

## Company In-Depth

2 January 2007 | 11 pages

# Reliance Communications (RLCM.BO)

## Buy: No Guts, No Glory

Rating change   
Target price change   
Estimate change

- Increasing estimates and target price** — Despite the constraints imposed by CDMA, subscriber adds have picked up in 2H FY07, but at the cost of ARPU – as evident in 2Q FY07 KPIs. Our estimates for FY07-09 have been raised 4-6% to reflect accelerating subscriber adds and increased confidence in the wholesale voice business.
- Hutch Essar (HE) acquisition could resolve many issues** — HE's assets fit in well with Reliance's increasingly unambiguous pro-GSM stance. Not only would it take RCOM to leadership position, but it would also obviate the potentially risky GSM overlay option and the associated spectrum constraints. Although potential cost benefits exist, which justify some control premium, risk of overpayment exists.
- What if HE goes to another party** — HE's acquisition by, say, Vodafone, would mean RCOM would have to revert to GSM overlay, the economics of which depend on deals with vendors and the extent of infrastructure sharing. Parallel capex on both networks does create a risk of sub-optimality. Given RCOM's premium valuations, such an event could pose some downside risk.
- Reiterating our Buy/Medium Risk rating** — We raise our target price for RCOM to Rs570 from Rs430 based on an EV/EBITDA of 11.2x FY09E, the imputed multiple at our DCF-based target price for Bharti. Potential clear leadership option associated with the Hutch opportunity and the lack of foreign headroom in Bharti could mean RCOM closely tracking Bharti's valuations.

<b>Buy/Medium Risk</b>	<b>1M</b>
Price (02 Jan 07)	Rs469.90
Target price	Rs570.00
	<i>from Rs430.00</i>
Expected share price return	21.3%
Expected dividend yield	0.4%
<b>Expected total return</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
Market Cap	Rs960,765M
	US\$21,779M

### Price Performance (RIC: RLCM.BO, BB: RCOM IN)



See page 9 for Analyst Certification and important disclosures.

Figure 1. Statistical Abstract

	Net Profit (RS. Mils)	P/E (x)	EV/EBITDA (x)	EBITDA (RS. Mils)
2006P	4,823	199.2	40.1	24,786
2007E	28,085	34.2	18.1	57,231
2008E	42,431	22.6	12.6	82,645
2009E	58,802	16.3	9.5	108,215

Source: Citigroup Investment Research estimates

Figure 2. Earnings Estimate Revision

	Net Profit	EPS	% Change	EBITDA
FY07E	28,085	13.7	5.3	57,231
<i>Old</i>	<i>26,662</i>	<i>13.0</i>		<i>56,826</i>
FY08E	42,431	20.8	5.9	82,645
<i>Old</i>	<i>40,060</i>	<i>19.6</i>		<i>79,870</i>
FY09E	58,802	28.8	4.3	108,215
<i>Old</i>	<i>56,375</i>	<i>27.57</i>		<i>103,828</i>

Source: Citigroup Investment Research estimates

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<sup>1</sup>Citigroup Global Market India Private Limited; <sup>2</sup>Citigroup Global Markets Asia

Fiscal year end 31-Mar	2005	2006	2007E	2008E	2009E
<b>Valuation Ratios</b>					
P/E adjusted (x)	na	199.2	34.2	22.6	16.3
EV/EBITDA adjusted (x)	na	na	18.1	12.8	9.7
P/BV (x)	na	8.2	6.8	5.4	4.2
Dividend yield (%)	na	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.9
<b>Per Share Data (Rs)</b>					
EPS adjusted	na	2.36	13.74	20.75	28.76
EPS reported	na	2.36	13.74	20.75	28.76
BVPS	na	57.48	68.96	86.34	110.60
DPS	na	0.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
<b>Profit &amp; Loss (RsM)</b>					
Net sales	na	112,884	154,280	202,235	242,295
Operating expenses	na	-105,085	-120,976	-150,086	-171,296
<b>EBIT</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>7,799</b>	<b>33,304</b>	<b>52,148</b>	<b>70,999</b>
Net interest expense	na	-2,649	-3,426	-5,003	-4,179
Non-operating/exceptionals	na	0	0	0	0
<b>Pre-tax profit</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>29,878</b>	<b>47,146</b>	<b>66,820</b>
Tax	na	-327	-1,793	-4,715	-8,018
Extraord./Min.Int./Pref.div.	na	0	0	0	0
<b>Reported net income</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>4,823</b>	<b>28,085</b>	<b>42,431</b>	<b>58,802</b>
Adjusted earnings	na	4,823	28,085	42,431	58,802
Adjusted EBITDA	na	24,786	57,231	82,645	108,215
<b>Growth Rates (%)</b>					
Sales	na	na	36.7	31.1	19.8
EBIT adjusted	na	na	327.0	56.6	36.1
EBITDA adjusted	na	na	130.9	44.4	30.9
EPS adjusted	na	na	482.3	51.1	38.6
<b>Cash Flow (RsM)</b>					
<b>Operating cash flow</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>21,810</b>	<b>33,796</b>	<b>85,767</b>	<b>103,158</b>
Depreciation/amortization	na	16,987	23,927	30,497	37,216
Net working capital	na	0	-21,643	7,836	2,962
<b>Investing cash flow</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-69,351</b>	<b>-75,336</b>	<b>-73,967</b>
Capital expenditure	na	0	-69,351	-75,336	-73,967
Acquisitions/disposals	na	0	0	0	0
<b>Financing cash flow</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,474</b>	<b>-13,903</b>	<b>-15,380</b>
Borrowings	na	0	22,500	-2,000	-2,000
Dividends paid	na	0	-4,600	-6,901	-9,201
<b>Change in cash</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>21,810</b>	<b>-21,082</b>	<b>-3,472</b>	<b>13,812</b>
<b>Balance Sheet (RsM)</b>					
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>319,738</b>	<b>349,262</b>	<b>399,699</b>	<b>458,168</b>
Cash & cash equivalent	na	60,038	38,956	35,484	49,296
Accounts receivable	na	16,807	19,285	19,662	20,191
Net fixed assets	na	214,263	259,687	304,526	341,278
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>202,223</b>	<b>208,262</b>	<b>223,168</b>	<b>232,036</b>
Accounts payable	na	89,956	72,786	89,692	100,560
Total Debt	na	92,976	115,476	113,476	111,476
<b>Shareholders' funds</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>117,515</b>	<b>141,000</b>	<b>176,531</b>	<b>226,132</b>
<b>Profitability/Solvency Ratios (%)</b>					
EBITDA margin adjusted	na	22.0	37.1	40.9	44.7
ROE adjusted	na	na	21.7	26.7	29.2
ROIC adjusted	na	na	15.5	18.5	21.6
Net debt to equity	na	28.0	54.3	44.2	27.5
Total debt to capital	na	44.2	45.0	39.1	33.0

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## Hutch could be master stroke, otherwise revert to Plan A

Complementary footprint and RCOM's increasingly unequivocal pro-GSM stance make HE an ideal acquisition candidate for RCOM. While a control premium is likely, we believe that it may be worth it for RCOM given the benefits that can be derived.

- Time to market for GSM rollout would be shortened considerably.
- RCOM + Hutch would have a 36.8% market share of subscribers if the acquisition went through, much ahead of Bharti's 22.0% to date. While Indian wireless operators typically have EBITDA margins in the mid-30s irrespective of scale, we expect some synergies in operating costs that can be extracted, thus justifying the premium over current market valuations. For example, a control premium of say US\$2-3bn could be justified if RCOM can extract savings of about ~US\$200m (based on the current 12-month forward EV/EBITDA of 12.5x), which is just 3% of the combined RCOM-Hutch FY08E revenues.
- It could also reduce the risks associated with the alternative greenfield GSM rollout by RCOM, which could lead to sub-optimal cost structures (even if it is for a short while). This is of course assuming that the assimilation is smooth without any associated risks.

On the flip side, if Vodafone is successful in its bid for HE, it would be potentially negative for RCOM. Not only would RCOM then have to revert to the potentially risky GSM overlay route, its rollout plans would be at the mercy of spectrum constraints. It would also be negative for the stock as RCOM's current valuations (EV/EBITDA of 12.6x FY08E and P/E of 22.6x) are now at 5-10% premiums to Bharti's valuations in anticipation of a successful bid. While the competitive landscape would not change materially in case of a Vodafone-Hutch deal, potential collaboration between Vodafone and Bharti could create some polarization in the market structure.

## Technologically challenged but running at full steam

RCOM's wireless business has done reasonably well given the constraints imposed by CDMA. While the bottlenecks might not go away completely in the immediate future, we think RCOM remains well positioned to capture growth given its wide and deep network as well as strong local brand.

**Figure 3. Estimate Revisions**

Year to 31 Mar	New			Old		
	FY07E	FY08E	FY09E	FY07E	FY08E	FY09E
Revenues	154,280	202,235	242,295	152,726	194,123	231,154
EBITDA	57,231	82,645	108,215	56,826	79,870	103,828
EBITDA %	37.1	40.9	44.7	37.2	41.1	44.9
EBITDA upgrade (%)	0.7%	3.5%	4.2%	NA	NA	NA
Capex	70,656	75,336	73,967	67,902	75,604	69,885
EPS	13.74	20.75	28.76	13.04	19.59	27.57
EPS upgrade (%)	5.3%	5.9%	4.3%	NA	NA	NA

Source: Company Reports and Citigroup Investment Research estimates

Figure 4. Segmental Forecasts (Rs m)

<b>Profit &amp; Loss</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>FY07E</b>	<b>FY08E</b>	<b>FY09E</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>112,884</b>	<b>154,280</b>	<b>202,235</b>	<b>242,295</b>
Wireless	74,070	110,830	157,636	198,762
Global Business	59,048	72,726	82,367	87,527
Broadband	5,128	11,735	15,990	20,414
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>24,786</b>	<b>57,231</b>	<b>82,645</b>	<b>108,215</b>
Wireless	22,411	40,090	58,155	75,959
Global Business	5,922	13,446	18,102	22,657
Broadband	746	4,624	7,069	10,006
<b>EBITDA Margin (%)</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>44.7</b>
Wireless (%)	30.3	36.2	36.9	38.2
Global Business (%)	10.0	18.5	22.0	25.9
Broadband (%)	14.5	39.4	44.2	49.0

Source: Company Reports and Citigroup Investment Research estimates

## Reliance Communications

### Company description

RCVL is an integrated player in the Indian telecom sector. The company was listed on the Indian stock exchanges as part of the scheme of de-merger of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL). It is the second-largest player in the mobile segment, has an 80,000km-long India-wide optic-fiber network and owns the FLAG submarine cable network. The company plans to launch IPTV and retail broadband in 2007. The business of RCVL is organized into three business units: 1) Wireless, which includes a nationwide wireless network on CDMA and GSM; 2) Global Business comprising wholesale voice and data; and 3) Broadband business for both retail and enterprise.

### Investment thesis

We rate RCOM as Buy/Medium Risk (1M) with a target price of Rs570. Continued expansion of the wireless market and RCOM's ability to capture market share profitably will, in our view, be the recurring theme for the stock. The wireless business has demonstrated higher operating leverage in the recent past and has maintained similar return parameters despite lower revenue yields. Competitive pressures, though intense, should continue to be rational. RCOM is also planning a GSM overlay on its existing CDMA network; while there is market rationale for this (GSM has lower-priced handsets), we think the economic rationale would be determined by the deal from vendors as well as the extent of infrastructure-sharing possible. Additionally, most regulatory concerns appear behind us, and news flow now is likely to be positive.

The company has yet to realize the benefits of full utilization of its network infrastructure (especially in broadband), and we expect significant strengthening of margins as traffic increases across segments. We thus expect RCOM to register an EBITDA CAGR of 63.4% for FY06-09E.

### Valuation

In valuing Indian wireless plays, we use DCF as our primary methodology given the back-ended nature of profits and cash flow. In the case of RCOM, however, we use EV/EBITDA in the absence of a detailed balance sheet, which is awaiting reorganization.

RCOM's 12-month target price of Rs570 is based on 11.2x FY09E EV/EBITDA, similar to the implied target EV/EBITDA for Bharti based on our DCF estimate. RCOM's valuation multiples are likely to closely track Bharti's due to the liquidity overflow from the latter, notwithstanding the risk of technology transition. In addition, the risks associated with technology shift to GSM may get significantly mitigated in case RCOM makes a successful bid for HE, besides according it a clear market leadership. As a secondary valuation methodology, we apply a target P/E of 27.5x FY08E for a fair value of Rs570. We believe a premium to the Sensex's target 12-month forward P/E of 20.0x is justified given our projected earnings growth for RCOM of 51% yoy for FY08E and a 45% CAGR for FY07-09E against estimated market earnings growth of 25% for FY07E and 15% for FY08E.

## Risk

Our quantitative risk-rating system, which tracks 260-day share price volatility, assigns a High Risk rating to RCOM, but we believe a Medium Risk rating is more appropriate. RCOM has been de-merged from Reliance Industries, and its shareholding at the time of listing mirrored the holding of RIL. The stock is therefore unlikely to have risk factors that are typical of newly listed companies that have more limited management and operating track records. Besides, growth in the telecom sector accords visibility to RCOM's prospects – characteristics that are similar to those of its peers. However, we believe its evolving financial history and risks pertaining to GSM overlay warrant a risk rating higher than that which we assign to Bharti (Low Risk).

Operationally, the risks facing RCOM are slightly higher than for Bharti due to the proposed technology shift. Also, RCOM's present CDMA-led business model leaves open the possibility of the re-emergence of handset subsidies, which the company has brought under control.

Downside risks to our target price include smaller-than-expected market share, lower-than-anticipated operating leverage (especially for FY07), cost-overruns in GSM overlay, regulatory and competition risks, un-remunerative capex, delays in the ongoing re-organization and more telecom-related paper entering the market.

**Figure 5. Income Statement (Rs m)**

Year to 31 March	FY06	FY07E	FY08E	FY09E
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>112,884</b>	<b>154,280</b>	<b>202,235</b>	<b>242,295</b>
Total Cost	(88,098)	(97,049)	(119,589)	(134,080)
Access & IUC	(31,012)	(66,040)	(80,001)	(90,143)
License Fees	(8,559)	(10,723)	(15,313)	(19,523)
Other Operating Exp	(48,527)	(61,297)	(78,034)	(88,822)
<b>EBITDA</b>	<b>24,786</b>	<b>57,231</b>	<b>82,645</b>	<b>108,215</b>
EBITDA Margin (%)	22.0	37.1	40.9	44.7
Net Interest	(2,649)	(3,426)	(5,003)	(4,179)
Depreciation & Amortization	(16,987)	(23,927)	(30,497)	(37,216)
PBT	5,150	29,878	47,146	66,820
Tax	(327)	(1,793)	(4,715)	(8,018)
PAT	4,823	28,085	42,431	58,802
No. of Shares	2,045	2,045	2,045	2,045
EPS	2.4	13.7	20.8	28.8
DPS	-	2.0	3.0	4.0

Source: Company Reports and Citigroup Investment Research estimates

Figure 6. Balance Sheet

As at 31 March	FY06	FY07E	FY08E	FY09E
Equity	10,223	10,223	10,223	10,223
Reserves and Surplus	107,292	130,777	166,308	215,909
Shareholders funds	117,515	141,000	176,531	226,132
Debt	92,976	115,476	113,476	111,476
Secured Loans	87,185	109,685	107,685	105,685
Unsecured Loans	5,791	5,791	5,791	5,791
Current Liabilities	89,956	72,786	89,692	100,560
Provisions	19,291	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>319,738</b>	<b>349,262</b>	<b>399,699</b>	<b>458,168</b>
Fixed Assets	230,531	301,187	376,524	450,491
Accumulated Depreciation	(47,573)	(71,500)	(101,997)	(139,213)
Net Fixed Assets	182,958	229,687	274,526	311,278
CWIP	31,305	30,000	30,000	30,000
Investments	121	121	121	121
Cash	60,038	38,956	35,484	49,296
Current Assets	45,316	50,498	59,568	67,474
Inventories	4,076	4,500	5,000	5,500
Debtors	16,807	19,285	19,662	20,191
Other Current Assets	765	1,000	1,200	1,400
Loans & Advances	23,668	25,713	33,706	40,383
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>319,738</b>	<b>349,262</b>	<b>399,699</b>	<b>458,168</b>

Source: Company Reports and Citigroup Investment Research estimates

Figure 7. Cash Flow Statement

Year to 31 Mar	FY07E	FY08E	FY09E
PAT	28,085	42,431	58,802
Add: Depreciation	23,927	30,497	37,216
Change in NWC	(21,643)	7,836	2,962
Add: Interest	3,426	5,003	4,179
Operating Cash Flow	33,796	85,767	103,158
Capex	69,351	75,336	73,967
Free Cash Flow	(35,556)	10,431	29,191
Cash flow into investments	(69,351)	(75,336)	(73,967)
Increase in debt	22,500	(2,000)	(2,000)
Increase in Equity	-	-	-
Less: Interest	(3,426)	(5,003)	(4,179)
Less: Dividend	(4,600)	(6,901)	(9,201)
Financial cash flow	14,474	(13,903)	(15,380)
Cash year begin	60,038	38,956	35,484
Cash generated	(21,082)	(3,472)	13,812
Cash year end	38,956	35,484	49,296

Source: Citigroup Investment Research estimates

## **Bharti (BRTI.BO - Rs629.50; 1L)**

### **Valuation**

Our 12-month forward target price of Rs750 is based on DCF, which suggests a fair value of Rs749 as of March 2008. This is based on WACC of 10.8%, terminal growth rate of 3.5% and beta of 0.9 (implying a terminal EV/EBITDA multiple of 8.0x). We prefer DCF as our primary valuation methodology because the wireless market will likely continue to see robust growth requiring upfront capex but should generate significant free cash beyond 2009-10. Our target price represents a FY09E P/E of 20.0x, P/CEPS of 12.5x and EV/EBITDA of 11.2x. The imputed target PER of 25.0x FY08E is at 25% premium to the broad market PER (20.0 FY08E at the higher end of Citigroup's Sensex target of 16,000). This we believe is justified by above-average earnings growth (FY06-09E EBITDA CAGR of 45.3% and 46.5% in EPS), improved earnings visibility and relative insulation from macro risks (interest rates and political risks).

### **Risk**

Our quantitative risk-rating system rates Bharti as Low Risk. We are comfortable attributing a Low Risk rating for the following reasons: (1) Bharti has a track record of profitability and execution; (2) the company's capex plans are fully funded; and (3) the strategic shareholding of SingTel and Vodafone leaves us comfortable with execution issues and initiatives. The risks that could prevent the stock from reaching our target price include competition-led tariff pressures, un-remunerative capex, overall market downside, and more telecom related paper entering the market.



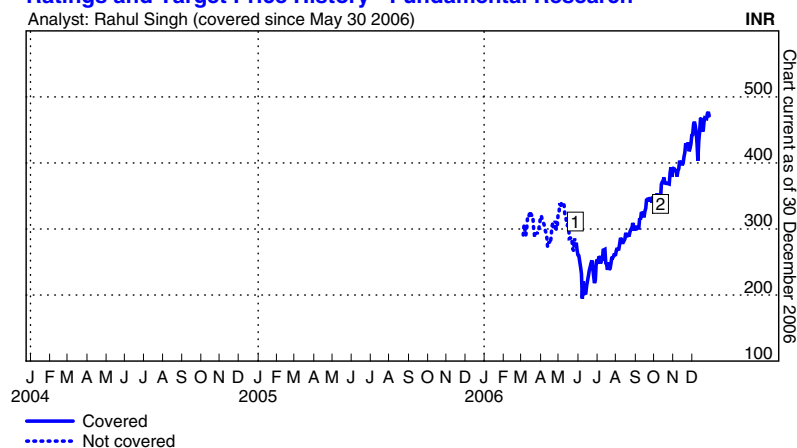
## Analyst Certification Appendix A-1

We, Rahul Singh and Anand Ramachandran, CFA, research analysts and the authors of this report, hereby certify that all of the views expressed in this research report accurately reflect our personal views about any and all of the subject issuer(s) or securities. We also certify that no part of our compensation was, is, or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendation(s) or view(s) in this report.

### IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

#### Reliance Communications (RLCM.BO) Ratings and Target Price History - Fundamental Research

Analyst: Rahul Singh (covered since May 30 2006)



#	Date	Rating	Target Price	Closing Price
1:	29 May 06	1M	360.00	276.25
2:	12 Oct 06	1M	*430.00	345.95

\*Indicates change.

Chart current as of 30 December 2006

#### Bharti Airtel Limited (BRTI.BO) Ratings and Target Price History - Fundamental Research

Analyst: Rahul Singh (covered since April 28 2006)



#	Date	Rating	Target Price	Closing Price
1:	20 Jan 04	1H	*160.00	118.40
2:	17 Mar 04	1H	*220.00	146.15
3:	14 Jan 05	*1M	*260.00	210.30
4:	22 Aug 05	1M	*400.00	306.10
5:	10 Jan 06	1M	*450.00	339.25
6:	13 Apr 06	1M	*500.00	395.95
7:	12 Oct 06	*1L	*600.00	475.65

\*Indicates change.

Chart current as of 30 December 2006

Rahul Singh holds a long position in the shares of Bharti Airtel Limited.

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Citigroup Global Markets Inc. or its affiliates has received compensation for investment banking services provided within the past 12 months from Reliance Communications.

Citigroup Global Markets Inc. or an affiliate received compensation for products and services other than investment banking services from Bharti Airtel Limited and Reliance Communications in the past 12 months.

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**Citigroup Investment Research Ratings Distribution**

**Data current as of 31 December 2006**

	Buy	Hold	Sell
Citigroup Investment Research Global Fundamental Coverage (3106)	43%	41%	15%
<i>% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients</i>	45%	41%	34%
India -- Asia Pacific (118)	58%	14%	28%
<i>% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients</i>	48%	50%	39%

**Guide to Fundamental Research Investment Ratings:**

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