

Title:

Better late than never?

Word Count:

415

Summary:

An opinionated and insightful article exploring Microsoft's belated venture into the portable MP3 market, with the soon-to-be released Zune.

Keywords:

gadgets, gizmos, cell phones

Article Body:

Have you ever sat back and wondered about the corporate decisions made by the executives at Microsoft? Well, I certainly have. It never ceases to amaze me how utterly clueless these people are. The blogosphere has been ablaze this week, with the news that Microsoft is entering the portable MP3 player market. One pundit or another is claiming that the new Microsoft Zune will be the ultimate iPod killer. On the other hand, there are a number of us that have serious doubts about Microsoft's ability to penetrate a market that is already saturated with their competitor's products.

However, one cannot help but wonder why they have waited this long. Apple has been playing in this space for years now, as have dozens of other companies in the consumer electronics industry. I can see the logic behind a wait-and-see approach, but this is a sad case of too little, too late for Microsoft. With the intellectual resources and working capital that Microsoft possesses, I am continually astounded by their lack of initiative in certain market spaces.

So why is a company that is an obvious titan in their chosen industry, so afraid to take chances? Is Bill Gates so preoccupied with his philanthropic work that he has allowed his company to drift off into the sea of irrelevance? When they are making moves, like their recent announcement of the upcoming Zune MP3 player, I seriously have to wonder what they have been doing for the last five years.

I realize that Microsoft has an unlimited marketing budget, but do they honestly think that they have any chance of penetrating the market that Apple so obviously dominates? Perhaps they have developed a novel way to turn back time, but in my humble opinion this may well be a complete waste of time.

For all the naysayers out there, I am aware that the Zune project is comprised of a number of strategic initiatives for Microsoft. Yes, the MP3 player is but one element of a larger corporate strategy in play here. Honestly, I wish Microsoft the best of luck in these new endeavors. Hopefully, they will release a product that will give Apple the motivation to develop their next-generation handheld gadget. AppleBerry, anyone? In this industry, competition drives innovation. Microsoft certainly is competitive, but have they ever been truly innovative? Time will tell. Unless, of course, Bill has found a way to turn back time. Now that would be innovative! You heard it here first, kids.