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San Diegans line up, camp out to be 'first' iPhone 4 owners

Posted By [eric.yates](#) On June 24, 2010 @ 12:24 pm In [Business](#), [Local News](#) | [No Comments](#)

I arrived at the Carlsbad Apple Store before 5 a.m. Thursday morning, to pick up my reserved iPhone 4 when it officially launched at 7 a.m. I would have been the first person in line for Apple's latest "gotta have" product had I only arrived the previous day and camped out overnight, in front of the store.

The honor of being first in line at the Carlsbad Apple Store goes to James Back, a Marine stationed at Camp Pendleton. He put in his leave papers last month specifically so he could wait in line to get the new iPhone 4. This is his first time waiting in line for a new product from Apple. Back was lucky that it only took him three attempts, last week, to pre-order his iPhone despite Apple's and AT&T's servers being completely overwhelmed by the demand for this new product.

Back arrived before 3:30 p.m. Wednesday afternoon to stake his claim at the Apple Store — more than 15 hours before the iPhone 4 was released to purchase. Why would someone camp out, overnight, to get the new iPhone? Obviously, to be the first person with the new gadget. But, for him it was more than just being first.

Back, who still uses the original iPhone that was introduced three years ago, said, "It's a huge jump from what I have. I've been waiting for the next great thing and this is it." He's eager to move from the poky EDGE data network on his first generation iPhone to AT&T's speedier 3G system.

James Back was the first in line to pick up his iPhone 4



[1]

Giggity.



[2]

What makes Apple so special to Back?

"It's mostly the user experience, just the ease of use and the joy that you get from it," he said.

Back, who specializes in gathering intelligence for the military, put his skills to good use when he overheard Apple employees saying that they had 800 phones reserved for customers who pre-ordered them for pick up at the Carlsbad Apple Store. But, by Wednesday evening, even the Apple employees hadn't yet counted how many iPhones they had for customers waiting on a separate, first-come, first-serve, line.

Thursday marks the first day that you can pick up the new iPhone 4 from the Apple Retail Store. However, there were so many new iPhones pre-ordered for direct delivery to customer's homes that it was impossible for FedEx to make all the deliveries in a single day. New iPhones began unexpectedly showing up on doorsteps two days ago to ensure that all pre-ordered phones were delivered no later than today.

How would you feel if you took off a couple days from work in order to be the first person to get the new iPhone, only to find out that you're two days too late? With a smile, Back said, "I'm a little upset about that." Wednesday afternoon, Back received a text message from a friend who already had his new iPhone delivered. Back joked that he would have stayed at home had he known it was possible to get the iPhone early.

It may have been a long, uncomfortable, night for most of the people who slept on the sidewalk, but they made the best of it by eating pizza and watching movies projected on the wall of the store. No matter how sleepy they were, everyone was wide-awake well before the store opened. At 7 a.m., the Apple employees cheered on the crowd as they welcomed the first customers into the store.

Some San Diegans, who received their iPhones early were (ahem) "kind" enough to drop by the Carlsbad Apple Store, Wednesday, to show off their new gadget to everyone waiting in line. But, having the phone delivered to your doorstep is just not the same experience as camping out with a crowd. It's the difference between listening to a song on the radio and hearing it, live, at a concert. Everyone wants to be a part of something that's bigger than they are.

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[1] Image: http://www.sdn.com/sandiego/2010-06-24/local-county-news/san-diegans-line-up-camp-out-to-be-first-iphone-4-owners/attachment/iphone4_pstam

[2] Image: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyQwa2YctiE>

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