



SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT MARKET ASSOCIATION

**SEMA DISTRIBUTOR/RETAILER
CANDIDACY QUESTIONNAIRE
2024 ELECTION YEAR**

**JOSH POULSON
AUTO ADDITIONS INC.**

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:

At the age of 16, I left high school and attended a community college and graduated with an associate's degree in legal assisting (paralegal) at the age of 18. While going to school I worked for Auto Additions Inc. as a technician. After school I was in a management position that paid more than any paralegal job I could find so I decided to stay. Five years later in 2000, the owner came to me and said he was moving out of state and wanted me to run the business. I was 23, about to be married and very scared, but took on the challenge and then over time took control of the company. Sitting here 24 years later I have been very fortunate to find great people to work with and build the business. I still am involved in overall sales of the company and new-product segments as well as potential acquisitions. In 2018, I became co-owner of Auto Accessory Configurator/Restyler Connect, which is a software for restylers and upfitters to run their businesses on as well as sell and market their products to car dealers and the retail public.

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 SEMA member for many years and 13 years ago a friend invited me to a SEMA PRO meeting to get involved. I was intrigued to meet other restylers and to find a group that had a "voice" in our industry. A year or so later I ran for the select committee and served six years before becoming chair-elect, chair and now immediate past chair, which finishes in July 2025. We have been very successful in turning PRO into a much more restyler "friendly" organization and creating programs and content that help our membership. I am also part of Restylers United, which is a "20 group" of the top restylers around the country made up currently of 15 members. We get together two times a year to discuss issues, challenges and strategies to continue to grow and thrive in our businesses.

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:

We have won a few local awards but most notable is our company winning SEMA-PRO Restyler of the Year in 2012, I was awarded SEMA PRO "Person of the Year" in 2015, and honored to receive the SEMA Person of the Year award in 2022. I am a regular contributor to *Shop Magazine* with a featured article every month that discusses every topic possible that is relevant to shop owners and managers as well as manufacturers in the industry. Auto Additions Inc. is usually always awarded in the top 10 customers of many manufacturers of different products around the country, making us an elite restyler domestically.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vehicular/Product Design/Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources Management
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Crisis Management	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Compliance	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative/Lobbying	_____

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?

Many people have said I am a "natural leader," but I really don't think there is such a thing. I prefer to lead by example. I never ask someone to do something I wouldn't do. I like to stay

relevant in any areas I have touched in the past so that I don't lose a "grip" on those areas. I feel that I have the ability to motivate people and even "sell" them on an idea if needed. I try to be reasonable and have an open ear because I recognize I don't have all the answers but can usually figure out the direction to go relatively quickly when presented all the facts. Being a husband for 23 years and also a father of two children (16 and 17 years old) have helped to round me out for sure! I have leadership roles at my church and also among my Restylers United group. I feel I can help the Board understand the restyler section of the industry that includes many manufacturers and installers that have never really had any representation on the Board. Our segment is still growing rapidly while other parts of the industry are shrinking or nervous about what the future looks like. As a restyler and having represented many PRO members we are optimistic about the future of EV and ICE and their place in the market. Ultimately, I am passionate to keep the positivity of the industry going. There are and will continue to be many opportunities that our members can grow with; however, if they continue to worry about what is in the "rear-view mirror" they will miss the opportunities. PRO is largely made up of owners or top executives, and we are one of the few councils that actually work to make money for our members.

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

The individual awards are very nice, however I prefer when Auto Additions is recognized because it speaks more to all the wonderful employees that have helped me get to this point. Even though we are a small business, we have 37 employees who are very happy to come to work every day and customize vehicles. Being able to lead and help each of them reach their potential is an everyday goal that is very rewarding. I get more pleasure out of helping an employee reach their goals or overcome an obstacle versus a trophy of some kind. I am also very proud of AAC and the software we have created to help Restylers around the country. We are a very niche business and the software solutions available to help us grow and run our businesses are not available. We always seemed to "shoe horn" a shop software into our business but it never has worked. So my partner and I decided to make our own and now I run my entire business off of it, as do other restylers around the country.

Lastly, I am so thankful and proud to know so many in my segment of the industry. We have grown our PRO membership in the past year and a half from around 180 members to now more than 300 members. We have launched two major programs that have changed PRO. I was proud that we fought SEMA staff on their antiquated social-media SOP and took back control of our social media and have grown our social media to give us a way to work with and communicate with our engaged members. As an example, after 10 years PRO had 1,000 Facebook followers. After we took over in January 2022, we now have more than 20,000 followers, and there are similar examples for Instagram and LinkedIn.

I also look forward to the future because many more companies in the wrap film business and also the 12-volt electronics business are looking for a home within SEMA. Many of these companies have left CES as their main trade show and have come over to the SEMA Show and represent hundreds of members that PRO can speak with and help. This will allow SEMA, as a whole, to continue to grow and be prosperous when many other manufacturers or products are becoming non relevant.

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 advancement of federal regulations and macroeconomic issues (inflation,

unemployment, health care, etc.) but only if they are relevant to your perspective on industry issues.

There are a lot of threats and opportunities currently. The largest threat is government regulations and overreach. The freedom to repair and modify is constantly a threat that can affect us all. This would also entail emission issues like CARB that the government may or may not side with our industry on. In my opinion, this is the largest threat in front of us. The second-largest threat is the way the OEMs are building their vehicles. They have no interest in the aftermarket and usually view us as a threat or at minimum an annoyance that will negatively affect their vehicles. Most don't care what their consumers want; instead they just want to build a vehicle and control all aspects moving forward. Therefore, we must continue to be creative to make sure we can stay relevant. The current Corvette is an example where it was basically "locked out" to the aftermarket and we were unable to make as many modifications to it as we did previous years. The third-largest issue is that we have been in the beginning of a generational change in our industry with the focus of the OEMs going from ICE to EV. I don't feel this is a major immediate threat, even though it could affect a lot of our industry and the products we offer. It is something to keep an eye on to see how much the public will embrace EVs and if the infrastructure to support this massive overturn will actually take place.

As for opportunities, I am usually very optimistic about the future, and I feel that some of our best days are ahead of us. Our industry's greatest weapon is our ability to pivot quickly. For large corporations or even the OEMs, it takes many years if not decades to pivot, whereas we are extremely pliable and innovative. So, if EV is the future we have the talent and the ability to give the EV consumer the experience and products they want that the OEMs and larger corporations cannot. One of my mentors told me a long time ago: "We are never going back to horse and buggy," and I truly believe that we have a bright future because people are not going to stop driving vehicles. We are not ever going to a mass-transit or a rideshare society where people won't own a vehicle. So, if that is the case, then the personalization of each one's vehicle will always play a factor. Just like none of us like the same clothes, colors, options, etc., vehicle personalization and customization will always be around. The opportunity is creating and offering the products that can fill a niche with whatever is needed at the time.

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?

For myself and the part of the industry that I am in and those that I have served and worked with, I feel the future relationship with the OEMs and how they are trying to retain the ability to own the "software" instead of an open-source platform where the consumer can get his or her vehicle serviced, repaired, customized where and how they want. This is a huge debate on who owns the car. Is it the OEM? Is it the customer who bought the car? The legal fight is happening now and if we find ourselves on the wrong side of that we could be in trouble. SEMA is doing a good job of trying to fight the legal battles and the government regulations whether it be through the PAC or those in DC. However, I think we need to continue to improve on our greatest ally and that is the public enthusiasts. Yes, there are many enthusiasts that know and like SEMA and would support us if they knew the issues facing our industry. However, we are not communicating those issues as well as we could, and we were late to the game to cater to these people. We also need to reach the general public that may not be an "enthusiast" but are potential voters—constituents that if we could reach them with the right message they would most likely side with us on these issues of service, repair and customizing. There are many ways to "get our name and

message” out there and at SEMA PRO, we have already presented a few ways and have many more ideas on how to reach a large group of voters to push our own agenda.

9. Given the 9 [Strategic Priorities](#) that the SEMA board and the association are focused on, which 2 do you think are the most critical and what can you do to contribute to the success of these initiatives?

#8 Promote Automotive Lifestyle: This initiative can be improved on to help with all other strategic priorities. Like I mentioned before, if we can create a louder “voice” for more of the general public to hear our message as we ask for help then we can be an unmovable force. The NRA has a large voice and a clear message. SEMA could have that same type of support, but we have been hiding as a B2B-only trade show for too long. We need to increase the consumer experience at the SEMA Show but also reach many of the common people who like vehicles but aren't what I would call “enthusiasts.” Just one example of a way to do this is like the program SEMA PRO was approved for but then because of budget restraints was cut. It was a national auto show program where we would build a SEMA booth and take it to regional auto shows around the country. We would partner with local restylers in the market and have them build some vehicles that are provided by local car dealers. These four to six vehicles would be in the booth along with a ton of pointed marketing (videos, graphics, information) that would allow the general public to know who SEMA is and what we need from them. They would be able to get an individual membership and then get informed on the challenges we are facing that they are unaware of. This is an easy way to reach up to 11 million voters with small investment. To me that is money well spent.

#7 Complex Vehicle Technology and OEM Relationships: This one needs a lot of work. Having the SEMA Garage Detroit is a good start. I personally think SEMA headquarters should be in Detroit where everything happens. When we can get in the same circles and events as OEMs, we will gain more allies and some listening ears. There are many OEM employees that know and love SEMA and what we do; however, we need to grow and leverage those relationships. Also, we can do some creative things (we are currently working on an awesome new initiative with the PRO and the Board of Directors) to make the OEMs recognize the importance of customization on their vehicles. I won't get into details but there are rating systems (JD Power, Edmunds, Consumer Reports) that we can use to our advantage to create a rating system for how “accessory-friendly” new vehicles are. The OEMs highly value these ratings, and if we can create an environment where they are seeing their vehicles rated poorly because of “lock out” or whatever, then they will start to build their vehicles a little different to gain higher ratings and understand consumers will be more enticed to buy their vehicles.

10. If elected to the SEMA board of directors what unique qualities, experiences, connections, or characteristics are you able to activate during your 3-year term?

I feel because of my SEMA volunteer experience of 12 years and an understanding of how SEMA operates it gives me an advantage on where to push and not push. Which is probably my second

qualification... I don't just sit quietly when I feel strongly about an issue. In fact, I have had to learn to be less vocal and instead listen and get educated on issues more. I feel my experience as chair of PRO has helped round me out better. I have a natural leadership skill of getting things done when they are obvious. It has been a learning experience to slow down without “knee-jerk reacting” to things. So, I hope that I would be humble enough to listen when needed and then vocal when needed.

11. What industry trends or opportunities is SEMA as an association and the SEMA Show missing out on currently?

Mostly what I talked about in previous questions...that is simply making SEMA and our issues mainstream to the general public. Once people know us as “the” organization that fights for our rights on vehicles instead of being known as a cool trade show then we will see many more opportunities. Also our website could use some help...but everyone knows that.

12. If you get elected to the SEMA board of directors, what topics or issues will you spend your time focusing on and how will you gain support?

We have some of the most passionate, creative, entrepreneurial minds in the world within SEMA, and when we can come together on things and then pivot the industry to meet the current needs, I really do feel it is unstoppable.

13. Where do you see the association and show having an advantage over and edge over competitors in a similar space

Besides the preceding answers where I outlined some immediate programs that could change the needle, I would like to focus on some of SEMA's programs that should either be cut or trimmed. There are some programs that really aren't giving the ROI that they should. I feel that with Mike Spagnola's leadership and some of the other leadership changes that have taken place in the past few years, we are doing a much better job of seeing and fixing the internal flaws at SEMA. Now we need to help move the marketing team and other staff members forward on where we need them to be since I feel we are years behind of where we should be.

0. Questionnaires can be 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:

If you don't know me personally then I can only tell you that what you see is what you get. I am not a CEO of a huge corporation nor am I a huge car enthusiast that knows how to build engines or race cars. I simply am a husband, father and business owner that has been in this industry for 30 years. I know how to get things done and not procrastinate or “kick the can down the road.” I like to be productive and accomplish things and have a great time doing it.

15. Why do you want to volunteer to be a SEMA board member?

I am not looking for a spotlight or a “position.” If I can be of help for a lot of people and have **the skill set to do that, then I feel the responsibility to volunteer for my peers. I get great satisfaction of giving back and feel that it will always come back to me tenfold in the long run. Quite frankly, I am only doing this because I have been asked by many of my peers in the industry to do it. Therefore, I do this out of commitment to them more than myself and any personal gains I may get. I would be content with running my two businesses and spending time with my family and my other commitments. However, I have gained some influence, and if I am being asked to use it then I will do it.**