Nokia shows off new flagship smartphones

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Nokia revealed its first smartphones to run the next version of Windows, a big step for a company that has bet its future on an alliance with Microsoft.

Nokia's new flagship phone is the Lumia 920, which runs Windows Phone 8. The lenses on its camera shift to compensate for shaky hands, resulting in sharper images in low light and smoother video capture, Nokia said. It can also be charged without being plugged in; the user just places it on a wireless charging pod.

Nokia also unveiled a cheaper, mid-range phone, the Lumia 820. It doesn't have the special camera lenses, but it sports exchangeable backs so you can switch colors.

The Finnish company revealed the new phones in New York. The American market is a trendsetter, but Nokia has been nearly absent from it in the last few years. One of CEO Stephen Elop's goals is to recapture the attention of U.S. shoppers, many of whom buy iPhones or Android devices instead.

Nokia Corp. launched its first Windows phones late last year under the Lumia brand, as the first fruits of Elop's alliance with Microsoft. Those ran Windows Phone 7 software, which is effectively being orphaned in the new version. The older phones can't be upgraded, nor can they run applications written for Windows Phone 8.

Nokia sold 4 million Lumia phones in the second quarter, a far cry from the 26 million iPhones that Apple Inc. sold. So far, the line hasn't helped Nokia halt its sales decline: its global market share shrunk from the peak of 40 percent in 2008 to 29 percent in 2011, and it is expected to dwindle further this year.

The price and availability date of the new phone weren't immediately available.

Wireless charging has shown up in other phones, most notably the Palm Pre of 2009. But Nokia is making its phone compatible with an emerging standard for wireless charging, called Qi. That means the phone can be charged by third-party devices. At the event, Nokia executive Kevin Shields demonstrated the technology by placing the phone on top of a JBL music docking station, which charged it.

The docking station also played music from the phone, even though it wasn't plugged in. The music was transferred from the Lumia's near-field communications chip, which can connect automatically to other devices at short range. Coupled with the right apps, NFC chips can also be used to pay for things in stores, by tapping the phone to credit-card terminals.

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