

## FROM HANDS-ON EXPERT TO KNOWLEDGE SOURCE: MARIO VAN LEEUWEN ON THE POWER OF THEORY AND EXPERIENCE

As a façade expert, Mario van Leeuwen is first and foremost a hands-on professional. For him, theory is not an end, but a tool to support practice: “You’re only truly an expert if you can connect theory and practice,” he explains. One of his guiding principles is: *“To measure is to know – if you know what you’re measuring.”*

According to Van Leeuwen, the importance of insight and interpretation cannot be overstated. “If you don’t understand what you’re measuring and treat the outcome as a black box, you won’t move forward. Theory helps you estimate the influence of various factors, but in the end, it’s practice that decides: *the proof of the pudding is in the eating.*”

With a career spanning nearly 44 years – including 27 years at TWEHA – Van Leeuwen has built up a wealth of experience. “You need to have had your feet in the mud. You must know what’s happening on-site, what can go wrong, and how to prevent it.”

This practical knowledge hasn’t gone to waste. It has been captured in a series of entries in the TWEHA Knowledge Box – a valuable resource for anyone working with façade systems. This knowledge is now also accessible through the TWEHA ChatBox, where users can ask their questions directly.

Through these initiatives, Van Leeuwen hopes to help professionals make better-informed decisions and avoid common pitfalls during design and execution. “It’s all about making theory and practice strengthen one another – only then can you reach the right solution.”