

Sans Ericsson

Sony Xperia S is the first product from Sony Mobile Communications after Sony bought out Ericsson's 50 per cent stake in Sony Ericsson. Can Sony be a 'smart'phone without its old partner?

By **Arshiya Khullar**

Over the years, Sony has built a reputation for itself as a premium brand in the consumer electronics business and enjoys a loyal customer base. However, it needs to recreate the same aura in the mobile segment which was earlier run in partnership with the Swedish handset maker, Ericsson. It needs to establish its new brand identity as a mobile player in the minds of the consumers, who till now associate Sony with consumer electronics.

According to Prasad Kumar, Marketing Head, Sony Mobile Communications, India, this transition does not change anything from a consumer's perspective. "From a consumer's perspective, I don't think this transition changes anything. It

only becomes better because they understand Sony as a brand through consumer electronics and they would demand and expect similar experiences from us, which we are ready to deliver. All our partners, distributors, and trade partners continue to be with us," he says.



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Prasad Kumar

Marketing Head,
Sony Mobile Communications, India

'Experience' is the key

According to India Smartphone Outlook for 2012, smartphone sales are expected to grow by approximately 100 per cent and smartphones to form 12 to 14 per cent of the total mobile handset sales in 2012. It is no surprise then that all major players like Apple, Samsung, Nokia, Blackberry and HTC, besides others in the mobile phones space are focussing heavily on this sub segment. Sony is no exception with the launch of three new smartphones in India in the coming few months, namely Xperia P, Xperia U, and Xperia Sola.

Thus, with more domestic and global players expected to join the race, Sony's smartphones will have to offer an entirely differentiated experience to the consumer to be able to establish a foothold.

At first glance, Sony Xperia has a unique and distinctive design. However, it is by offering a wholesome 'Sony' experience to the customer and leveraging its massive store of music, movies and hardware to provide lot more than just a mobile handset.

"The biggest differentiator that we bring to the table with Sony Mobile Communications is that we can integrate our vast bank of software and content that we have developed with our hardware. Experience doesn't involve looking at the phone in isolation. We define an experience as the one that exists beyond a smartphone. Xperia, for instance, has perfect connectivity with Bravia TV, Sony Viao or a Sony tablet, and files and data transfer is smooth and easy. It is also PlayStation certified, so consumers can now have access to PlayStation games on the phone," explains Kumar.

Sony is following a strategy akin to that

