Walkman Encyclopedia Article

Walkman

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When audiocassette s replaced eight-track tapes as the preferred tape format of consumers in the 1970s, small cassette recorders with built-in speakers (and poor monophonic audio quality) were already on the market. However, high-quality mobile stereo systems with headphones were not yet available.

In 1979 Akio Morita (1920?-), president of Sony Corporation, created a pocket-sized cassette player using the miniaturized electronics pioneered, in part, by his own company. This pocket-sized player, dubbed the " Walkman," featured tiny motors and a miniature circuit board housed in a plastic casing, and equipped with lightweight headphones which allowed listeners almost unlimited portability. The Walkman proved so popular that other varieties appeared, including models with AM-FM radios, recording capability, and, recently, models capable of playing compact disks.