

HIGH TECH

Video creator plays 52 games to win

By JAMES McNAIR
Herald Business Writer

At 51, Vince Perri has called himself a businessman for a long time. But it took fatherhood to help him find what could be the business of his life. Perri is the brains behind a 3-year-old Miami company, Active Enterprises Ltd., that is offering a new game product for the six million Sega Genesis systems in the United States. His isn't just another addition to the hundreds of titles on store shelves. His product, Action 52, offers 52 games for the price of two.

An investment banker for six years, Perri has seen his share of business opportunities, good and bad. This time, the idea originated at home.

"Having a 9-year-old, I had to buy a lot of video games, and it cost me a fortune," he said. "A decent Sega or Nintendo costs \$55 to \$60. I said there's got to be a way to do this cheaper."

The breakthrough came by accident.

"I happened to see my son playing an illegal product made in Taiwan that had 40 games on it. The whole neighborhood went crazy over it," Perri said. "I figured I'd do it legally. It's obvious when you see something like that, you know there's something there."

Overseas investors

Perri said he used his overseas banking connections to raise \$5 million from private backers in Europe and Saudi Arabia. He farmed out the programming to college students and the technical work to Cronos Engineering Inc., a Boca Raton company that does work for IBM Corp. He expects to begin shipping Action 52 today.

"We've sold out of our first manufacturing cycle, so we're going into another cycle as soon as these go out the door," he said.

Action 52 is meant to be played on the Sega Genesis system, which, at 16 bits, is faster and more stimulating than the older, eight-bit Sega games. Perri said



A. BRENNAN INNERARITY / Miami Herald Staff

HOPING TO SCORE BIG: Joey Martinez, left, is the artist and Vince Perri the creator of a budget-friendly line of home video games.

the 52 games, like G-Force Fighter, Sunday Driver and Haunted Hills, were fashioned for kids between 9 and 12 years old.

Perri said he'd be happy snaring a tiny fraction of the \$9.5 billion market for video games. So far, all of his orders have come from overseas. A sales representative for the United States was hired just two weeks ago, but has already pitched the product to several major retail chains. Perri said Action 52 will sell for \$99 to \$119, depending on where you buy it. He will sell it over the phone for \$99.

Another hurdle?

Perri's company might have to clear one more hurdle. Sega of America Inc. in Redwood City, Calif., said third-party developers need a Sega license to sell software for the Sega system. Perri said he doesn't.

"You need a license if you want to be a licensed Sega game and if you want to display the Sega seal," Perri said. "We are unauthorized, but not illegal."

TO LEARN MORE

Contact Active Enterprises Ltd. at:
8360 W. Flagler St.
Suite 209
Miami, Fla. 33144
599-0711

Neil Pickles, chief executive and chairman of the Audnel Group in Leicester, England, said his company is slated to receive some of the first shipments. The games will be sold by regional agents directly to the public.

As for the game itself, we gave a copy of Action 52 to Kevin Orth, a 10th-grader in the magnet computer program at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale. Orth has been playing Sega Genesis games for three years on his bedroom TV.

After spending a week with Action 52 and playing all 52 games, Orth said it is an "excellent" package for first-time video game players in the 9-to-12-year

age group. He said it could spur beginners to buy more products.

As an advanced player, Orth tired of the games quickly. After a while, many looked alike.

"A change of scenery would be nice, although I understand why they'd need to conserve as much memory as they can for 52 games," he said.

Future projects

Perri is already working on his next products. Due out in October is a Super Nintendo copy of Action 52, another 16-bit product. He is also developing a single-game program called Cheekahmen, based on a comic book written by his artist, Joey Martinez.

Beyond that, Perri plans to introduce a portable video game console that plays both Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo games, as well as older eight-bit Sega and Nintendo cartridges. The console, to be called GameMaster, will have a 3.2-inch color screen and will be able to pick up TV signals. Perri expects to have it ready by Christmas 1994.

BULLETIN BOARD

SOFTWARE

Envelope printer comes in 42 fonts

A new IBM-compatible program from a Plantation company will let you laser-print envelopes with up to 42 different typefaces.

Postmark Mailing Service & Equipment calls the software Jet Envelope. The 42 fonts include three in handwriting and one in "old typewriter." The \$249 program allows bulk mailers to imprint bar codes, bulk-mail permits and business-reply envelopes.

The company has also introduced FileMaker Pro for Windows for personalizing letters, labels, envelopes, invoices and catalogs. For \$269, the program includes installation and training. For another \$75, Postmark will install a digitized version of your signature for repeat use.

Call 584-8075 for more information.

WINDOWS

System helps run resorts, hotels

Hospitality Systems Inc. of Deerfield Beach has begun installing its new "point and click" system for Windows-based computers in hotels, resorts and restaurants.

The point-of-sale system, called POS for Windows, adapts Windows' graphics and mouse features to monitors typically found at cashier, server and bartender stations.

Call 426-0005.

Send information on new electronic products or services to James McNair, The Miami Herald, 1320 E. Sunrise Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33304.

INSURANCE LICENSE
LIFE & HEALTH • PROPERTY & CASUALTY
CR 440 • REAL BOND • CONT. EDUC.
PERMANENT SOUTH FLORIDA LICENSES
GOLD COAST SCHOOL OF INSURANCE INC.
Free Brochure & Class Schedule W. Palm
MIAMI 891-2335 733-5679 688-9964

HOME EQUITY LOANS

- * Low Fixed Rates
- * Low Monthly Payments
- * Tax Deductible Interest
- * No Application Fee
- * No Income Verification
- * No Pre-Payment Penalty

Dade (305) 381-9019 • Broward (305) 749-8877
Group W. Financial Services Licensed Mortgage
825 S. Bayshore Dr., #515 Miami, Fla 33131 Brokerage Business

CELLULAR INDEPENDENCE
CEL-TEC® GIVES YOU FREEDOM • CONVENIENCE • SECURITY • PRODUCTIVITY
UP TO 6 FREE MONTHS AIRTIME
PLUS FREE AIRTIME
WITH NEW MOTOROLA PORTABLES & SERVICE HOOK-UP FOR EXISTING PHONES
And Cellular One's Maximum Reachability increases Call Power & Coverage
OPEN 6 DAYS 8:30-5:30 Sun 10-7
CELLULARONE

MIAMI 77-4400 892-5206 334-2100
MIAMI 77-4400 892-5206 334-2100
MIAMI 77-4400 892-5206 334-2100

*Requires a prior Value Plan activation & Cel-Tec agreement. The One for Cellular

Florida International University
College of Engineering & Design
announces
Graduate Engineering Education
at Your Work Site or Residence
Live Via Closed Circuit Broadcast
Starting FALL Semester 1993
Graduate Engineering Degree Programs in Mechanical, Electrical, Civil, and Industrial Engineering
For information call 305-348-2539
Florida Engineering Education Delivery System (FEEDS)

MONDAY, JULY 12, 1993, THE MIAMI HERALD 9