

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

AWARD 2024

PADRAIG SMYTH



The BTHA Lifetime Achievement Award is presented only in exceptional circumstances. It is awarded to individuals who have made a truly outstanding and significant contribution to the toy industry. Recipients must have facilitated positive and sustained change in the toy industry as a whole and must be inspirational achievers who are widely acknowledged to have made a fundamental and beneficial impact on the sector over the long term.

The story of Smyths Toys began in 1986, when Padraig Smyth, along with his three brothers – Thomas, Liam and Tony – launched a stand-alone toy shop in Galway, Ireland.

The shop emerged from a well-established family business – a newsagent selling toys, that had been run by his parents since 1935 in Claremorris, County Mayo Ireland.

This very first 'Smyths Toys' opened as a well-stocked but modest 650 square foot toy shop but was the start of a journey. The business saw excellent growth in those early years with the first larger style Smyths superstore opening in Limerick, Ireland in 1989. At a much larger store with 6,000 square feet, this was a store which looked and felt like the modern Smyths Toys store we are used to seeing today.

With immense and ongoing contributions from brothers Tony and Liam and an outstanding staff team whilst under Padraig's key stewardship, the business continued in its growth trajectory, with Smyths now becoming the predominant toy retailer for Ireland and throughout the 1990's the company opened a new store nearly every other year. It opened its first store in Northern Ireland in 2001.



The Smyths Toys commitment to the toy business has been underpinned from the very beginning by its now famous toy catalogue – something which is viewed by many as the essential listing for toys in print, which contains 300 pages and lists some 2,000 products each year. The catalogue was first launched in 1993 and has been published every year since and is still printed today.

A large proportion of Smyths success has been due to its early investment in digital technologies. In the early 1990's, with modern IT systems in their infancy, Smyths established a best-in-class stock management system which allowed the company to scan and manage stock successfully, work closely with suppliers, and in turn endorse further store openings and growth for the business. This stock management and collaboration with suppliers is something the company counts as one of its biggest strengths today.

The company has continued to focus its investment on the best digital tools available, to support the business and improve its online offering. It is endeavouring to create the best multichannel experience possible for the consumer. This has been personified in its highly successful click and collect service which is used by thousands of consumers today.

In 2018, Padraig led Smyths acquisition of all 94 German and Austrian Toys R Us stores, which helped the business establish as a toy retailer in continental Europe. This was later advanced by the purchase of 41 PicWic stores in France in 2022. The company now have 290+ stores across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Benelux.

Smyths have been recognised in recent years as the BTHA's prestigious Overall Toy Retailer of the Year – an award that they waited a significant period for – before receiving the honour. This is something Smyths regard highly and consider an honour.

Padraig Smyths story is one of a true entrepreneur. From small beginnings selling toys in the back of his family shop to the multi-store, pan-European, Omni-Channel specialist that is now Smyths Toys.



Padraig is described by his peers as very supportive of suppliers that support his business. He encapsulates someone who is humble, courteous and is a genuine person – qualities he expects in return from his suppliers. He is always approachable, honest and someone who knows the toy industry inside out and knows product like no other large scale international toy retailer.

There is no doubt that through Padraig's exceptional level of personal commitment, drive, passion and integrity throughout his career, he has facilitated positive and sustained change in the toy industry and has made a fundamental and beneficial impact on the sector over the long term.



**The BTHA is
honoured to present
its BTHA Lifetime
Achievement Award
to Padraig Smyth.**





British Toy & Hobby Association

BTHA House

142-144 Long Lane

London SE1 4BS

