iPhone 5 Lines 83% Longer Than Lines For iPhone 4S

Far more people waited in line for the iPhone 5 [1] launch Friday than waited for the release of the iPhone 4S [2] last year, at least according to a new research note from top Apple [3] analyst Gene Munster.

Munster's firm Piper Jaffray counted the number of people waiting in line for the iPhone at several Apple stores, including the flagship 5th Avenue store in New York, and found that the average line was 83% longer this year than for the iPhone 4S launch.

In case you're curious, Munster found there were 775 people in line at Apple's 5th Avenue location when the store opened at 8 a.m. ET, up from 460 people the year before. Perhaps last year's rain on launch day dampened the numbers, but it's worth pointing out that Apple received twice as many pre-orders for the iPhone 5 [4] in the first 24 hours as it did for the iPhone 4S as well.

Munster has been counting heads waiting in lines at every iPhone launch since the iPhone 3G hit stores in 2008, and based on the latest count, he believes demand for the iPhone 5 is greater than any other iPhone launch to date.

Munster now predicts that Apple will end up selling 8 million iPhone 5?s this weekend, in line with his previous estimates of 6 to 10 million in the first weekend. Beyond that, he is sticking with his previous estimate that Apple will sell 49 million iPhone 5s in the next fiscal quarter.

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