

### *Choosing a topic*

The failure of the BlackBerry

### *Coming up with a title*

Everyone Had to Have One

### *Big picture questions to ponder*

- What about the BlackBerry made it popular in the first place?
- What changed about the way people perceived the BlackBerry?
- Were there changes BlackBerry could have made in order to avoid failing?
- What were changes BlackBerry could have made to make their product better than what is on the market?

### *Executive summary*

Shares in the Canadian maker of BlackBerry smartphones peaked in August of 2007, at two hundred and thirty-six dollars. Seven months earlier, in January, Apple had introduced the iPhone at San Francisco's Moscone Center. Executives at BlackBerry decided to let Apple focus on the general-use smartphone market, while it would continue selling BlackBerry products to business and government customers that bought the devices for employees.

Six years later, BlackBerry's stock is worth just over ten dollars a share, and in 2013 announced that it has formed a "special committee" to explore ways to sell the company or form a joint venture with another business, among other options. Basically it was trying to salvage the company.

### *What or who is your case study about (telling the story)*

Similar to Blockbuster video, the BlackBerry company is a case of recognizing the changing market a little too late, even being stubborn in failing to recognize that the market was changing. It was the story of the Innovator's Dilemma. Disruptive innovation describes a process by which

a product or service takes root initially in simple applications at the bottom of a market and then relentlessly moves up the market, eventually displacing established competitors.

When the iPhone came out. The executives at BlackBerry couldn't see what the fuss was all about. They didn't believe business people wanted a touch screen -- and they were the market for smartphones. They knew people were very addicted to their product and loved the keyboard. They were confident in their product and why not. They invented the market and were the leader. First incumbents get disrupted by new technologies not because they are unaware of them...but because they rationally choose to ignore them." The executives at BlackBerry did just that.

#### *Problems that were faced*

- Slow to react to market changes
- Bad designs and bizarre names
- BlackBerry was never really cool
- Corporate slowdown
- Apple and Android exploded

#### *Constraints of the case*

- Limited market (already two major players, Apple and Android)
- Consumer focus has changed so the features need to as well
- Cannot make a carbon copy of what is already out there, what will make the BlackBerry stand out
- Must use technology from 2013 when BlackBerry began to fail

#### *Research that supports or refutes the case*

Because technology is typically a little more recent, it can be difficult to find a single article or report that students can use to guide them. You might have to put together a series of articles that each paint a different part of the entire case.

The Fatal Mistake that Doomed BlackBerry

<http://business.time.com/2013/09/24/the-fatal-mistake-that-doomed-blackberry/>

The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) of BlackBerry

<https://digit.hbs.org/submission/the-rise-and-fall-and-rise-again-of-blackberry/>

6 Reasons BlackBerry Crumbled in the SmartPhone Market

<https://www.theinquirer.net/inquirer/feature/2473044/6-reasons-blackberry-crumbled-in-the-smartphone-market>

How BlackBerry Blew It – the Inside Story

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/the-inside-story-of-why-blackberry-is-failing/article14563602/>

*Outcome of the actual case for discussion*

BlackBerry's business has increasingly relied on licensing. The unit is responsible for *supporting* handsets and all other hardware. BlackBerry has largely completed its move to a licensing-only model. In other words, it has gone from hardware to software.

BlackBerry is no longer making any hardware or manufacturing any devices. The company is still selling some phones, but only those that were already built. You can no longer buy a new BlackBerry from BlackBerry.

BlackBerry products are still being made by their licensees though and in 2019 released the BlackBerry Key2.

For an example of how you could use technology to present the group's findings for this particular case, go to <https://www.slideshare.net/ckhattar/blackberry-case-study-22696609>.