

Samsung donates its phones to quarantined coronavirus patients

Electronics giant says it's also helping retool factories that produce face masks.

Like many tech companies, Samsung is pitching in to fight the novel coronavirus. In addition to providing funding and medical supplies such as hygiene kits and face masks, the Korean electronics giant is also donating the hardware its most known for: smartphones and tablets.

"We are donating smartphones to patients in quarantine to help them keep in touch with their families and friends, as well as air purifiers and other appliances to hospitals and quarantine centers," Samsung said in a statement late Wednesday. "We are also donating tablets to educational institutions so that children can continue to learn outside of the classroom."

Samsung said it's donated \$29 million in funding and goods to local governments and communities battling the respiratory virus that causes COVID-19.

The spread of the coronavirus is taking a toll on the global technology industry, with companies shuttering stores and offices, limiting travel, and bracing for disruptions to an integrated worldwide supply chain.



Samsung -- the world's biggest phone manufacturer -- briefly shut down a factory in South Korea due to the coronavirus, and it's temporarily shuttered its stores. It said it's also mandated health screenings and temperature checks for employees prior to entry to company facilities and has implemented regular deep cleaning.

Samsung said its engineering teams have been working with other companies in Korea to produce face masks, helping increase production by improving factory layouts and manufacturing processes. The company said it's also creating molds used in the production of face masks.

"Because of our efforts, one of the companies was able to more than double its daily production," Samsung said.

The company also said it's also extending the date on repair services that are unavailable due to coronavirus restrictions.

Like other phone manufacturers, Samsung has suffered from a general weakness in the market, due largely to rising phone prices and consumers upgrading less often. However, the company's mobile business was a bright spot for the company last quarter, increasing the department's operating profit by 67%, while the company's overall operating profit declined by 34%.

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