

Standing out from the crowd

Fifteen years in the industry have given David Lachance chance to sit back, assess and develop accordingly, in order to stand out from the crowd, as **Helen Fletcher** finds out

DAVID Lachance of Adrenaline Amusements celebrates his 15th year in the business this year. Having started out in 1997, opening one of the first internet cafes in his local region, with which he planned to offer linked game play for the original version of one of the best shooter franchises of all time - Quake - he went on to become involved in founding Trio-tech, developing its first product Cyberpod.

Acting as one of the company's co-owner and leading product development designers, Lachance, together with his older brother Frederic and Ernest Yale (Trio-tech's current CEO), pushed the boundaries of simulation to the edge, launching products such as Ballistics, Madwave motion theatre, the renowned XD Theatre and more recently Typhoon. After a decade at Trio-tech David sold his share and left to start up Adrenaline Amusements. Kaboom!, the manufacturer's first multi-experience concept product, paved the way to the release of the one-of-a-kind Touch FX multi-touch gaming platform, which aims to provide operators and their customers with a truly new gaming experience.

"Game developers don't think outside of the box enough in my opinion," Lachance told *InterGame*. "Take the most recent 'drivers' - they are not competitive in regard to what can be played at home on players' big televisions. A steering system that can be bought at Walmart is delivering a better experience than most of the product in an arcade. On the other hand, there are some companies out there that focus on delivering a unique and inaccessible experience on a day-to-day basis which justifies the pay to play expense - just look at the most recent motion simulator products, 'videmption' and other multi-touch devices released over the last few months.

"At Adrenaline, we have assembled an executive team with non-traditional backgrounds that are able to give arcade video game development and commercialisation a new twist in order to stand out from the crowd and offer the industry something new," he said.

Looking at the technology used in the industry, for Lachance the release of Dance Dance Revolution marked one of the very first steps in arcade evolution. "It offered a refreshing game play and controls to its players," he said.

"Great products are normally born out of a cool new technology that is integrated or adapted to a video game. Technology has dramatically changed the game play experience provided by the home console. For

example, the Nintendo Wii, which is based around accelerometer technology, or the award-winning Kinect, which is based around a video recon interface. They are what the simulator products are for the arcade: something people find impressive that was, at some point, not available to own.

"Simulators are still too expensive for application in the home, which explains why people are still keen to pay that extra dollar or two for a ride.

Touch FX is for me, one of those revolutionary products that can only attract customers and so far the units installed are supporting this theory. Sadly, some of today's manufacturer's fail to follow consumer technology trends and therefore their products don't stand up against home entertainment.

"Manufacturers used to innovate by using heavy and powerful CPU that were not available to consumers," continued

Lachance. "Now a days you can get very powerful systems

cheaply, manufacturers need to stop

thinking they can set

themselves apart by using new

software in standard cabinets. The software

offered by today's console orientated game

studios is better than what the coin-op industry can offer

- a situation easily explained by the gigantic budgets those

development teams have available to them, as well as the dedicated

game producers and so on.

"The coin-op amusement industry can no longer rely on just good software;

it also needs innovative hardware and technology to support it and set it apart from

what consumers can get at home. This is the only way, as I stated earlier, we can convince a player to put their dollar in the machine."

When it comes to amusement, Lachance believes in innovative controls and interactivity; one of a kind game play; physical simulation (Lachance notes Namco's Tank! Tank! Tank! is "brilliant" in this regard); and in bringing the player to new heights without losing them with complex controls and options.

These values are all reflected in Adrenaline's Touch FX product and will continue to filter through to new developments in the pipeline at the Adrenaline headquarters.

