

Global VR Enters Redemption Sector With New Prize Monster Line

SAN JOSE, CA — Shipping in November from Global VR are four redemption video games in kid-sized cabinets, available in dedicated and kit formats: Gone Bowling and Gone Fishing (both licensed from Tsunami), Big Red Button and Feeding Frenzy.

Collectively marketed under the name Prize Monsters, all four machines feature the image of a new mascot: a fuzzy, friendly blue monster called Jazzy P. Monster

(the “P” stands for “prize”). This proprietary character will also appear as an onscreen character in some of the games.

GVR executives noted that having a kid-friendly character that is strongly associated with the brand of the game is a strategy that works well in a myriad of product lines. Obvious examples range from Namco’s Pac-Man to Nintendo’s Mario Brothers, both of which live on in older coin-op video games and a steady series of con-

sumer video games.

The Prize Monsters brand and the Jazzy P character were developed in-house rather than acquired through a license. GVR officials said this strategy “opens up a variety of revenue opportunities,” with merchandise such as Jazzy P stuffed animals high on the list.

GVR’s video redemption line debuted at the AMOA International Expo in late September. It represents GVR’s first foray in the

video redemption sector. GVR officials said operators and distributors were a bit surprised to see this type of product from the company, yet responded enthusiastically.

President Jim DeRose said developing intellectual property in-house is a risk, but that risk taking is needed to grow the industry. Prior to heading GVR, DeRose led PDI (Pacific Data Images). PDI performed animation of the character Shrek and worked with highly recognizable brands. DeRose feels that he deeply understands the value of intellectual property and how to develop it.

DeRose said GVR tested the Prize Monster character with many focus groups, and that results indicate that Jazzy P. Monster is widely accepted by kids and trusted by adults. “It was obvious from the response we received at AMOA that kids absolutely loved the character as well as the games,” he said.

The Prize Monsters game cabinets feature twinkling attraction lighting. Cabinets are sized to enable children from 3 to 12 years of age to reach without having to stand on their toes.

GVR officials say this factor is more important to success of kid video than many industry members realize. Prototype testing determined that “pint-sized cabinets” are a powerful element in making video games easier and more fun for kids, and acceptable for parents. Not being able to see the controls or the simple instructions can be “intimidating and not a whole lot of fun” for smaller players, said GVR executives.

The Prize Monsters game cabinet was developed by industrial design expert Mark Gruber, a former Atari game developer who

also designed cabinets for GVR’s Need for Speed Underground and its new Aliens Extinction game. Player controls include, a simple track ball or, as suggested by the name of one title, a big button.

Big Red Button, an original title, shows an onscreen spinning wheel. Players stop it by hitting the button. The number the player lands on either equals the number of tickets dispensed or determines if the player can enjoy one or three small sub-games (tic-tac-toe, rock-paper-scissors or pop the balloon). Additional tickets can be won if the player lands on the jackpot portion of the wheel.

Feeding Frenzy, a familiar and popular title, offers several play modes including Storybook without tickets, Storybook with tickets and Frenzy Mode (time based).

Gone Fishing and Gone Bowling are both proven successes. These multi-player games feature a vast array of operator settings, and the game can run as a simple entertainment-only video unit with no redemption features.

Expanding beyond video, GVR offered a Crane Kit and Jazzy P. Monster Plush to supplement the Prize Monster line. This gives operators an opportunity to refresh existing cranes and bring them under the marketing umbrella of the Jazzy P. video games.

Decals in bright colors may be applied to a commercial crane of any brand, transforming it into a Prize Monster product. GVR officials said children stood in line to get Jazzy P. plush dolls at the AMOA show.

Branding and marketing of the line can be enhanced by theming the area of the location in which Prize Monsters games are installed. GVR displayed an example of such décor at its AMOA Expo booth; DeRose described it as a “playground environment for the players.” It featured Astroturf, trees and flowers, along with a wall decorated like a backyard fence.

For more information, contact Global VR, 2350 Zanker Road, San Jose, CA 95131; (408) 501-0000 or (877) 487-GAME (4263); website: globalvr.com.