



## SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT MARKET ASSOCIATION

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2021 ELECTION YEAR**

# **BRIAN ROWLAND**

#### **Part 1 – Personal/Professional History**

1. Please provide a history of your professional background and education (including professional development). Feel free to attach your resume and/or Bio. Describe the specifics of your current job responsibilities:

Résumé attached.

2. Indicate your historic and/or current involvement with automotive industry initiatives specifically, as well as other professional and philanthropic associations, societies and organizations you have been actively involved in. Please be specific about other boards (if any) on which you have served or are currently serving:

- Board of Directors, 2010–2014; Auto Car Association National Catalog Manger's Association (now rebranded Automotive Content Professional Association); elected vice president in final term.
- Select Committee Member, 2015–2018; SEMA Automotive Restoration Market Organization (ARMO).

3. Please highlight specific career accomplishments including, but not limited to, patents received, product innovations, awards and recognitions, publications, marketing or business programs, presentation to business and/or industry symposiums. Share any and all significant or notable accomplishments:

- Designing, building and implementing the end-to-end omnichannel ACES and PIES solution for the number-one global retailer.
- Keynote speaker at 2021 Auto Care Association ACPN Conference.
- Defined and led successful RFP process for Nissan USA e-commerce platform selection, resulting in triple-digit revenue gains.
- Designed, developed and operated ACES automation logic that increased new SKU launch capacity by +10x for a major automotive retailer.
- Designed, developed and operated price-testing and price-automation logic that improved revenue and profitability for a major automotive retailer.
- Led multiple successful acquisitions and business integrations, including JC Whitney.

- Led multiple successful site-cutover events, including 4Wheelparts.com.
- Led a major automotive retailer through a significant cash crunch, successfully making every supplier whole under relatively dire circumstances.

4. Please mark each of the skill categories where you believe you possess a level of expertise:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Sports/Racing                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution/Logistics              | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Shows/Auctions/Exhibitions          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supply Chain                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Planning/Management    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicular/Product Design/Innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Resources Management       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Product Management       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Management/ Development |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OEM Design/Technology    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sales                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brand Management         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Technology              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertising              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data Management                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketing                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet Utilization             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations                    | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crisis Management        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Compliance               | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative/Lobbying                | _____  |

**Part 2 – Personal/Professional Attributes**

5. What are your specific areas of expertise? What unique skills or perspective do you think you could bring to the leadership of SEMA? What business or life experience do you have that prepares you to help shape the direction of the industry? What industry issues are you particularly passionate about?

- Deep skills in all things digital, e-commerce and omnichannel retailing (data, pricing, marketing, merchandising, vendor management, product management, etc.).
- Deep skills in automotive data (ACES, PIES, etc.), including automation and weaponizing data.
- Experience as a retailer, manufacturer, WD and OE.
- Consistent track record of success in business strategy and leadership.
- I'm an avid classic-car enthusiast, especially first-generation Camaros. I have restored a '69 Z28 that caught on fire twice (with me in it) and cracked three blocks. My team at the time didn't have much domain expertise, so we built my 383 stroker long-block in my offer after hours—a fantastic experience. Getting younger generations to turn wrenches as well as build spreadsheets is a passion project!
- Personally very passionate about diversity and believe it's incumbent on leaders to provide underserved people the same opportunities we have been afforded.
- I believe I'm uniquely able to help the aftermarket navigate the sales-mix fluctuations of a COVID-19 environment, notably e-commerce penetration/adoption, digital marketplaces and harnessing the power of automotive data.

6. What would you say is/are your most notable achievement(s) to this point in your career? What are you most proud of?

When I joined the aftermarket in 2008, many manufacturers wouldn't speak to me because I was part of the "internet"—I've literally been asked to leave multiple SEMA and AAPEX booths once my company was known. I'm very proud of how far the industry has come in embracing the power of e-commerce, data and information—particularly in omnichannel efforts—and I'm happy to have been a small part of that transformation.

Specific to my career, my biggest failure is also my proudest moment. I led and was personally responsible for a horribly failed website platform cutover of 4WD.com. After more than six months leading a team through exhaustive efforts, everything failed. Through perseverance, humility and the support of Greg Adler, we were given a second chance to succeed, and we got there. For months, every day started with a team meeting reinforcing that we had the right team, right strategy, right technology and right brand—then following up with, "What does success look like today?" Leading the team through this "double-marathon" and seeing them come together from their lowest point is my crowning achievement (so far...).

### Part 3 – Industry Perspective

7. What do you consider to be the top opportunities or threats facing the specialty parts aftermarket over the next five years? Try to be specific to industry trends. You may comment on macroeconomic issues (inflation, unemployment, health care, etc.) but only if they are relevant to your perspective on industry issues.

- **Internet Penetration & Sales Mix Management:** The automotive aftermarket has generally lagged other industries in internet penetration, allowing channel partners to deprioritize some related efforts. COVID-19, in my opinion, has fundamentally changed this paradigm and pulled multiple years of digitization forward. All channel partners in the supply chain need to be focused on internet penetration rates and sales mix management to foster the right balance of direct-to-consumer (DTC); traditional, omnichannel and ecommerce retail; marketplaces; and wholesale distribution. There's plenty of business and eyeballs to go around, but channel partners—especially manufacturers—should start with an end-state in mind, then aggressively pursue their strategy to avoid devaluing their brand and to preserve margin throughout the supply chain.
- **Data & Content Management:** Similar to internet penetration above, data is the oil in the internet engine it keeps the crankshaft turning. Manufacturers have an opportunity to significantly increase sales and better manage their sales mix by developing, evolving and controlling their content. Technology partners, like SEMA Data, should develop new technologies to streamline content updates and minimize time-to-market. For example, channel partners shouldn't have to process ACES XML files—all of the plumbing exists to remove manual intervention and let the

machines work while we sleep.

- **Telematics and Over-the-Air (OTA) Updates:** OEMs are progressively locking down access to vehicle diagnostics, data and electronics. In a few years, OBD-II ports won't exist on new vehicles. Customers may not have access to control where their vehicle diagnostic data is sent. OEMs may scan and modify vehicle software via OTA updates. Without access to vehicle data, software and diagnostics, enthusiasts won't be able to enjoy many of the popular aftermarket options they have today. Additionally, aftermarket products could void OEM warranties without the owner's prior knowledge and customers may not have control over where, or who, can repair their vehicle.

8. Of the issues you identify above, which ONE concerns you the most as to how it will impact the industry's future? What would you do to initiate change to either expedite a positive outcome or prevent a potential disaster?

**Telematics and Over-the-Air (OTA) Updates:** I believe telematics and OTA updates present the biggest threat to the enthusiast community. OEMs can effectively block the aftermarket from the vehicle's computer and create a walled garden to drive more service revenue to their dealer body, which they are under immense pressure to do.

In my time with a major OEM, I was involved with our "connected car" efforts. We had a defined strategy to weaponize our data. I have a unique perspective and experience that can prove valuable in understanding the OEM mindset, strategy, strengths and weaknesses as they relate to vehicle software.

I think SEMA should continue, if not expand, support of SEMA PAC to protect our industry via legislation. SEMA also has an opportunity to be appropriately disruptive by hosting and promoting "hack-a-thons" to show the power of technology and software in our industry. This would also have an adjacent benefit of engaging a younger and more diverse demographic, supporting multiple strategic efforts in one initiative.

#### Part 4 – Association Specific Observations

9. Do you feel that the Board of Directors and SEMA are currently pursuing the initiatives that are critical to our business segment? What would you place more emphasis on? What would you discontinue? What would you add?

From my perspective, I think SEMA and the Board are generally pursuing the right initiatives to support our industry. That said, I don't personally feel like I have a great handle on what keeps the Board up at night. To that extent, I would like to see more transparency from the Board on what their annual goals and objectives are with periodic progress updates to drive more accountability and credibility.

I would drive more awareness and engagement in member benefits outside of the SEMA Show, not stopping at telling the story but showing real-world application of the benefits and how they can be operationalized to drive a direct financial benefit. The VIO program is a

great example of an untapped resource. I would also emphasize technology and automation opportunities. Our industry tends to throw human capital at problems—in an increasing complex and digital world, software wins.

Regarding specific additions and deletions, I think it would be too audacious to comment directly without understanding more context. In my opinion, there are technical synergies with the Auto Care Association, opportunities with diversity and youth engagement, and opportunities to enable effective digitization—but I think it's important for leaders to stop, look, and really listen before jumping to conclusions.

10. As a SEMA Board member how do you feel you would be uniquely qualified to help address the issues you identified above?

**Experience:** I have deep skills in many areas that may be of benefit to SEMA members and where I may be able to supplement the skills of the Board: Digital/performance marketing, marketing technology, omnichannel strategy, category management, web design and usability, pricing and promotions, assortment selection, technical integrations, and automotive data—experience gained and deployed at the number-one retailer in the world. I also have Board-level experience from my time with the Auto Care Association ACPN and understand some of the complex challenges nonprofit, member-supported Boards face. Finally, I have direct “trial by fire” experience in most aspects of the aftermarket—retail (omnichannel and e-commerce), wholesale, manufacturing, marketplaces, consulting and OEM.

**Strategy and Critical Thinking:** My diverse experience allows me to apply situational awareness and critical problem-solving skills to complex challenges in all phases of leadership. I have the ability to synthesize disparate concepts and problems into cohesive solutions—then line up the operational plans to achieve common goals.

**Passion:** My primary purpose in running for the SEMA Board is to give back. I'm an enthusiast at heart and have benefitted immensely from my time in the aftermarket. It would be my honor to create opportunities and drive value for the industry that has given so much to me. Whatever deficiencies I may have will be more than compensated by my passion and work ethic.

11. What do you see as SEMA's weaknesses?

I don't see SEMA having many weaknesses but there are opportunities to drive more value:

- **Program Engagement:** To some extent SEMA is a victim of its own success with the SEMA Show—members generally think of SEMA as the Show and not the multi-faceted organization it is. SEMA has great programs, but they seem under-utilized by the member body (e.g. VIO). This may be due to awareness and/or members' understanding how to operationalize the expanded member benefits. I'd like to see SEMA drive more engagement and adoption outside of the SEMA Show.

- **Industry Technology and Standards:** SEMA generally “drafts” off the Auto Care Association in terms of adopting technology and standards for our industry. I feel like a more active role would be beneficial, especially for demand forecasting, product attribute definition, and ACES and PIES enhancements, among others.

12. How about its strengths?

SEMA is crushing it in many aspects:

- **SEMA Show:** Fantastic marketing vehicle, top-tier business-to-business conference, aspirational event; extension into Battle of the Builders and SEMA Ignited provide more reach.
- **SEMA Data:** Cost-effective platform that provides scalability to data distribution.
- **SEMA Garage:** OE measuring sessions, and testing labs are huge assets that level the playing field in a fragmented industry.
- **SEMA Market Research:** The “SEMA Market Report” and the “SEMA Accessory Opportunity Report” are required reading for all new team members.
- **SEMA Staff and Volunteer Base:** Committed, driven and passionate human capital authentically pushing the needle for the industry.

13. If you were chosen to chair the Long-range Planning Committee, which topics or issues would you want your committee to be deliberating on?

- **Youth Engagement:** Demographically speaking, our enthusiast industry is aging—we need a healthy youth movement to maintain growth and long-term relevancy. I see this as two-fold:
  - Younger generations are somewhat apathetic to cars. With the COVID-19 shift to more rural and suburban environments, we may have a chance to leverage this to our advantage as these customers can’t rely on public transportation. We have a chance at creating the next generation of enthusiasts.
  - The shortage of skilled technical workers is a drain on our industry. I would like to leverage the rising costs of higher education to our advantage to drive more technical jobs, supporting U.S.-made products. Creative tuition programs, like what [Lambda School](#) is doing in software engineering, could also be very attractive.
- **Diversity:** Very simply put, too often leadership in our industry looks the same. I think SEMA has an opportunity to educate, reinforce and promote the benefits of diversity in our industry. Much like the women’s suffrage movement, it will take people in power positions to create opportunities for under-served resources.

## Part 5 – About You

14. Questionnaires can be very limiting. In the space below, share with us anything we didn't ask that you believe will help the Nominating Committee develop a better understanding of you as a candidate:

- My primary purpose in running for the SEMA Board of Directors is wanting to give back to the industry that has provided many opportunities for me and my family.
- I have a unique perspective from leadership positions in e-commerce and omnichannel retail, marketplaces, wholesale distribution, manufacturing and OEM.
- I have deep skills in automotive data and content with a strategic view on how data should be weaponized through all stages of the purchase journey.
- I'm passionate about diversity, leadership, supporting American-made products and sustainability.
- I love trucks (Raptors and Super Dutys), classic cars (first-gen Camaros), and off-roading (SxS)—you'll generally find me in the mountains or the dirt on weekends.
- I've been through all business cycles, from identifying the best deployment of capital to struggling with payables; I learned this business is built on transparency, accountability, integrity and respect.
- I like to joke that the good news is I'll be able to write a book at the end of my career, the bad news is that the title may be "What Not to Do."

# BRIAN W. ROWLAND



## SUMMARY

- Hands-on senior executive with global ecommerce, automotive aftermarket, digital marketing, and omni-channel retail expertise. Proven ability to manage large and complex P&L's. Collaborative leader of large, diverse, and global teams. Consistent record of achievement across all critical business functions.

## EXPERIENCE

### WALMART, INC, BENTONVILLE AR

#### Senior Merchant Director Parts & Accessories, Walmart Inc; August 2020 – Current

- Responsible all aspects of growing and operating Walmart's universal and direct fit parts & accessories business across Stores and eCommerce
  - **Team:** Lead team of +15 in Bentonville, AR
  - **Responsibilities:** Responsible for establishing & growing Walmart's universal and direct-fit parts and accessories business including under hood, under car, interior, exterior, performance and replacement businesses. Essentially a well-funded start-up, leading a team that will double the business every year for the next five years across Stores, eCommerce, stocking, drop-ship and marketplace sales channels **Wins:** Successfully launched Year, Make, and Model fitment lookup on +2,000 Part Types in first six months

#### VP & GM Automotive, Walmart.com; November 2019 – August 2020

- Responsible all aspects of automotive business for Walmart eCommerce
  - **Team:** Led team of +55 in San Bruno, CA
  - **Responsibilities:** Responsible for 9-figure eCommerce P&L with mid-double digit growth across stocking, drop-ship & marketplace sales channels, led all assortment & selection, led omnichannel integration with Bentonville store-based business, Integral in Year, Make, Model fitment adoption
  - **Wins:** Exceeded revenue, profit, and inventory Plan; Improved profitability by +250 BPS; Gained buy-in and CapEx investment in ACES & PIES processing; Successfully led a diverse team through multiple social injustice issues

### NISSAN USA, FRANKLIN TN

#### Director of Marketing & Technology; November 2018 – November 2019

- Responsible all B2C marketing, technology, and business intelligence for \$3 billion United States Aftersales division
  - **Team:** Lead team of +50 in Franklin, TN and distributed United States field force
  - **Responsibilities:** \$39 million marketing budget with +80% dealer offset; Management of multiple full-service agencies; Online and offline customer retention and acquisition, In-dealer digitization, B2B2C Ecommerce, Marketing analytics; Business intelligence; Long-Range & annual operations planning
  - **Wins:** Designed omni-channel retail strategy, leveraging +1,200 dealer footprint; Designed and implemented organizational redesign to fully optimize team; Defined integrated digital strategy



to exploit Nissan competitive advantages; Implemented “Single Source of Truth” analytics with actionable insights delivered via dispersion analysis

## **TRANSAMERICAN AUTO PARTS, COMPTON CA**

### **Head of Digital & Ecommerce; October 2015 – October 2018**

- Responsible for all aspects of a +\$125 million ecommerce and omni-channel P&L
  - **Team:** Built and led team of +70 in Compton, CA and Columbiana, OH across Application Development, Customer Acquisition, Customer Retention, UX/UI, and Call Centers
  - **Websites:** [www.4wheelparts.com](http://www.4wheelparts.com); [www.4wd.com](http://www.4wd.com); Amazon & eBay accounts, 7 ancillary sites
  - **Responsibilities:** Full P&L accountability; Long-Range & annual operations planning; Oracle Commerce (ATG) platform consolidation; Vendor selection & negotiation; Digital customer acquisition & retention; Omni-channel strategy; Amazon & eBay marketplace P&Ls; Site roadmap & prioritization; Data & content; Conversion rate optimization; Promotions strategy
  - **Wins:** Grew online revenue +15% in first year, consistently beating budget; Launched and operated Amazon accounts, ramping from \$1 million to \$36 million in 2<sup>nd</sup> year; Grew traffic +20% through more efficient spend, mobile optimization, and improved retention efforts; Managed +\$8 million digital marketing budget to profitable growth; Decreased headcount and increased capacity through technology and process automation

## **US AUTO PARTS NETWORK, LOS ANGELES CA**

### **Vice President, Category Management; February 2008 – October 2015**

- Responsible for all aspects of a +\$100 million Branded P&L; 2014 to 2015
  - **Team:** Built and led team of 35 located throughout the US and Manila, Philippines
  - **Responsibilities:** Margin management, vendor management and negotiations, purchasing, product management, assortment selection, website and email merchandising, website categorization, website and email promotions, acquisition marketing oversight
  - **Categories:** Replacement, Performance and Accessory categories, +400 vendors, +650 brands, and +1.8 million SKUs
  - **Wins:** 20% email revenue growth through better content, merchandising and promotions; 25% decrease in cancellations through better vendor management; 7% conversion increase and 20% returns decrease through Guided Navigation/Selling; Launch +90k new SKUs contributing more revenue and profit with less inventory than all other business units in 2015
- Responsible for all aspects of a \$70 million Performance & Accessory P&L from 2012 to 2014
  - **Team:** Built and led a team of 20 located throughout the US and Manila, Philippines
  - **Responsibilities:** margin management, vendor management, purchasing, product management, assortment selection, site & email merchandising, site categorization, site and email promotions
  - **Categories:** Private Label and Branded, Performance and Accessory categories; +200 vendors, +450 brands, and +1.5 million SKUs
  - **Wins:** Changed revenue trend from -22% in 2013 to +5% in 2014 through better product management, conversion, and merchandising; Designed, built and implemented data automation software that automated 90% of data processing with significantly improved accuracy, scale, and speed; Launched more new SKUs with more revenue and profit with less inventory investment than any other business unit in 2013 and 2014
- Responsible for Pricing and Product Data Management for all product categories SKUs from 2010 to 2012
  - **Team:** Built and led a team of 200 located throughout the US and Manila, Philippines
  - **Responsibilities:** Pricing and margin management on +1.8 million SKUs across five price levels; Product data management on +1.8 million SKUs including all new SKU and Brand launches

- Managed pricing and product data for six of twelve total product categories from 2008 to 2010
  - **Team:** 60 located throughout the US and Manila, Philippines
  - **Responsibilities:** Pricing and margin management on +1 million SKUs across five price levels

#### **BLOCKBUSTER ONLINE, DALLAS TX**

- **GM & Director, Online Retail Sales; 2007 - 2008**
- **Senior Program Manager; 2006 - 2007**
- **Business Process Program/Project Manager; 2004 - 2006**

#### **ACCENTURE, DALLAS TX**

- **Management Consultant; 2000 - 2004**

#### **EDUCATION**

- BSBA International Business, 2000; University of Arkansas, Sam M. Walton School of Business

#### **ORGANIZATIONS**

- Board of Directors, 2010 - 2014; Auto Car Association National Catalog Manger's Association (NCMA)
- Select Committee Member, 2015 – 2018; SEMA Automotive Restoration Market Organization (ARMO)