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Luxurios looks coupled with rich multimedia features
Cowon

Cowon Threatens Apple's US Market

Weapon of use: the S9 Curve

Sometime at the end of August 2008, Cowon, a well known portable multimedia device manufacturer, has announced a future iPod killer going by the name of S9. The device was described as featuring some impressive specs: 3.3-inch AMOLED touch display with 16 million colors and 480 by 272 pixels. Bluetooth 2.0 (with A2DP profile), FM radio, TV out and accelerometer. Everything is powered by a 500MHz dual-core CPU. Most devices sporting these specs would usually provide only a few hours of battery life, but the S9 Curve provides 40 hours of continuous playback.

Of course, the big news today is that Cowon will spread the S9 through the US (starting with December) in order to take on the iPod. The device will firstly come in 8 and 16GB flavors, but Cowon promises a 32GB model in the near future. Although the Korean version of the S9 features a a T-DMB TV Tuner, US versions will be stripped down of it since there is no support for this standard across the North-American continent. As a result, prices should drop and the competition between the iPod Touch entry-level models and the Cowon S9 should prove somewhat interesting.

In my opinion, Cowon has a full range of feature-rich, high quality portable multimedia players, but the truth is that if it wants to take on the iPod, it really needs some powerful marketing strategies. Apple pumped a lot of money into marketing while promoting the early first generation iPods and has continued to do so even today, when the iPod has become more of a symbol.

And this is not all Cowon needs to do. As far as I can tell, the S9 is promoted as a luxury multimedia device, which might not cope with the iPod trend. iPods get along great with teenagers and even past that age group, but it has never been marketed as a luxury gadget. Apple always promoted the iPod as an integral part of one's life style and this is in fact what steered users into viewing the iPod as a day to day device (like a mobile phone if you like).

So Cowon's first priority should be concerned with the Curve's market position. Is it teen targeted? Is it supposed to be fun? I hope the company get it right since the device really looks promising and we could really need an iPod challenger these days.

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