

Main contributors to India's fast growing mobile market in 2009

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India, one of the fastest growing communications markets in the world, has crossed the half a billion mobile subscribers in 2009 to close the year with nearly 522million SIM cards users according to Dataxis Intelligence latest updates. This represents an outstanding increase of 54% in just a year bringing the country's penetration rate to about 45% of the population.

The question here is who are the key drivers of this impressive double-digit growth observed in India's mobile market during 2009?

To answer this question, we analyzed quarterly net additions during 2009 for the largest market players as shown in the chart below and the results are quite instructive. For the whole year Bharti Airtel and Reliance Communications – the two largest operators- gained more customers than any other cellco, by taking each up to 18% of the total 183 million newcomers, However, on a quarterly basis, the two giants were dwarfed by Tata Communications performance in the third and fourth quarter of 2009, as the alternative operator added more than 20 million customers to its base in the second half, thus becoming the fifth largest market player ahead of Idea cellular in a highly competitive environment.

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