consumer business group, said in the accompanying press release on Tuesday.



Arjun Kharpal
Technology Correspondent

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