

Reliance plans specialty stores for cellphones

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RELIANCE Retail is planning to open a chain of specialty stores to retail mobile phone handsets across the country.

The mobile handset retail initiative will be spearheaded by Navneet Saluja, who was earlier heading Reliance Retail's operations in Delhi-NCR. Reliance Retail stores will compete

with similar stores of other major retailers, including Subhiksha, RPG and Essar-Virgin's The MobileStore.

When contacted, a Reliance Retail spokesman said: "Our initiatives are a full spectrum design across various defined formats and categories within Reliance Retail. As regards separate mobile telephone format, we will make announcement at an appropriate time."

Reliance Retail's strategy has been to have a

large presence across all categories and formats and the company's foray into mobile phones is an extension of that strategy.

The roll-out of food & grocery stores, Reliance Fresh, the company's best known format, has been quick although with its own share of controversies. But other specialty formats, which started slow, are now picking up.

For a faster roll-out and in order to overcome challenges related to acquiring retail space, the company has chosen to take the franchisee route. Reliance Retail is also entering into alliances with foreign players for some of its specialty formats, where it thinks the foreign partners' experience could come in handy.

Reliance Retail operates stores in various categories, including food & grocery, consumer durables and IT, apparel, wellness products, footwear, books & music, and jewellery.

