

PRESS RELEASE



24 September 2012

John Smith: “The very exemplar of a modern manager”

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight (GBRf) won the Senior Management award for Outstanding Personal Contribution to the rail industry at the National Rail Awards in London last night. He was presented with the award by the BBC's Fiona Bruce and Rail magazine editor Nigel Harris.

Mr Harris said: *“The National Rail Award for Outstanding Personal Contribution goes to a railwayman who quite literally started with an oily rag before rising to lead one of the biggest rail freight companies in the country.*

“Whether it's winning new business for his company, meeting and greeting his staff or leading them for a drink when the work is over, John gets the job done.

“In one of the most challenging and competitive commercial environments of the railway John has demonstrated huge management and leadership skills to steer the company he has been involved with from the very start.”

John was employee number one when GBRf was formed in 1999. The company won its first contract, with Railtrack, in April 2000 and the first trains ran in 2001. It quickly went on to become a multi-million-pound company.

Mr Harris went on to praise the work done by John and GBRf at the port of Felixstowe, with which the company has had a partnership for 10 years.

Harris said: *“[John] has created radical employment conditions, leading to high productivity and intense commitment to customers. He developed not only new business but also new traffic and the new hardware to make this possible.”*

“The company has been able to enter markets that make a real success,” he continued, citing the example of coal, where GBRf went from having 0 to 12 % market share in one year.

“He makes sustained efforts to meet his staff both socially and professionally, is a passionate advocate not just for his sector but for the railway as a whole. Under his leadership, GBRf has risen to become the third largest rail freight company in the UK.”

John's aim is for GBRf to keep growing, and it's clear he has the winning formula, being a regular winner not just at the National Rail Awards but also at many other industry awards.

“In 2009, John told Rail that having doubled the size of the company in a decade, he aims to do the same again by 2019,” Mr Harris concluded.