



SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT MARKET ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS POTENTIAL CANDIDACY QUESTIONNAIRE – 2022 ELECTION YEAR

Melanie White

Part 1 – Personal/Professional History

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

My Bio:

I am the president of Hellwig Suspension Products and the fourth-generation Hellwig to lead the company. Under my leadership, the company has boosted sales, developed strong OEM partnerships, increased brand awareness, and implemented a robust digital marketing strategy.

I started at Hellwig Products in 2005, gaining experience in every area of the company, including sales, marketing and customer service, but I also enjoy putting on steel-toed boots and working the factory floor with my team.

As a passionate volunteer, I am currently on SEMA's Board of Directors. I was recognized as the SEMA Person of the Year in 2018 and have served as the chair of the LTAA (Light Truck Accessory Alliance, now called TORA), served as a select committee member on ETTN (Emerging Trends & Technology Network) and am the current chair of SEMA Cares.

Attached is my résumé.

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:

I have been a passionate volunteer for over a decade. I currently sit on the SEMA Board. The position of a Board member has been a lot of work, but I've loved it. I love the influence on the industry we can make as Board members. I love being surrounded by others who are passionate about our industry and its success—and I especially love the environment for passionate conversation and solving big problems.

I started as a volunteer for LTAA now TORA. I fell in love with the industry and the ability to make a bigger impact by taking off our company hats and putting on our industry hats. I continued to volunteer with CBLC, ETTN and SEMA Cares.

Outside of the industry I've volunteered for our local Little League board, Rocky Hill Triathlon, Vistage member, San Joaquin Valley Manufacturing Alliance and president of the Exeter Toastmasters.

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:

SEMA Person of the Year in 2018, SEMA Businesswoman of the Year in 2016, *SEMA News* 35 Under 35 award recipient in 2014, Fresno's 40 under 40 in 2011.

Speaker at the SEMA Show for family business in 2021, for women in business and what works in 2021, for ETTN symposium in 2016.

Spokesperson for tariffs and electronic stability control.

SEMA Show founding member

Ford Design award in 2017

Awarded Platinum Data from SDC

Craig School of Business Family Business Award in 2018

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OEM Design/Technology | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sales |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brand Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input 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?

My expertise is in manufacturing knowledge. I am aware of the challenges of manufacturing in the United States and the challenges that affect manufacturers for the automotive industry. I have a strong background in marketing and sales, but I've been living in steel-toe boots and have worked the factory line as well. I have a deep understanding of all aspects of manufacturing from sales, marketing, engineering, finance and operations.

I believe my unique skills are my connections in the industry. I feel I could help represent the small- to midsize companies. I am a strategic thinker and am always thinking of opportunities to grow. I am strongly committed to continuous improvement and will challenge the status quo.

My business or life experience includes running a midsized company and almost tripling the business since joining the company. I've grown the company, the leadership team, the Hellwig team and culture, and have implemented the idea of continuous improvement with lean manufacturing. With all the work it has also allowed us to be the most profitable we have been in our history. I have responsibility for the financial success for the company. I read and am responsible for the P&L for our company.

Before I joined Hellwig I managed a French gourmet bakery. I was responsible for the success of that small company. I ran the day-to-day operations and helped grow their wholesale business. I also understand the challenges of running a small company and the limited resources available.

I'm particularly passionate about vehicle technology and legislation. These are two areas that have directly affected our company in the last 75 years and one of the biggest reasons we became SEMA members. We are stronger together and more able to fight new policies that hurt our businesses or can work together to create solutions for new legislation. We were one of the first to work with SEMA with testing for ESC.

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

I am incredibly proud to have been selected for the SEMA Person of the Year. It is such an honor to see my name listed with the past amazing SEMA Person of the Year winners. That has been a true honor.

But what I'm most proud of is how I've positively impacted the revenue and profit for our company, because how it positively impacts the 60-plus employees and their families who currently work for us. I am incredibly proud of the culture and team we are building to make all of this happen.

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.

There are three significant areas that are both threats and opportunities. Our influence in Washington, D.C., for legislation and regulation is my most important concern. If we did nothing else well but got this right, it would be the best thing we could do for the industry. SEMA has this significant opportunity to grow its influence with marketing and communication; we have this great event, the SEMA Show, that we could genuinely use to leverage for the industry health. Vehicle technology is another area of threat and opportunity to our industry. In the last three years, the electrification of vehicles has been significantly growing, and we are seeing more and more changes like this.

Our most significant area where I need to gain ground is in Washington, D.C. We've had an office in D.C. where a team of people does excellent work for the association and the industry. But our industry is being threatened like never before. We have an opportunity to

increase our influence in Washington so that our industry doesn't lose its voice or its right to modify. I am firmly behind the individual membership. In Washington, D.C., we know the number of members matter. Having a solid individual membership will help the lawmakers pay closer attention to our segment. On all fronts, there are threats to our industry with the RPM Act, with Oceano Dunes closure, Bonneville Salt Flats, Sacramento's law that doesn't allow you to work on your vehicle at your home within the city limits. There are so many of these different threats coming at our industry that we don't have the workforce currently to address them all. And we don't influence Washington or local jurisdictions to have the influence. My company just turned 76 years old. We've seen how laws have affected our company over the years. There is a massive opportunity for us to work together to combat and stay ahead of the legislation and regulation.

Legislation and regulation are why SEMA got started. We banded together to put up a good fight for our industry. We have a D.C. office that is losing brain power quickly. We lost the leader of the D.C. office more than four years ago. We have one of the most talented and hard-working D.C. staffers retiring, and our past CEO was well-versed in this world as well, as that is where he started within SEMA. We need to staff up and do this quickly so we can do more than talk about threats like the RPM Act, small-volume legislation and so much more.

Marketing and communications are a big area I see as a significant opportunity. We host one of the biggest trade shows in North America and have a huge brand presence during the week of the SEMA Show. We have an opportunity to extend that presence out and make our industry and lifestyle more of a household name. There are so many programs and events that SEMA could use to promote throughout the year that we currently don't leverage. The more our industry is known, the more it protects our right to modify vehicles. We also have an opportunity to leverage the SEMA Show even more than we currently do. Look at the Go RVing campaign from the RVIA industry. They aren't out there promoting RVIA, but the lifestyle associated with the industry. Hands down they do something for their members that is so beneficial, and we have that opportunity to do this too. RVIA is out there promoting the lifestyle of RVing and getting people excited about it. They do a great job marketing it nationally, but they also do a great job representing the industry in the news as well. They have spokespersons who will speak on national news and be available for comment when anyone wants to speak to that industry segment. I want to see SEMA follow their lead.

Vehicle technology is another area that I would like to see SEMA use its resources to help protect its members from the changes coming. Electronic stability control (ESC) was a significant concern for us with the National Highway and Safety FMVSS 126. This potential threat to our product caused us to seek out SEMA's program to work with ESC experts to certify our products. It was a game-changer in our confidence in selling a product that wouldn't interfere with the OE ESC system. But there are new threats in technology gaining ground, like electrification. I'd like to see SEMA work on supporting members through some of these vehicle technology shifts. We've known electrification is coming, but it's gained tremendous traction in the last three years.

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?

My biggest concern is legislation. I think this is the one area that could hurt our industry the most, and I believe we are not ready for the upcoming challenges we will be facing with the push to electrification. I am in California and see how aggressive a state can be to set such goals as no gas vehicles sold after 2035. We need influence in D.C. and local jurisdictions. Individual memberships will help us gain attention. But we need more lawmakers who are willing to listen and work with us. I believe this will take a dynamic leader in Washington, D.C., to set strategy for Capitol Hill and state jurisdictions. We can see how votes at a local level like Oceano Dunes can significantly impact a market segment that uses the dunes for off-roading. Also, like in Sacramento, where you aren't allowed to work on your vehicle in your driveway within city limits. We could have influenced these challenges if we could be in more places and had more power. I want to see SEMA take a bigger, more aggressive, or assertive stance in these areas.

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?

Our strategic priorities are as follows.

1. **EMISSIONS**
2. **REGULATORY ISSUES (NON-EMISSIONS)**
3. **TRADE SHOWS: IMPROVE AND EVOLVE**
4. **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENTS**
5. **MOTORSPORTS: PRESERVE AND GROW**
6. **IMPROVE MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**
7. **ADDRESS COMPLEX VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY AND OEM RELATIONSHIPS**
8. **PROMOTE AUTOMOTIVE LIFESTYLE**

I am proud that I got to be a part of establishing these SEMA strategic priorities listed above. I believe these are all very important and valuable, and I appreciate that the top two here are focused on regulatory and legislative issues. I agree that these issues are all critical. But all the seven points deserve attention and resources to help preserve and protect our industry.

There is a big gap between programs and where SEMA aligns resources that match to the strategic priorities. During my time on the Board, we did a program review of all of SEMA's programs. They are great programs on their own. But it became very clear after establishing the strategic priorities that we are not clearly in alignment here. We will need to do another review to make sure we are using our resources, time and money on programs

that support the strategic priorities. To do what is right and best for our members we are going to have to be willing to make some hard decisions and sunset some programs.

I also see a gap where staff are not enthusiasts. We have a lot of staff who are not at their core car folks. This gap can be felt in a lack of passion and lack of enthusiasm to attack this list of strategic priorities. I want to see SEMA staff represent more of our membership in their passion for the aftermarket.

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

I am at the point in my career and business to be incredibly motivated to do what is necessary to keep this industry healthy. Hellwig Products just turned 76, is still family owned, and I am fourth generation. I have 17 years in the industry and have a long runway ahead of me. I want a seat at the table to help steer our future. I am motivated for my company, but also for many other companies in our industry like mine.

I own and run a small, family-owned business, just like many other members of SEMA. I would be able to be their voice. I am taking a proactive approach to our business's challenges and could speak to that in the boardroom. I am using SEMA resources to help with the challenges our business faces.

Our industry is getting a lot of venture-capitalist money infiltrated and this is getting a lot of attention. But a lot of our membership is still largely made up of small businesses. The SEMA Show is still one of the biggest gatherings of small businesses. I know their plight, I know their pain points, and I am on the Board to represent them—and I do this better than people who work for companies with the backing of big funds. I have no safety net—and neither does our industry right now. This is why I'm running again.

I have been involved in SEMA as a volunteer for more than 10 years. I have been an active SEMA Board member for almost three years. I have been chair of Light Truck Accessory Alliance (LTAA, now Truck & Off-Road Alliance, TORA) and served LTAA for eight years. I served as an Emerging Trends & Technology Network (ETTN) select committee member for two years and am an immediate past chair of SEMA Cares. I understand how SEMA works from the volunteer side.

We at Hellwig have been through the ESC testing process; I understand what is available for companies and what gaps might exist for companies where SEMA can help.

I have been on SEMA international trips to help grow our business outside of the United States. These trips are a great member benefit; they allow companies easy access to international markets that seem daunting to tackle without extra support.

Our company uses SEMA Data as its number-one source for data. We have reached the highest level of rating for the strength of data.

I have had influence and a first-row seat to how SEMA can solve problems. I know I can help SEMA solve big problems for all our businesses.

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

I believe SEMA being financially healthy caused it to take the eye off the ball to serve its members and look at the industry's future health. The association sat back and didn't continue to work on the issues, and there was a false sense of security. I feel like we are paying for it now and for the near future. Being financially well-established helped SEMA weather the most significant storm to hit the event industry, COVID. But we lost the drive to continue working for our members in every capacity. I want to see us get this passion back.

12. How about its strengths?

SEMA has many strengths; we had two successful trade shows back-to-back in the COVID era. Our trade show is healthy and evolving. Our financial portfolio has kept us strong through COVID challenges. We have an active and engaged volunteer community. We have a strong brand. SEMA has strong members. SEMA also has a talented team that cares about the organization's health.

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?

Deep dive into regulatory challenges, vehicle technology, marketing and communications, growing the automotive lifestyle brand.

SEMA spent many years doing things a certain way and hasn't evolved. It's time to do that now. We need to segment our databases and do a better job connecting with different types of members. We need to improve and modernize our content, and promote lifestyle, hobby, and career paths to the consumers. We need to work on growing vocational education opportunities to relieve the labor shortage. COVID showed us that our real competition isn't each other, but things like European vacations, going to the movies, going out to eat. We need to do a much better job for our members promoting our lifestyle so that we stand a better chance with our real competition.

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:

I am excited for the opportunity to serve the industry as a SEMA Board of Directors again. I greatly value being able to contribute to our industry and am poised to hit the ground running.

In the last two-plus years on the Board I've had the opportunity to serve in many different capacities. I've served on several task forces that I am proud to be apart of, Individual Membership Task force, SEMA Show committee, DEI Initiative for the association, and Election Committee. I love serving this industry.