

Will the Sanyo Brand Disappear?

Written by Bob Snyder
06. 12. 2011



In America, rAVe reports Panasonic plans to eliminate the Sanyo brand by April 1st, 2012. rAVe learned Panasonic will absorb the Sanyo products that aren't redundant, so you'll see Sanyo's meeting room line of projectors take on the Panasonic badge in 2012. As most of Sanyo's sales and marketing channels become redundant, they will be eliminated. For the most part, Sanyo folks will need to find new jobs.

Recent record-losses at Panasonic suggest drastic measures are the order of the day.

Panasonic had already been absorbing some of the Sanyo technology into their own products throughout 2012, and divesting unwanted Sanyo operations (like washing machines.).

But is this news only for the American market? We have contacted Panasonic and were told, "Panasonic will unify its brand names to Panasonic in April 2012. There may be, however, regions and products where Sanyo brand will remain for the time being from the customer relation and cost perspective."

That's right: **regions and products...**

And that makes sense: it costs money to maintain brands and if you are saving costs, you don't throw out anything that's making money. Any country (or a product range within a country) may be an exception. *(Oddly enough those last vestiges of Sanyo may finally be terminated only when business is great and Panasonic can afford to converge.)*

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Will this be the end of Sanyo brand? April 1st will be an unpleasant April Fool's joke for a historic brand, but it might not be the death of the brand. Not if Panasonic really wants to maximize their intellectual property and make money. Established brands don't die...they tend to resonate for decades. In electronics, we see discarded brands adopted by entrepreneurs and used as cost-effective mechanisms of market entry. Even if Panasonic doesn't need a Sanyo brand, there are others that will pay for its use—especially in non-competitive areas. A known brand can be easily bent but hardly broken.

Ironically Sanyo was founded by the brother-in-law of Panasonic founder, Konosuke Matsushita. A former employee of Matsushita, the brother-in-law borrowed an unused Matsushita plant in 1947. He then built up Sanyo and incorporated in 1950. In 1952 Sanyo made Japan's first plastic radio and in 1954 Japan's first pulsator-type washing machine. In 2008, Panasonic purchased a majority stake in Sanyo for just under \$5 billion, and then purchased the rest of the company in 2010—presumably for the Sanyo effort in solar energy.

The company's brand name, **Sanyo**, means three oceans in Japanese, referring to the founder's ambition to sell their products worldwide, across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. Sanyo brand may not yet be sunk, but its Panasonic product that will be shipping for now.

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