
Should Your Next Wireless Phone Be a “Smartphone”?

Switching wireless service providers? Tired of that old wireless phone or needing to replace one that isn't working anymore? Now could be the right time to spend a few dollars more and increase your wireless productivity by purchasing a Smartphone.

What is a smartphone? A smartphone is a combo PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) and wireless phone combined into a single device. Smartphones range in price from around \$299.99 to \$599.99 and come in three “main” flavors:

- *Windows-based* - wireless phone/PDA combos based on Microsoft's Pocket PC or Mobile 2003 operating systems. These phones integrate the “native” capabilities of Windows-based handhelds (Pocket version of Outlook for email, contact, task, calendar management, Excel, Word, Explorer and Media Player) as well as a variety of networking options that reach beyond standard wireless connectivity. Many of these phones also include 802.11b/g wireless LAN and Bluetooth networking options as well. Many include memory expansion slots and QWERTY keyboards as well. Windows-based phones come from a variety of manufacturers - HP, Hitachi, Toshiba, Kyocera and Audiovox.
- *Palm-based* - wireless phone/PDA combo based on PalmOne's Palm operating system the Treo 600. This device comes with the standard capability of a Palm OS handheld (contact, calendar, task management and graffiti handwriting entry) as well as email, web browsing and a QWERTY keyboard and SD/MMC memory expansion slot.
- *BlackBerry-based* - wireless phone/PDA combos from Research in Motion, integrating their well known email, contact management, calendaring and task management device with a wireless phone. BlackBerry devices are famous for their thumbwheel navigation but newer models also include QWERTY keyboards.

Smartphones can help you become more productive when you're traveling - around the corner or around the country in a number of ways:

- They combine most of the functions you'll need - phone, email, web browser, word processor/note taker, voice recorder and more into a single, compact device.
- Synchronizing your contact data is a snap using handheld OS's that have synchronized with PC platforms for many years. Slip the phone into the cradle that is USB attached to your computer - and synchronize contacts, calendars, notes, to-do lists and more. If you've tried to do this with a wireless phone, you know that it can be easy or....
- Your smartphone can, in many cases, allow you to travel without a laptop. Just need to do email and web browsing? The capability is there. Just need to take some notes at a meeting? You can do it. Simple spreadsheets - on your phone. Why lug around 8 lbs. when you can carry 8 oz.?
- Keyboards and larger screens enhance the usability of these devices over trying to enter text using a phone keyboard, peering at a small screen (if you aren't 20 years old

anymore, you know what we mean about that small screen!). You'll save a ton of time just writing emails with the Qwerty keyboards and tap screen capabilities of these devices.

- Smartphones also offer the potential to add more functionality through software and hardware "add-ons" to make them more powerful and you even more productive. GPS systems, database software, expense managers and a ton of other applications and add-on devices are available - especially for Palm and Windows-based systems.

Bottom line - if you're in the market for a new wireless phone, spend the extra dollars and get a device that will make you more productive and your business more profitable - a smartphone!

Our current favorites:

Windows-based: HP iPAQ H6315 (T-Mobile)

Palm-based: Treo 600 (multiple providers)

BlackBerry: 7100t (T-Mobile)

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