

Steve Calfee

Project Proposal - Bar Top 5200

File

DESCRIPTION

The objective of this project is to produce a coin-operated hardware system capable of running off the shelf 5200 cartridges (primarily "RealSports") in a self-contained "Bar-Top" package. The intention is to use unmodified cartridges so the operator can "convert" the game on his own. The problem this creates is that 5200 carts are not designed with the time element of the game being a consideration. This problem and others are solved by selling time to the player (with an "add-a-coin" option). The "add-a-coin" option will allow players to continue a game that was stopped because time ran out.

HARDWARE

The hardware will consist of a PC board with the basic PAM components (SALLY, ANTIC, GTIA, POKEY, miscellaneous MSI, RAM and ROM). In addition, there will be some circuitry to drive the L.E.D. countdown timer and coin switches and coin counter.

SOFTWARE

The software effort will consist of modifying the PAM O.S. to include a coin routine, a timer and clock driver routine and an attract mode.

GS:jdh
8/26/83

Attached is a list of available cartridges.

11.7 ENGINEERING COST ESTIMATE FORM

Date: *8/26/83*
 Game: *Bar Top 5200*
 Prepared By: *Gary Stempler*

MATERIAL COST

Display.....	200
Audio/Reg PCB.....	-
Switcher PCB.....	-
Game PCB(s).....	60
RFI END PCB.....	10
Interconnect PCB.....	-
Coin Door.....	30
Coin Door Enclosure.....	5
Cash Box.....	5
Switch Bracket Assy Components.....	12
Harnesses, Main, AC, PWR.....	10
Harness, Control Panel.....	10
Wood Cabinet Compnents.....	20
Power Supply and Cord.....	15
Control Panel/Decal.....	10
Control Mechanisms.....	55
Speakers and Grills.....	3
Glass and Bezels.....	-
Flourescent Light.....	-
Retainers.....	3.50
Labels and Manuals.....	35
Formed Parts.....	10
RFI Enclosure.....	5
Shipping Container.....	5
Other..... <i>Larry Susan</i>	
Other.....	
Other.....	
MATERIAL TOTAL	503.50

LABOR COST

PCB Labor.....	10
Silkscreen.....	2
Wood Shop.....	5
Video Sub-Assy.....	10
Video Final Assy.....	5
LABOR TOTAL	32

PRIME COST (MATERIAL & LABOR)

535.50

Game Development Status *Bar Top 5200*

Date: 8/26/83

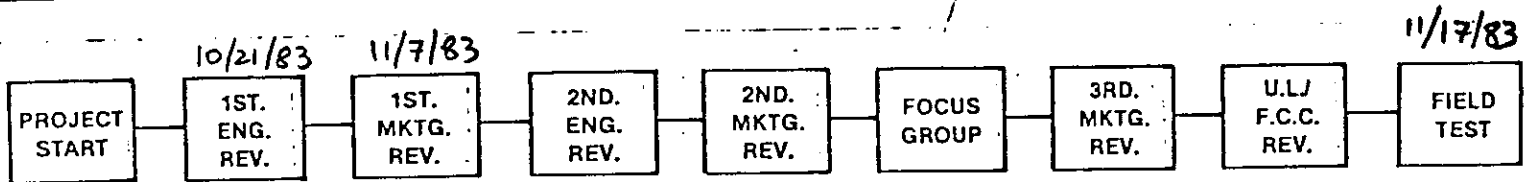
Project Leader: Gary Stempler

Project Start: _____

Lab #: Drobny

Ext: 7456

Project #: _____



Inter-Office Memo

A T A R I

Coin-Operated Games Division

To: Team Managers

From: Chris Downend



Subject: Bar Room Games

Date: July 21, 1983

Let's give Marcus what he asked for:

Counter-top Sports Game for Bars

See Jerry's memo dated 7/15/83. We can do it very easily:

- a) Takaichi's group designs a counter-top cabinet.
- b) Strip down a 5200 or a 600XL for electronics.
- c) Plug-in an "Atari Realsports" Cartridge.
(Choices for 5200 include Soccer, Football, Tennis, Baseball and Basketball). These new carts look good.
- d) Tack on a small P.C. Board containing a 6502 and an EPROM that runs coin 65 and interfaces the coin-mech to the 5200 hardware.
- e) Material cost for one unit would be about \$125 - \$175.

Anyone interested? Let's talk about it at Calfee's next Staff Meeting.

CD/eb

CC..Dan Van Elderen
Steve Calfee

Inter Office Memo

RECEIVED JUL 20 1983



Coin Operated Games Division

To: John Farrand

From: Jerry Marcus

Subject: REPLAY ARTICLE

Date: 7/15/83

In the event you did not read this month's Replay, I am forwarding a copy of two articles written by Eddie Adlum. Among other things, Eddie talks about the "Gin Mill Crowd" ...the over 40 year old male adult.

I am also attaching a copy of a letter written to Don Osborne from Louis Boasberg. Louis' thinking is very much along the lines of what Eddie has stated and I mentioned at Silverado. This may be a limited market, but should be good for two to three runs of over 10,000 machines.

Perhaps Louis' idea of a sports game could be incorporated into a quiz game devoted to male oriented themes.

JM:rd

Distribution:

D. Osborne

~~D. Van Elderen~~

S. Calfee

L. Rains

R. Machamer

B. Sullivan

M. Fujihara

Chris Edmund

F.Y.I.

De V-

7/19/83

NEW ORLEANS NOVELTY CO.



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May 2, 1983

RECEIVED MAY 10 1983

MAY 15 1983

Mr. Don Osborne
Atari, Inc.
P.O. Box 906
Milpitas, CA 95035

Dear Don:

The reason why I have been urging you to have your engineers develop the sports games is because this type of game is the only game suitable to combat the invasion of the poker and gambling theme games into barrooms, taverns and masculine locations.

Remember there are thousands of these locations and they are the poor man's Country Club. Their indulgence in kid's video games are few and far between. On the other hand they would play football, basketball and baseball.

I think the true competitive game on today's market should work on two games for a quarter if it is fast enough.

The LITTLE CASINO is coming into local locations by the hundreds and sooner or later, when they die, they will start making gambling games out of them in order to keep the play. Then the trouble will begin.

Si Redd told me the other day he is working on a 100% amusement poker game.

I hear through the grapevine that John Hill is leaving the company. I am sorry to hear this, as John is a truly fine person and I enjoyed doing business with him, although I don't like the idea of road men taking orders, no matter how good they are. It doesn't make sense to search out and find someone to give an order. Two or three very personable girls, with Wats Lines would be the ideal situation and would make for more orders with far less expense.

I look to see many changes in this business in 1984, with the government probably stepping in to save a small businessman.

CUTTING THROUGH THE FOG

and kits all over the country and get back to "home base" — the distribution office that sells you product, provides technical service and parts and financing advice or assistance. "What's needed in this industry now is 'management' and a good distributor is part of the operator's management picture!"

Some operators (and some jobbers) have another answer . . . knockoff kits. Counterfeit games have been around almost as long as the video boom itself, and were the most ugly wart on an industry then shining as brightly as Grand Canyon at high noon. When operators took to using conversion materials shortly after the video bubble burst, the peddlers of contraband games were waiting in the alley smacking their parched lips. Phony kits on solid top games are abroad in the land . . . not on every game, but enough behind

pliers has already sprung up and the success of such software items as 'Mr. Do!', 'Bump 'N Jump' and 'Lost Tomb' has done as much to legitimize conversions as prevailing market conditions.

Factories like Data East, Tago, Universal, Stern, Venture Line, Rock-Ola, CVS, Centuri, Sega, Enter-Tech, Intrepid (and even Atari with 'Black Widow' for 'Gravitar' and Bally with 'Pac-Man Plus') have launched software in varying degrees and proven the concept viable and (barring the older knockoff problem) manageable. (Now, if all distributors would handle conversions rather than just some, the operators would be happier, we think.)

Are conversions a permanent answer or a temporary bandage. Even some of the software makers say it's the latter . . . that the industry will return to a sounder whole-game footing one day. We suspect, however, that these bandage-believers are secretly smiling . . . that conversions are not only here to stay for a good long visit but that the new laserdisc technology that's about to come (another "answer") is going to do them a world of good.



Coin Operated Games Division

Chris Downend
942 - 7174

Lasergames! The very word sends chills up the backs of those who can sense what this new technology can do. Already seen in prototype form by operators with Sega's 'Astron Belt' and Cinematronics' 'Dragon's Lair,' the concept is truly the next generation of video game entertainment. But, will it cause a return to boomland? That's the \$64 million question. Even though lasergames will give players literal control over the actions of movie actors, jet planes, rocket ships, animated characters and anything else you can get on film, the industry knows that the public is really only interested in the "play appeal" and not in new technology (although the initial novelty aspect should get a few extra quarters for that reason alone).

* It's safe to say every major manufacturer right now is working on a lasergame. Most if not all will be on the market this fall. If only one of them can get consumer goose bumps rising, the industry could be in for a windfall . . . and anyone who sets one on anything but two-coin play should put himself where that Texas sun shines but once.

Veteran operators are reading this and nodding wisely, wondering if it's worth their time to worry about laserdiscs until they actually happen. And they may wonder how long the "laser boom" lasts until it bursts . . . like the other cycles they've seen and weathered. The businessman (the "real" businessman) after all, doesn't look for pie in the sky but what's already on his plate and that plate is supposedly divided thusly: four parts of the machines are in street locations, one part is in arcades.

That "one part" did a lot of talking for the other four parts in recent years. Speculation about factory engineering teams designing games for arcade youngsters, and driving the "bar crowd" away as a result, are not entirely unfounded. The big

Start Here →

CUTTING THROUGH THE FOG

* ticket may have been a zippy zappy hand/eye space game to excite the arcade players, but have we ignored the middle-aged crowd in the rush to please their juniors? Interesting thought . . . and it shouldn't surprise any coin operator to read it, because they saw the same thing happen with music on the trade charts. "Hot product?" Yes. "Kid product?" Also yes. When it came time to pick records for the jukeboxes, you couldn't go purely by the charts . . . you had to know the musical style and plug holes in the carousel with easy-listening and oldies to cater to the folks who wished they were still teenagers but the calendar told a different story.

At one time, the operator's serviceman was called "the jukebox man" by some location personnel. It didn't matter that he had control of the pool table, the pin, the cigarette machine and the shuffle alley . . . he was "the jukebox man." Now he's "the game guy" . . . the one who brings in those "noisy space games that the guys who drive the beer truck play." There's not a chance of denying a basic fact about the video game business: the younger you are the more apt you'll be to play one.

Sure, older tavern goers, moms shopping for groceries, dads doing their morning coffee thing in 7-Eleven, etc., etc., have eyes to see what's going on. But, how often have they literally walked over to an upright or sat down at a cocktail table and

tried one of our toys? Curious question, surely answered loudly by "not enough times, if ever!" Plain and simple, many of our games are confusing to older people and they'd be embarrassed to try them if someone was looking.

Many American big corporation marketing people are looking at Mainland China, thinking, "Boy, I'd love to get just 1% of that market!" Do we actually have our own "Mainland China" populated by tavern people, shoppers, coffee buyers, etc. etc.? Will the video game designers spend some thought toward creating machines that might get that 40-year-old man off that stool and over hand-in-change-pocket to play something or other? Or do we already have such "adult toys?"

We have. But the gloss of the video collection has put much of them on the operator's back burner. Besides your classic pool tables and jukeboxes (some of which are treated so shabbily by operators it's an insult), you have some leading games (like the 'Whirly Bucket'), video pinball things ('FAX' and the coming 'Prof. Pac-Man'), bumper pool tables, foosball, pinball (yes, pinball!), shuffle alley (now almost an unknown idea in parts of this country), shuffleboard of varying sizes, electronic darts, and . . . among other ideas . . . video card games.

Ah, the video card games? Think or say what you want about them, they do appeal to the adult player. The gambling excitement has both hurt and helped this class of video (it does go on at many locations). When played for pure amusement (the fun of getting a good hand), it's still looked at by some trade people as a peculiar device that can't make any decent money unless there's a bet in the air (innocent, pure-amusement play also goes on and many operators and location owners are quite content with it, since their players seem happy just with this).

Devotees of the amusement card game often say, "People who haven't tried them, don't know what they're talking about" (regarding the gambling tag). Others say they've seen bartenders pay off remaining credits and even mention the existence of some video cards with payout hoppers attached to them like a slot machine. But, if you just watch people having a great time scoring big hands, you can get angry at the operators and location personnel at other places that muck it up by offering the gambling element.

One side says these games could never earn a decent buck without some gambling incentive; the other side says "bunk" and that it's great fun just by itself. We're not going to debate this any further, and will leave with the observation that video card games do appeal to an older crowd which seems to be relatively ignored by our industry . . . people who have trouble playing games requiring speedy hand/eye dexterity.

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from youngsters and young adults. Even if some magical machine got an award for "adult game of the year," we can't conceive of people of that age group playing it as frequently as the younger playing base hits its favorite machines . . . even though adults have more money to spend. But, it's still a valid idea to attempt to enlarge on the overall player-base in these times, and if that means catering a bit more to the adults, then everyone should move in on it. You might make a lot of lonely people in the nation's taverns happy and staying longer.

The next answer to the industry's economic problems is an old one we're dusting off and "driving up front." It's purely a matter of adjusting location commissions to offset any losses you're suffering. If you're off, it's safe to say the location's principle business might be off as well, so how do you tell a storeowner you're dropping his commission to 40% when he himself might have been thinking of asking you "for a raise" to 60%? The minimum collection guarantee is a safer way to improve your lot without driving him through the wall. Figure how long you want to go before your cash box share pays for the machine, do simple division by collection periods, and lay the figure on him.

Some people have a talent for turning "dirt into honey," you know. For example, if your locale or state imposes (or raises) a per-machine license fee, there's one whale of an excuse to adjust your location arrangements. So are lower collections. Everyone, location owners included, might adapt to the prevailing climate of the coin machine industry if you use the right words.

If you still have locations dictating which machines you should buy, please learn how to say "no" unless he's right. Get your own business back into your own hands once again (remember, "turning dirt into honey?"). Just think for a minute and figure out how many times you've said "yes" during your years in business as opposed to the number of times you've said "no." Curious question, no?

Independence Day (July 4) has come and gone. How grand if the nation's operators could get independent of nagging locations, independent of unpaid equipment bills, independent of worry about the future.

The fat is gone from the collection pot. The easy buck is not to be found in our industry today. The old rules of rotation, money management and hard work are once again the norm. To make matters darker, the general industry is continually harrassed by legislators who supposedly "have the best interests of their constituents at heart" or others that simply want more tax money and say, "hey, what about those guys? They must be rolling in quarters!"

These are troubling things, but the biggest trouble of all could be a loss of confidence in the

industry's future. NCMI just had a "Survival" seminar in Florida. That word "survival" is odious to some trade people who prefer to "win." As Detroit distributor Hank Heiser recently wrote to his customers: "If survival is all you're looking for, then do yourself and the industry a favor and toss in the sponge. That will leave those of us who are dedicated and committed to our industry ready to take up the gauntlet and go forth to even greater successes than those we've already enjoyed in those all but too brief fat times."

A positive attitude, says Heiser, is 80% of the game. Hank's an optimist. He's also running a successful distributorship, so who's to argue? A buoyant spirit backed by experience with the peaks and the valleys of the industry is a golden combination shared by too few. Newcomers may say instead: "Ain't this a bitch? What happened?"

What happened was a lesson in coinbiz economics: nothing really lasts forever in this trade except the job of providing novel entertainment for the general public. There may be more than a few operators losing their businesses today, and that's a shame. For years we've been looking for "new blood" but when we got it, we screamed "too crowded!"

The operators that remain will be the best of the new, and certainly include the veterans (best because of their longevity). That's a good thing, Darwinian "survival of the fittest" which we earnestly hope will serve up a remaining industry that once again regards the "rules" of our house with a bit more respect than during the boom.

Jean Monnet, architect of Europe's Common Market, believed that rules and regulations should be designed to produce perfect competition, not utopias. We came close to "Utopia" during the boom but bruised the spirit of perfect competition in the process (with knockoffs, 60% commissions offered to locations, games changes made so frequently that locations got spoiled rotten, etc.). It's time to go back, to retrograde and position ourselves for a different industry today and for a future that could include a laser boom.

It's time to pay equipment bills. Time to examine location commissions (and also to cut off marginal locations). Time to change the jukebox and recover the pool table cloth. Time to do all the "service" things that our industry is (by its nature) supposed to do on the route, in the arcade or back at the shop (where some might deserve promotions and others a shove out the door).

So take a deep, deep breath and shake off any ideas that the money tree will come back without you watering the damn thing. Those big bucks are still there . . . but like in an old gold mine, you just might have to dig a little deeper and a little harder to find them. And if another "clap of thunder" strikes and another boom visits coinland, this time you'll take it for what it is . . . a pleasant part of coin machine history.