

The great communicator

The German home improvement industry will honour John W. Herbert with the DIY Lifetime Award 2017. "And about time too," is the view of many people in the industry

When the news emerged, the comments on Facebook were unequivocal, ranging from "I thought he'd already received the award long since" and "About time" to a succinct "Too right".



Where he is most at ease: John W. Herbert on the stage, in this case at the 5th Global DIY Summit in Berlin.

The Facebook comments were in response to the announcement that John W. Herbert, general secretary of Edra, the European DIY retail association with global network Ghin, is to be awarded the German industry's DIY Lifetime Award 2017. The prize is awarded an-

nually by the German DIY retail association BHB and the Dähne Verlag publishing house in Ettlingen, which produces the trade journals **diy** (for the German-speaking market) and **DIY International**.

Herbert is recognised as a renowned trade expert who has been active in the DIY store industry for almost 35 years. Born in Great Britain, he entered the retail trade after his time as an officer in the British Army of the Rhine in Germany. His DIY store career began in 1983 when he started at Knauber, the family-run German DIY store operator, where he was managing director for 17 years. At the start of January 2001 he moved to Home Depot in the USA as president of the Expo Design Center West Coast sales channel. After that he was active from 2002 to 2008 as managing director of BHB, the German DIY retail association, and has been general secretary of Edra since 2004.

Without John Herbert the Edra association would not be what it is today. It wouldn't even exist, for John Herbert was its founder and has since been the tireless driving force behind it.

Communication is ultimately at the heart of the European association and the now global Ghin network, and this is John Herbert's core competence. He is the great communicator, bringing representatives of the sector together, above all as human beings.

The German trade magazine *diy* from the Dähne Verlag publishing house describes Herbert thus: "With his charm and humour John W. Herbert is captivating both in conversation and on the event platform. His presentations are legendary, but moreover he has an in-depth knowledge of the retail landscape. He consistently implemented his oft-repeated mantra 'retail is detail' while working as managing director of Knauber and at Home Depot." The *diy* piece continues: "Developing close relationships with his staff and colleagues was one way of putting his ideas into practice. The term 'networking' seems to have been made for him."

This accolade says it all. The award will be presented at a gala event as part of the 18th BHB DIY Congress on 6 December 2017 in Cologne, Germany. ■