

Nintendo chief rules out Wii price cut for now

Written by Administrator

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TOKYO (AP) -- Nintendo's president said efforts to boost Wii sales ahead of Christmas will focus on limited deals in cooperation with retailers and special packages that add game software or other products to give buyers a feeling of a discount - not an outright price cut. Satoru Iwata's remarks Friday come a day after the Kyoto-based maker of Pokemon games and the DS handheld machine reported its first six-month loss in seven years, hit by a strong yen and falling sales of its mainstay game machines. "Of course, we cannot say it will never happen, but we are not thinking of it for the near future," Iwata said at a Tokyo hotel, when asked about a possible price cut. He acknowledged that those who hadn't already bought a Wii likely needed an additional reason to buy such as a bargain. It now sells for about \$200. The Wii, which comes with a wandlike wireless remote-controller, first went on sale in late 2006. A special edition red Wii to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the birth of Super Mario, one of Nintendo Co.'s trademark games, will also be going on sale to lure interest, according to Iwata. It now comes in white and black.

"Those who really wanted it would have already bought it so now we need to reach those who considered it but never got around to buying it," he said.

Price cuts ahead of year-end shopping for game machines are standard fare. Sony Corp. recently slashed the price of its PlayStation Portable Go to 16,800 yen (\$200) from 26,800 yen (\$330) in Japan, and \$199 from \$250 in the U.S.

Nintendo racked up red ink of 2.01 billion yen (\$24.7 million) during April-September.

But Iwata sounded upbeat about prospects for the 3DS handheld machine, which will deliver 3-D technology without special glasses, although it is not ready to go on sale for Christmas. It goes on sale in February in Japan, and in March in the U.S. and Europe.

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The machine will also miss New Year's, a time when toymakers can expect to boost sales because of cash gifts children get in Japan.

Nintendo is expecting to sell 23.5 million DS machines, including 3DS, and 17.5 million Wii consoles in the fiscal year ending March 2011.

Iwata believes the appeal of the 3DS is best understood when people try it out and so events are being planned around the world to provide that opportunity for potential buyers.

He said the 3DS is likely to also attract consumers as a portable player for 3-D movies.

TVs that show 3-D imagery have already gone on sale but they are attracting more attention than buyers, partly because of their relatively expensive prices, such as about 100,000 yen (\$1,000), or more.

The 3DS will cost 25,000 yen (\$300) in Japan. Overseas prices have not been announced.

"Hopes are high for the 3DS as the first device that can show 3-D movies to reach a mass market," Iwata said.