



The W980 can store 8,000 songs.

Sony Ericsson adding jobs in RTP

It's looking to beat iPhone in U.S

Frank Norton, Staff Writer

Mobile-phone maker Sony Ericsson is updating its aging portfolio in a bid to out-pizzazz Apple's iPhone as well as handsets from Motorola and Samsung.

The success of the new line, due out in the second half of the year, has ramifications for Research Triangle Park, where the London-based company is expanding its U.S. headquarters to keep pace with expected demand for the phones.

"RTP is continuing to grow to support our broader ambitions in North America," said Najmi Jarwala, president of Sony Ericsson North America.

The company, a joint venture between Sony of Japan and Ericsson AB of Sweden, is adding 100 local employees this year to bring its total here to 850. Most of the new hires will be software and radio-frequency engineers.

Sony Ericsson controls less than 10 percent of the global mobile phone market. Key to building share is the United States.

On Sunday, company officials unveiled the new phones at a trade show in Barcelona. The new models were developed in RTP and other global locations. They are: the W980 Walkman, which can store 8,000 songs and sync with car stereos; a splash-resistant Cybershot C702 camera phone; a high-resolution C902 camera phone; and the X1, which

runs Windows Mobile software with help from a slide-out keyboard. It is Sony Ericsson's answer to the iPhone and its first and only handset to run on Windows.

The company is aiming the new phones at early adopters in the United States, part of a plan to eventually surpass Motorola as the world's third-largest handset maker.

"This has got U.S. all over it," said Karen Morris, head of marketing for Sony Ericsson North America. "You'll see a big investment in the U.S. in terms of branding, especially in the second half of the year." Sony Ericsson officials have given no word yet on cost but said they will aim the new phones at the high end of the market.

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