

Nextbit to launch phone distance away from marketplace crowd

August 2 2015, by Nancy Owano



Mobile software startup Nextbit is to launch its first smartphone. The company CEO said that Foxconn is manufacturing the smartphones, according to *Engadget*. That means the company is moving in a new hardware direction as well, and last month was a buzz-filled wrap about what all this might mean—in the absence of any firm details.

In fact, the looming question is why so much interest in a smartphone launch if it's not a big-deal marketing campaign from a major vendor, and within a dizzying marketplace crammed with competitive vendors, all touting special features?

Engadget's Richard Lai reported, "We caught up with Nextbit CEO Tom Moss at Hong Kong's RISE conference." *Engadget* learned a few things that tease out even more interest in what Nexbit might be up to. They learned that (1) the design will 'easily [stand](#) out' from the crowd; (2) the phone would be addressing pain points; (3) The company's focus is on the cloud for improved experience; (4) Nextbit's first phone won't be headed to a US carrier.

That still makes the details scoreboard quite low. Ina Fried in *Re/code* said Nextbit is [aiming](#) for a provocative design. She got that from Scott Croyle, who joined Nextbit last year. "We don't have to be for everybody," he told Fried.

Also, she said Nextbit looks to leverage a bunch of the cloud-based storage technologies it previously showcased

The company plans to move away from its past strategy, which was to offer its services for use on other companies' devices. "We're really shifting the focus to a controlled experience," CEO Tom Moss said in *Re/code*. "We don't want to do piecemeal services anymore.

"It will be interesting to see where Nextbit sees room in the crowded [smartphone market](#)," said Fried.

"Whatever it does," said Ryan Whitwam in *Android Police*, "it'll have to be good to [carve](#) out space in the market with Samsung, LG, Motorola, and others already offering polished flagship devices."

With all those teasers, the Nextbit site itself spells suspended animation. "It's time for a reboot," said the near-empty home page. The company described itself as a "small band of rebels who want to free people from the limits of today's mobile technology." One thing is for certain; its team, in work experience, has spent more than half a minute on smartphones.

CEO Moss had once served as worldwide head of business development and partnerships for Android at Google. Mike Chan, CTO, was a software engineer working on Android from version 1.0 through 3.0 (Honeycomb). Scott Croyle, chief product officer, was once SVP of design and user experience at HTC. He had led the team that launched several phones including the Evo.

The company's Twitter comment is that "Our site's a bit airy on purpose. We can't wait to [share](#) what's next."

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