

Did you ever wonder who was included in starting the video game industry? Or who was one of the founding fathers? Well for many people they have no clue as to how it got started but one man named, Nolan Bushnell, helped open minds in the world of video games. Nolan Bushnell was born on February 5, 1943. He grew up in Utah in the 1940s. At a very young age he had inspirations to become an inventor. In the third grade he did a science project on electricity. He ended up burning down his family's garage with a homemade liquid-fuel rocket mounted on a roller skate. Even though this had happened you could still tell that Bushnell was a talented kid. When his father died he took over his concrete business, at the age of 15.

Nolan Bushnell's career plans took off when he attended the University of Utah. He started off learning the basic computer graphic skills, while managing an amusement park and playing chess on the side. He then started to become intrigued by computers, images, and having fun. Later, he went on to create his first computerized video game, "Computer Space", in 1970. However, the game was too complicated for most people and failed. After hard work, Bushnell simplified the game and produced "Pong" within the next year. Pong is a video version of Ping-Pong, where the ball bounced back and forth on the screen between two paddles moving up and down in the hands of the players.

The game first debuted in Sunnyvale, California in 1971. This game was more popular than his first game and was actually overplayed. Bushnell is a very smart individual. He took an interest in arcade games, where customers had to use skill and luck to achieve the goal and win the prize. He liked the idea of having people interested in a game and getting them to pay a fee in order to play.

After the success of Pong, Bushnell founded the Atari in 1972 with the help of Ted Dabney and only \$500. His invention of the Atari led to a rise in not only video arcade but also the entire game industry. In 1975, Bushnell and Sears made an agreement to sell a home version of Pong. This was the first time home television sets became interactive. In the midst of everything good that was happening Bushnell still continued to make smart moves and decisions. To ensure that his product would succeed with financing he realized that if the company was going to grow, it needed capital, and since the market was not in the best condition he felt he should not go to the public.

Instead, he made a list of companies that might want to buy Atari. In 1976, Bushnell sold Atari to Time Warner for \$28 million. By the time of 1982, their Atari division was making \$2 billion in annual sales. Thinking big, in 1977 Bushnell purchased Pizza Time Theatre from Warner Communications. Bushnell wanted a place where kids could go and eat pizza and play video games. This is why he formed Chuck E Cheese. He always wanted to work for Walt Disney but could not right after college, so Chuck E Cheese was his way of developing something similar. The culture of this company was very open and flexible. Bushnell had people on his team that shared a common goal and that was to have a fun place where kids could be themselves. After a while business started to get slow for Chuck E Cheese. Bushnell claimed it was because of over-expansion. Chuck E Cheese entered bankruptcy in 1984. It was then purchased by Showbiz Pizza and today has over 500 locations.

As of today, Bushnell has founded more than 20 different companies. He continues to develop computer games and work in robotics as well as personal computers. He has entered the Video Game Hall of Fame. Bushnell has really paved the way for all of the video games and new game systems we have today. He is currently the founder of uWink and NeoEdge Networks.

Most people take their kids to Chuck E Cheese and play the games and have no idea how it all began. What made this company successful was the fact Nolan Bushnell was determined and persistent. Being that he came from nothing and was able to use his mind to show that he could improve technology tells a lot about him as a person. He now lives with his wife and eight children in Woodside, California.

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