



## North American Hardware and Paint Association

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Eric Hassett Receives 2023 Top Guns Award From NHPA

March 27, 2023, *INDIANAPOLIS*—Hardware, along with hard work and a love for people, runs in Eric Hassett's blood. Those qualities have led to an extremely successful operation and have contributed to his being named a 2023 Top Guns Award honoree by the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA).

Top Guns honorees are chosen based on their commitment and passion for the independent home improvement channel. They are pillars of innovation and have helped grow their businesses through strategic leadership with consideration for their communities and their teams. This year's honorees were specifically chosen for their focus on utilizing technology to improve operations.

"These Top Guns Award winners exemplify what it means to be a successful home improvement retailer, especially when it comes to utilizing technology in their operations," says NHPA president and CEO Bob Cutter. "We are excited to honor their accomplishments and the ways they positively impact their operations and communities."

Hassett is the owner and president of Hassett Hardware, which includes five retail stores and one outdoor power rental equipment location in the San Francisco Bay Area. The business was started in 1957 by Hassett's grandfather Bob Hassett, and Hassett got his start in the stores when he was 11.

While Hassett Hardware has many accomplishments to its name, the biggest key to its success has been the focus on a positive company culture. Company culture, mission and values are all passions of Hassett's.

"Our core values are everywhere—in our emails, on signs on the walls, talked about in our manager check-ins and more," Hassett says. "Those values are how we make sure we have a shared understanding across all stores, provide a high level of customer service, hire the right people and continue to grow and maintain who we are."



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Growing up in Silicon Valley, Hassett says he has always had an interest in technology. He has taken that passion and made it work for Hassett Hardware, bringing in programs and processes to ultimately offer a higher level of customer service, which was a priority instilled by his grandfather at the very beginning of the company.

Hassett started by adding technologies that handled operational tasks and eliminated pen and paper processes to allow employees to focus more time and energy on the salesfloor. Over the years, he has implemented several types of communications-related technology, including the Teatro mobile communication system in 2022. Most recently, the operation has been testing electronic shelf labels (ESLs) as another way to save employees time and effort.

Hassett is also working to add an autonomous robot from Badger Technologies, which roams the store each night and checks for price errors, product outs and misplaced items.

When it comes to adding technologies, Hassett says he is not looking to replace employees, but enhance their roles within the company. Any technology Hassett Hardware has in place was added to allow the employees more face time with customers and provide a higher level of customer service.

“Service is going to be our differentiator today, tomorrow and for the next 10 years,” Hassett says. “Anything we do with technology will follow this priority.”

As he looks back on his career so far, Hassett is grateful for his parents, who started him on his successful career path.

“My dad had the foresight to step back when I came on. He didn’t micromanage me but brought me along and empowered me,” he says. “And then I also had my mom in my ear saying, ‘You don’t have to do hardware.’ So I never felt trapped.”

The team back at Hassett Hardware has also played a huge role in Hassett’s and the operation’s successes, helping him grow as a leader, and ultimately, making the business thrive. Hassett says it’s an honor to be named as a Top Guns honoree, and he is proud to be joining the ranks of previous honorees.

“Ultimately, this award goes back to my team,” he says. “My name might be on the plaque, but what we’ve done with our culture, our stores and taking care of our customers, that all goes to



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our 116 employees who do this work day in and day out. I want them to understand that we're being recognized for excellence for all of their efforts, not just mine."

In addition to Hassett, two other retailers were named Top Guns Award honorees: TJ Colson, president of Wilco Stores, which operates 25 retail farm stores in Oregon, Washington and California, and Scott Sommers, president of Hartville Hardware & Lumber, the largest independently owned hardware store in the U.S. Each of the Top Guns honorees will be featured in upcoming issues of *Hardware Retailing* and *Paint & Decorating Retailer* magazines. Top Guns honorees will also participate in a panel presentation at the 2023 NHPA Independents Conference on Aug. 2-3 in Dallas to discuss their technology strategies. During the conference, they will also be honored at an awards reception sponsored by STIHL and the National Hardware Show .

For more information on the Top Guns Awards, visit [YourNHPA.org/top-guns](http://YourNHPA.org/top-guns). To learn more about the 2023 NHPA Independents Conference and register to attend, visit [YourNHPA.org/conference](http://YourNHPA.org/conference).

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### About the North American Hardware and Paint Association

Founded in 1900 by a group of retailers, NHPA is a not-for-profit trade association whose mission is to help home improvement, paint and decorating outlets in the U.S. and Canada become better and more profitable retailers. Governed by a board of independent hardware and paint retailers, NHPA fulfills its mission by providing how-to management resources, product discovery, training programs and networking opportunities for the industry it serves. Learn more at [YourNHPA.org](http://YourNHPA.org).

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