

ANALYZING THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE: STRATEGIC INSIGHTS INTO HUAWEI'S MAJOR RIVALS

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Huawei's evolution from a Chinese telecommunications startup in 1987 to a global giant operating in over 170 countries has significantly reshaped the tech industry. As of 2024, the company leads the global 5G infrastructure market and ranks among the top smartphone vendors worldwide. However, its expansion has encountered fierce competition from established Western and Asian firms vying for market share in high-growth segments.

The following scientists have devoted their scientific works to the study of the above-mentioned issues: Liu, Y., & Wang, S. (2019), Xu, B. (2019). Zhang, X. (2020) and others.

Purpose and objectives of the study. The task is to conduct a competitive landscape analysis: strategic analysis of huawei's main competitors.

In telecommunications infrastructure, Huawei faces intense competition from Sweden's Ericsson and Finland's Nokia. Together with Huawei, these companies dominate the global 5G market, with the top five vendors controlling approximately 92% of the share. Ericsson's competitive advantage lies in its strong brand reputation in Western markets and compliance with strict regulatory standards. Unlike Huawei, which has faced restrictions in countries like the U.S., Australia, and the UK over security concerns, Ericsson has positioned itself as a "trusted" alternative. In 2023, Ericsson secured a \$1.8 billion contract with AT&T to expand its 5G network-a deal Huawei was effectively barred from competing. Ericsson also emphasizes sustainability, claiming its 5G equipment uses 30% less energy than competitors' offerings, appealing to clients aiming to reduce carbon footprints.

Nokia, meanwhile, has focused on open radio access network (RAN) technology as its strategic differentiator. This approach allows network operators to combine components from different vendors, reducing reliance on single suppliers. Nokia has gained traction with this strategy in European markets, where there is growing political pressure to reduce dependence on Chinese technology. In 2024, Nokia secured several major contracts in Europe, including a significant deal with Vodafone to deploy open RAN solutions in Germany and Spain.

Huawei's response has focused on innovation in camera technology and its HarmonyOS ecosystem. However, limited access to Google Mobile Services (GMS) due to U.S. sanctions has hurt sales in Western markets. To counter this, Huawei has developed its own Mobile Services (HMS) and targeted emerging markets with mid-range models like the Nova series, capturing 15% of India's mid-range market.

In enterprise technology, Cisco remains Huawei's primary rival, particularly in networking and cybersecurity. Cisco's competitive advantage lies in its deep cybersecurity expertise and established relationships with large enterprises. In 2023, Cisco secured a \$500 million contract with JPMorgan Chase to upgrade its global networking and cybersecurity systems (Cisco snaps up open-source networking and security start-up, 2023)..

Huawei's strategy to challenge Cisco focuses on cost and customization. Huawei's enterprise networking equipment is typically 20–30% cheaper, appealing to SMEs and emerging-market corporations. In 2024, Huawei partnered with BYD to build a customized industrial network for its factories, enabling real-time data transmission between production lines. However, Cisco has responded by launching more affordable product lines for SMEs, such as its Cisco Business series, which offers simplified networking solutions at lower prices.

Rivals have capitalized on these challenges. Ericsson and Nokia have gained market share in Western countries where Huawei faces restrictions. Samsung and TSMC have reduced chip supplies to Huawei under U.S. pressure, affecting Huawei's smartphone production capacity. Meanwhile, Huawei has accelerated investments in 6G research to maintain technological leadership. At the 2024 Global 6G Development

Conference, Huawei showcased breakthroughs in space-ground integrated communication technology, including low-orbit satellite direct connection capabilities. Looking forward, the 5G infrastructure market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 41.6% from 2025 to 2032, reaching \$540.34 billion (Fortune Business Insights, 2025). Asia Pacific dominated this market with 54.02% share in 2024, highlighting the importance of regional strategies for both Huawei and its rivals.

Huawei's competitive landscape is defined by rivals with distinct strengths: Ericsson and Nokia in telecommunications infrastructure, Samsung and Apple in premium consumer electronics, Xiaomi and OPPO in mid-range markets, and Cisco in enterprise technology. Each competitor has adapted its strategy to exploit Huawei's vulnerabilities, particularly its limited access to Western markets due to sanctions. For Huawei to maintain growth, it must continue leveraging core strengths in R&D, cost competitiveness, and emerging market dominance. However, addressing key challenges is crucial: expanding HMS to compete with Apple and Samsung's ecosystems, building trust in Western markets, and accelerating innovation in 6G and AI. The global tech industry's evolution will be shaped by the rivalry between Huawei and its competitors. As 6G rollouts begin and AI integrates further into devices and infrastructure, the company that balances innovation, cost, and trust will emerge as the leader. Huawei's rivals remain formidable, and the competitive landscape will continue shifting-driven by technology, regulation, and consumer demand.

References:

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