

2.4GHz cordless phones: Broad user base buoys established line

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Competition from other telecoms products and services is cause for little concern, but makers believe industry still sustainable.

China suppliers of cordless phones have seen export volume drop continuously since 2005. This is due to the increasing use of VoIP and mobile phones worldwide, and relatively slow demand for fixed phone lines or landlines.

The decline is expected to continue. Suppliers, however, said there is a large and established user base of public switched telephone networks that can sustain the product line for at least 5 more years. They also believe that the telecom market is big enough for cordless phones to thrive together with their more popular counterparts.

In 2008, China suppliers produced approximately 60 million cordless phones, accounting for more than 90 percent of global output.

Generally, China-made cordless phones use the 900MHz and 1.9, 2.4, and 5.8GHz bands. Some models with lower technology utilize the 27MHz and 43 to 50MHz bands.

Nearly all new 900MHz designs are inexpensive bare-bones analog models. Digital features such as direct-sequence spread spectrum and frequency-hopping spread spectrum that minimize signal interference are usually integrated in units using the higher frequencies.

In recent years, the 900MHz and 2.4GHz bands have been used by other devices, including baby monitors and microwave ovens, and Bluetooth-and Wi-Fi-enabled products. This has caused occasional signal interference, resulting in inefficient operation, especially for gadgets that fall under the telecommunications category.

Most countries, however, have allocated the 1.9GHz frequency for voice telecommunications. The band is reserved for the DECT standard that avoids interference issues increasingly seen in the unlicensed 900MHz, and 2.4 and 5.8GHz frequencies.

To extend battery life, some models use the 5.8GHz band when transmitting from the base station to the phone. A lower frequency, usually 2.4GHz or 900MHz, is adopted for signals transmitted from the phone to the base station.

Product specifications

Many cordless phone models from China support up to four base stations and simultaneous use of several handsets. This allows for multiple voice paths that support three-way conference calls between bases.

Although analog models are still available, digital units dominate production. The latter have the advantage of a longer

transmission range and being integrated with frequency hopping technologies that combat signal interference. Some digital models also transmit in encrypted signals for additional security.

The typical transmission range for high-end cordless phones is about 30m. The effective operating distance is shorter for less expensive units.

Entry-level models usually have a monochrome screen and are priced between \$12 and \$20. They have caller ID and call waiting functions. Units in this price range support up to four handsets and a phonebook with 90 entries.

Midrange DECT phones from \$21 to \$35 have a 1.5in color display. They support as many as six handsets, and are generally designed with a SIM card reader, 90 to 200-entry phonebook, and calculator. Some models feature an answering machine or selectable screen wallpaper function.

High-end models are generally priced between \$36 and \$70 and have a 1.8in color TFT LCD. They support a SIM card, SMS and polyphonic ringtones. Some models can also serve as VoIP handsets.

A few companies, including Desay Electronics (Huizhou) Co. Ltd, are trying to reinvigorate the line through product upgrades. The supplier offers a model with a base station that also functions as an 8in digital photo frame.

Desay is also developing a model that directly connects to a PC for ringtone and image downloads.

Supplier capability

There are more than 20 China suppliers of cordless phones. Most are based in Shenzhen and Dongguan in Guangdong province. Some operate in Guangzhou, Zhuhai and Zhongshan also in Guangdong, and in Xiamen, Fujian province.

The major enterprises include TCL Communication Equipment Huizhou Co. Ltd, Desay and Shenzhen Gaoxingqi Technology Co. Ltd. These suppliers have the R&D capability to keep up with the latest trends in the cordless phone industry. They also have solid reputations in both the electronics and telecom fields, and are ready for mass production.

TCL's cordless phone sales account for about 25 percent of revenue. More than 40 percent of the line is shipped overseas on an ODM and OBM basis.

The company has more than 2,000 employees, with 100 involved in R&D, and can manufacture 700,000 cordless phones a month. Its clients include Taiwan Telecom.

TCL conducts SMT, assembly and packaging in-house. The supplier invests 4 percent of revenue in R&D and plans to release five or six new cordless phone models by year-end. Its products meet CE and FCC requirements, and are RoHS-compliant.

Desay has more than 30 models of cordless phones. The product line accounts for 65 percent of the company's revenue. The supplier ships all models to Europe and the US. Its clients include General Electric. Desay performs almost all manufacturing processes in-house, and invests 5 percent of revenue in product development.

The company, which has a capacity of up to 700,000 cordless phones a month, sources chipsets from National Semiconductor and DSPG. It plans to release more DECT, 2.4 and 5.8GHz cordless phones.

At Shenzhen Gaoxingi, cordless phone sales represent 10 percent of revenue. All output is shipped to Europe. Ninety percent is under ODM and OEM business.

Shenzhen Gaoxingi performs all production processes in-house using automated SMT lines, and plastic injection and silk-screening machines. The supplier outsources ICs but makes its own RF modules. It can produce up to 70,000 cordless phones a month.

The company plans to release more DECT and combo phones at a rate of two new models per month. Products pass CE and RoHS requirements.

This article "2.4GHz cordless phones: Broad user base buoys established line" is originally posted in Global Sources.

Contact suppliers in this article

Cheung Hung Electronics Company

RTX Consumer Products Hong Kong Ltd.

Shenzhen Gaoxingi Technology Co Ltd

Telewell Electric Co. Ltd

TCL Communication (Int'l) Ltd

Note: All price quotes in this report are in US dollars unless otherwise specified. FOB prices were provided by the companies interviewed only as reference prices at the time of interview and may have changed.

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var finalURL = newURL;
if (prodsrch == "" || prodsrch == "Find China suppliers and products here...")
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{ window.location = finalURL; }
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function write_blank() {document.singleSearchbox3.query.value="";}
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