

## DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

### HITMAKER

A name can say a lot about a company. When Sega's internal game development teams were spun off in 2000, each of them had to not only establish its place in the industry but also brand itself with a new moniker. For AM3, maker of arcade hits such as Crazy Taxi and Virtua Tennis, only a proud and memorable name would do. AM3's President and Director, Hisao Oguchi, decided to get right to the point and named the company Hitmaker.

Born in Japan's Nagano prefecture, Oguchi struggled through school (thanks in part to late nights at the local arcade!) before getting hired by Sega in 1984. Oguchi believes games should be simple and fun, and this philosophy shines throughout Hitmaker's body of work.

The company's first arcade game was Rail Chase, an Indiana Jones-inspired first-person shooter released in 1991. In the three years that followed, AM3 found success with two games based on movies - Star Wars Arcade and Jurassic Park.

AM3 really hit stride in 1995 with the release of two arcade masterpieces, namely Virtual On and Sega Rally Championship. Utilising a unique twin-stick control method and an innovative combat system, Virtual On became a standard in Japanese arcades. Sega Rally Championship was a slippery off-road racing game by Tetsuya Mizuguchi, who later went on to head United Game Artists (AM9) and create Space Channel 5.

The hits kept coming for AM3 in 1996 and 1997, when titles such as Last Bronx, The Lost World, Manx TT and Top Skater lit up arcades and home consoles. In 1998, new technology was introduced in the Dreamcast and the NAOMI arcade board that enabled AM3 to supply some of its best work. Headlining the list was Crazy Taxi, a high-octane romp through San Francisco-based streets. The Dreamcast version of Crazy Taxi stands as one of the most successful titles on the console. AM3 served up another winner with Virtua Tennis, a sleeper hit that was considered the best tennis game to date.

#### Hitmaker Highlights:

1994: Star Wars Arcade (Arcade)  
1995: Sega Rally Championship (Arcade, Saturn)  
1995: Virtual On (Arcade, Saturn)  
1995: Gunblade NY (Arcade)  
1995: Baku Baku (Arcade, Saturn)  
1996: Last Bronx (Arcade, Saturn)  
1996: Manx TT (Arcade)  
1997: The Lost World (Arcade)  
1997: Top Skater (Arcade)  
1998: Crazy Taxi (Arcade, Dreamcast)  
1998: Virtual On Oratorio Tangram (Arcade, Dreamcast)  
1998: L.A. Machineguns (Arcade)  
1999: Virtua Tennis (Arcade, Dreamcast)  
2000: Confidential Mission (Arcade, Dreamcast)  
2001: Crazy Taxi 2 (Arcade, Dreamcast)

