

RIM skips CES despite big launch coming up

By [Dan Gallagher](#)

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SAN FRANCISCO (MarketWatch) — As thousands of the world's leading tech companies gather in Las Vegas this week for the Consumer Electronics Show, Research In Motion Ltd. is among the more notable absentees.



Reuters

Research In Motion CEO Thorsten Heins talks about BlackBerry 10 at an event on Sept. 25, 2012.

The Canadian smartphone maker [US:RIMM](#) [CA:RIM](#) has no booth on the show floor, and hasn't set any press events or announcements for its flagship BlackBerry business. Instead, the company is quietly preparing for its own event in New York City later this month to launch its new operating system and two new handsets.

"Coming into the launch, we've been looking closely at how to best engage with our own customers," said RIM spokesman Nick Manning, who added that the company still has several executives attending the show and taking meetings with business partners and other parties.

RIM shares closed trading Wednesday down 3.5% at \$11.49.

The stock has surged nearly 75% since late September ahead of the launch.

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A growing number of larger tech firms have been cutting down on their participation at CES — with some skipping it altogether. Apple [AAPL, -0.64%](#) famously avoids CES despite its position as one of the world's largest makers of consumer electronics such as the iPhone, iPad and iPod. Microsoft [MSFT, -0.37%](#) drastically scaled back its presence this year, stating its preference to launch new products at its own events.

But with RIM, the timing is notable. CES takes place less than a month before its official launch of the BlackBerry 10

operating system, designed to be several leaps ahead of its current BB7 platform. The company has scheduled an event in New York City for Jan. 30 to showcase the platform and unveil two new smartphones expected to hit the market over the following weeks.

That launch is considered a make-or-break event for RIM, which has watched its once pioneering BlackBerry smartphone family lose market share to the iPhone and Android devices, such as the Galaxy line from Samsung.

While most analysts are skeptical that RIM can recover its smartphone business with BB10, Mike Walkley of Canaccord said avoiding the crush of CES is a better strategy for the company, “as it’s easy to get lost out here,” referring to the hoards of companies angling for attention from the media at the Vegas confab.

Can the new BlackBerry save RIM?

(1:38)

Research in Motion Ltd. is preparing for an event in New York City in late January, where it will launch new BlackBerry 10 devices. A leaked image of a touch-screen model was published last month by the Vietnamese site Tinh Te. Dan Gallagher reports.

Or, as Ramon Llamas of IDC put it: “A lot of announcements tend to get drowned out among everything else, competing smartphone vendors and consumer electronics companies included. Better to wait when you have the airwaves all to your self.”

And while images of the new BlackBerry touch-screen phone leaked around the gadget blogs in mid-December, companies still look to make a splash with their phone designs — and keep that information from competitors as long as possible.

“They can’t tip their hand before the release, lest the Samsung machine have an exact duplicate out by March,” joked Ed Snyder of Charter Equity, who added that “Without BB10 to talk about, there’s really no reason to show up [at CES], especially given the cash burn situation.”

RIM reported an adjusted net loss of \$114 million for its third fiscal quarter last month, with a boost to operating cash flows coming mainly from amortization and other write-downs.



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