



Trudeau Believes BlackBerry Ltd. Can Make the Jump to Autonomous Vehicles: Do You?

Description

The recent announcement of **BlackBerry Ltd.'s** ([TSX:BB](#))(NASDAQ:BBRY) new autonomous driving research centre has resulted in renewed interest in the Canadian technology company, which saw its stock price tumble another 20% this year (down more than 95% from its 2007 high).

The company has switched its focus from being a hardware-focused company to software creation and managing its mobile device security platforms. The addition of developing advanced driver assistance and autonomous-driving software is a welcome surprise for a company with few positive announcements of late.

The launch

BlackBerry is expected to formally launch the research centre on Monday—a launch Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to attend, according to the prime minister's office. The company is expected to announce its intention to focus on developing its QNX software to allow for functionality with sensors, cameras, and other components necessary for autonomous vehicles.

By breaking into the autonomous vehicle market, BlackBerry is banking on the security and robustness of its trademark QNX software to be able to integrate well with many of the technologies being explored by market leaders in this space. As such, BlackBerry is attempting to be a “trusty sidekick” to the existing “superhero” developers of autonomous driving vehicles, such as **Ford Motor Company**.

Why this launch matters

The Ontario government is one of the first provincial governments that have allowed for the testing of autonomous driving technology. The government of Ontario announced in November its intention to allow BlackBerry and Ford to test Lincoln vehicles on Ontario roads. The software is expected to support a fleet of cars slated for an autonomous car-sharing fleet, which is expected to be launched by 2021.

Having the federal and provincial government on board can't be understated for BlackBerry. The

announcement of Prime Minister Trudeau's appearance at the launch is another positive sign for the company in its bid toward becoming profitable. The company's CEO John Chen has announced that 2016 should be a profitable year for BlackBerry—something investors have been waiting to hear for some time.

If the company intends to maintain its profitability moving forward, it will need to continue to maintain positive relationships with the Ontario and Canadian governments and prove it can execute its development of QNX to be a key market participant in autonomous vehicles.

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