



## SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT MARKET ASSOCIATION

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

# KELLE OESTE V8 SPEED AND RESTO SHOP

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:

Over the past five years, I've worked with several organizations to improve my professional development and earned the following:

1. Masters in Shop Ownership from Drive Shops <https://driveshops.com/drive-kpis>.
2. Completed a master's program in Shop Ownership at Drive Shops in record time, demonstrating exceptional commitment and proficiency. Coursework included KPIs, financial strategy, business operations, marketing and human resource management.
3. Leadership training from Discover Leadership <https://discoverleadership.com/about>.
4. Member of Vistage Chief Executive group [www.vistage.com](http://www.vistage.com) fostering strategic thinking and executive-level insights.

#### Other key points:

1. More than 20 years of professional development training as a business owner, leading a team of 30-plus employees, while managing business development, real estate, accounting and daily operations.
2. Owner of seven real estate properties.
3. Building relationships: collaborated with diverse stakeholders, including city council, educational institutions, other business owners and charitable organizations, showcasing strong communication and collaboration skills.

My current job responsibilities include overall business management and strategic planning for expansion, business development, real estate planning, and banking relationships, as well as day-to-day operations management, including accounting, purchasing, IT, HR and employee-performance management.

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:

Professional Affiliations and Community Engagement:

- Actively involved in industry organizations:
- SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) member
- HRIA (Hot Rod Industry Alliance) Select Committee Member
- ARMO (Automotive Recyclers Association of Missouri) member
- SBN (Society of Automotive Engineers International) member
- PRI Pro Member (Performance Racing Industry)

Dedicated to automotive industry education: volunteer at local high schools and colleges, speak at career days and job fairs, assist students with Skills USA testing preparation, collaborate with high school CEO programs, mentor college and tech school students in our shop through employment and internships, moderate online roundtables covering industry education through HRIA, teach students about business ownership and entrepreneurship.

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:

Industry Recognition:

- Master of Shop Ownership award recipient: Demonstrated exceptional proficiency and dedication in shop ownership principles (awarded by Drive Shops).
- Featured educator in musclecar community: My work is featured on V8TV; broadcasted hundreds of instructional videos on television, social media and YouTube, reaching and empowering enthusiasts globally.
- Moderated Women in Motorsports panel discussion in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Shared motorsports career opportunities and experiences in evolving culture traditionally oppressive to females in automotive.
- Received joint award from Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals event: Recognized for valuable contributions and dedication to the automotive community.
- Recognized in various automotive publications for leadership in restoration shop operations.

Business Growth and Expansion:

- Achieved sustained annual revenue growth: Successfully implemented strategies to consistently increase company revenue year-over-year for 20 consecutive years.
- Diversified business offerings: Expanded operations by adding new departments to our business, including project management, upholstery and engine machining, diversifying services and attracting new customers.
- Strategic real estate acquisitions: Purchased seven shop-related properties, securing long-term operational stability and future expansion potential.

Community Engagement and Education:

- Passionate advocate for automotive careers: Regularly present to high school and college students, inspiring and informing future generations about opportunities in the industry. Participate in various events designed to inspire women to pursue motorsports and automotive careers. Routinely provide tours and community events at our shop to share our work and culture with the community.
- Building excellence: Cars built by our company have gained worldwide recognition for top quality, showcasing our commitment to craftsmanship and innovation.

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

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motor Sports/Racing                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distribution/Logistics              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vehicle Shows/Auctions/Exhibitions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supply Chain                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Planning/Management      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accounting                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicular/Product Design/Innovation | <input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> Internet Utilization                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Relations         | _____  |
| <input checked="" 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?

- Cultivating Talent Through Leadership: I thrive on mentoring and empowering a diverse team of 30-plus employees with wide-ranging skills and experience. Building strong relationships, fostering growth and seeing my team flourish brings me immense satisfaction.
- Bridging Generations of Knowledge: I hold a deep respect for the expertise of seasoned professionals and am passionate about absorbing their wisdom and building upon it. This intergenerational knowledge exchange keeps our company innovative and competitive.
- Fueling Growth and Success: Witnessing increased business profitability is more than just a metric—it's a testament to the collective effort and potential of our team. Optimizing operations and achieving financial goals fuels my entrepreneurial spirit and motivates me to push boundaries.
- Continuous Learning and Improvement: My journey as a business owner is shaped by a perpetual quest for self-reflection and development. I'm constantly seeking new ways to be

a more effective leader, employer and strategist, leading by example and driving positive change.

- Of course, I still enjoy the occasional opportunity to connect with my hands-on skills that helped us launch our business, and I love fabricating and welding!

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

Witnessing the continuous financial and physical growth of our company is incredibly rewarding, but I'm most proud of my role in positively affecting the lives of our team members and their families. By careful financial management, I was able to increase our employee benefits package to cover 75% of employees and their families' health-care costs, also adding vision, dental and life insurance to their benefits package. Considering the national average shows only 49% of automotive repair shops offer medical insurance to their employees alone, 32% offer life insurance coverage, and just 25% provide short-and/or long-term disability insurance, these benefits demonstrate my commitment to improving our team's well-being. By providing health, vision, dental, life and 401k benefits, I was able to provide security, increased productivity and increased morale. This achievement exemplifies my dedication to driving both business success and employee well-being.

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.

I feel the automotive aftermarket has several opportunities and threats coming in the next five years.

1. The internal combustion engine is being threatened by uneducated legislators. At the same time, there are also many opportunities to develop careers and technology relating to emerging alternative fuels that will allow our industry to continue to grow. I feel SEMA should be more supportive of those developing alternative fuel options.
2. The right to modify vehicles with parts from the aftermarket is being threatened. This is a critical time for enthusiasts and manufacturers to raise awareness and protect their rights.
3. There are many career opportunities for people of all ages who chose to learn the skill sets our industry desperately needs. I feel SEMA's educational resources should be shared more easily and more frequently with the members.
4. An opportunity exists to empower business owners with effective business-management strategies. So many businesses in our industry are born from passion, by talented individuals who may not have business training. An essential aspect of industry growth is equipping business owners with the knowledge and skills needed for successful operations. Educational programs focused on business management will contribute to the sustainability and prosperity of aftermarket businesses.
5. I feel there is an opportunity to improve quality, safe repairs on all vehicles. By setting

and adhering to high standards, we can enhance consumer confidence and safety. These high standards will help our builders and installers command a higher level of respect from consumers. This will allow them to charge a fair market price for their services while keeping them safe and compliant in the eyes of the law and insurance providers.

6. With new developments in technology, I see many opportunities for manufacturers to improve the quality of their aftermarket parts.

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?

I'm most passionate about the success of small-business owners. Many people can purchase the parts and install them, but a business owner takes on a much greater risk. Although many of us started our companies because we are passionate about building beautiful cars, trucks or automotive products, we make it work without formal business ownership training. We have been forced to learn accounting, customer and employee management, marketing and so much more on-the-fly. I feel that automotive aftermarket business owners are natural problem solvers and can weather any storm if we have the tools we need to own and operate our businesses. I feel if business owners in our industry had more professional support and training from SEMA, we could increase our ability to train employees, communicate better with customers, learn how to do better quality repair work, create new products to sell or install, and develop ideas and products to solve many manufacturing issues. Businesses that operate more professionally ultimately improve the standard of living of ourselves, our employees and their families and contribute more to the automotive aftermarket industry. Many of the smallest-business owners I know are creating and innovating solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing our industry with little to no support from SEMA.

Passion alone can't keep a car-related business afloat. Without strong business-management knowledge, the very health of these enterprises can falter, impacting personal relationships, product quality and, ultimately, consumer demand. This precarious foundation makes them vulnerable to economic fluctuations, potentially leading to closures. The consequences ripple outwards, leaving car enthusiasts struggling to find essential parts and repair facilities, jeopardizing their ability to enjoy these beloved vehicles. By prioritizing sound business practices alongside their passion, these businesses can ensure their own sustainability and keep the joy of classic cars accessible for generations to come.

Personally, I have dedicated numerous years to collaborating with shop owners on aspects of business ownership, management and succession planning. Simultaneously, I am actively engaged in ongoing education and training initiatives to further enrich my understanding of these critical topics.

To initiate a change, I would first open the vault of SEMA recorded seminars, training sessions, and professional development programs and make them easy to access and available 24/7 to anyone, not just SEMA members. I advise recording all future speaking engagements, whether motivational or educational, and share those too. The shared content should include a link to join the SEMA organization as well as the councils and networks but the information should be free and easy to access. SEMA has generations of

extremely valuable knowledge going to waste seemingly behind lock and key. I find it unfortunate that if someone were not able to attend on the day of a seminar, the helpful information is lost forever.

Additionally, I would be the advocate for SEMA to give greater support to the councils to create new educational opportunities at a regional level so that the automotive aftermarket industry could attend more educational events. These would be more frequent and in more locations, and SEMA could improve them by allocating additional financial and planning resources, reducing decision-making delays, and providing more online and in-person resources and promotion by SEMA staff or allowing outsourced professionals to help when needed.

9. Given the nine [strategic priorities](#) that the SEMA Board and the association are focused on, which two do you think are the most critical and what can you do to contribute to the success of these initiatives?

The first priority of the Board should be the ability to modify (not only engines but entire vehicles), as it is paramount for our industry's sustainability. A stringent regulatory environment could potentially prevent our members' capacity to innovate and thrive. It is imperative that SEMA continue to advocate for the preservation of our industry's freedom to modify vehicles, ensuring that retailers, restorers and manufacturers can continue their operations without unnecessary constraints.

If elected to the SEMA Board of Directors, I would work to connect SEMA members to the SEMA councils and networks (and other SEMA resources) to help them maximize the benefits of SEMA resources to help ensure their continued development of internal combustion engines, alternative fuels and engine-related parts. I feel this is an important need as many of our members do not have time or resources to market their ideas, attend events or trade shows, or learn the tremendous amount of knowledge other SEMA members have available to them.

The second priority of the Board should be member engagement, which stands as a cornerstone for the prosperity of our industry. I recommend a strategic focus on educational initiatives as a means of fostering member engagement. There are many businesses, both current SEMA members and potential future members, that desperately need the kind of help SEMA can offer if SEMA improves their educational channels. This approach not only targets all age groups and backgrounds, from younger enthusiasts to veteran businesses. By increasing the frequency and accessibility of educational programs, SEMA can help improve the success of our industry and contribute to a more informed and passionate aftermarket.

I propose a broader regional presence for SEMA throughout the year. By actively supporting retailers, manufacturers and builders willing to host open houses or training opportunities, SEMA can strengthen its connection with members at the grassroots level. This regional approach would not only bolster engagement but also provide a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration, further solidifying SEMA's role as a guardian of the industry.

If elected to the SEMA Board of Directors, I would collaborate with members to distribute information, coordinate with the councils and networks to develop regional and more frequent events to network and share knowledge with each other as well as their memberships. I would work to improve the distribution and ease of access of the wealth of information in SEMA's archives that would be so helpful to many members.

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?

If elected, I feel my knowledge of business ownership and employee development are valuable skills. I would help others focus on the direction and future sustainability of the automotive aftermarket industry. My ability to think of processes and ideas differently is also a valuable tool. My experiences as an employer, parts purchaser and installer, media personality and interviewer, and promotor of manufacturers and the industry in general have afforded me tremendous opportunities, perspectives and relationships in the industry. My skills as a fabricator, mechanic and auto body technician also give me valuable hands-on perspective in this role. As a member of the HRIA select committee since 2022 and an attendee of the SEMA Show for 20 years, I have met, worked with and become friends with many industry professionals.

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

SEMA the association seems to be missing out on the opportunity to provide more educational opportunities to their members.

Many people have no idea what SEMA is about and how it helps the industry. A substantial segment of the audience remains uninformed about SEMA's pivotal role in advancing the automotive aftermarket industry, necessitating a concerted effort to enhance awareness of the benefits of the SEMA organization.

The SEMA database necessitates meticulous management by SEMA Data to ensure its accuracy and utility. Transparency in the distribution of membership lists is crucial, as a more open approach to sharing this information among councils and networks would amplify the collective benefits for all members involved.

There is a pressing need for the SEMA organization to remove barriers obstructing access to valuable information, facilitating seamless communication among its members. The current practice of confining recorded interviews and photographs to a seemingly inaccessible vault hinders the potential for knowledge dissemination. SEMA should recognize the intrinsic value of these resources and leverage platforms like YouTube to make them publicly available, fostering increased membership and heightened engagement within the automotive aftermarket industry.

Perhaps the SEMA organization is missing an opportunity to connect with builders and installers due to their underrepresentation on the Board and in SEMA positions. These

are the “front-line” members who have a unique perspective interacting with both consumers and products, and they would benefit greatly from education, support and representation.

The SEMA Show seems to be missing the opportunity to engage and retain many long-term exhibitors. Many past and present exhibitors are frustrated at the expense and effort they put into being at the SEMA Show with less than expected support from SEMA or return on their investment, something that could be enhanced with more education on the resources available.

The SEMA organization seems to be missing out on quality international participation in our councils and networks.

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?

I would like to work on membership engagement improvements through education, increasing the interest of others in our industry and helping business owners to be successful. I will ask large business owners to provide mentorship to smaller business owners and those interested in our industry. I will work with large SEMA membership companies to host regional classes, seminars and hands-on training opportunities.

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

The SEMA Show's main advantage over competitors is the Show's ability to attract individuals and companies from all over the world to come to one location to network and connect. The SEMA Show has the advantage of connecting every type of automotive aftermarket part manufacturer company with the retailers, service providers, media and enthusiasts seeing the same things—all at the same time and at the same place.

An advantage SEMA has is its large membership and strong voice to facilitate change in legislation and to support its member companies.

Another advantage shared by the organization and Show is a rich and long history of involvement. SEMA is synonymous with the automotive aftermarket industry.

14. 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:

My journey began growing up on my family's farm. I learned the value of hands-on work and resourcefulness as a kid by helping my parents operate and maintain the farm. My parents wisely saddled me with real responsibilities early on, from raising the animals to having to rebuild the engine of my first truck before I could drive it.

After pursuing a career as a legal assistant in St. Louis, Los Angeles and Chicago, I combined my technical know-how, office acumen and strong work ethic to take the leap and start V8TV



Productions with my husband Kevin. The video production business grew into the creation of a TV show called V8TV, another show called "Muscle Car of the Week," and a podcast called V8 Radio. The production of the shows led to us building and opening V8 Speed and Resto Shop to restore and add performance to cars we feature on V8TV.

We currently employ 31 team members and work on an average of 40 cars at a time. We own several properties, and build musclecars, classics and custom cars for discerning customers all over the world.

I still love the farm, fishing and animals, and thrive on the challenges of business and learning to better my family, team and community. My education started on the farm raising animals and helping my father harvest crops and my mother to harvest a two-acre garden while feeding anyone who showed up at the farm at any time. I learned mechanical skills from my dad who was a diesel mechanic, and I learned autobody skills from my brother who does collision repair. While in school I participated in 4-H and FFA. I attended a local community college to study secretarial sciences with a legal specialty. While employed at law firms I took advantage of any training opportunities presented.

I have worked with DRIVE, the largest high-tech automotive, collision and truck repair coaching and management training company in North America, studying business management and ownership. In the last two years, I received CEO business training through the Vistage executive coaching organization. Last fall, I hired a fractional CFO to help me plan the succession of our business and make plans for the next 10 years and beyond. I have been self-implementing the Traction EOS system in our shop since early 2023 while considering building or purchasing new properties to expand our shop footprint and services. I also received a Certificate of Achievement from Discover Leadership training in 2023. Each year at the SEMA Show, I attend many workshops that are contextual to our business and growth. I am always seeking the guidance of mentors and other business owners as well as my employees and friends on how to be a better business owner, leader, employer and contributor to society.

As owner and operations manager of V8 Speed and Resto Shop, my daily duties started 20 years ago as a mechanic, fabricator, body work and video production assistant. Over time, my daily focus has changed to business growth, property development, management and development of the crew, human resources and a lot of accounting.

Looking ahead: I'm excited to bring my passion, diverse skills and commitment to learning to the SEMA Board of Directors. I'm confident I can make a significant contribution to your organization.

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

I feel the Board needs the perspective of a business owner and service provider with the car-building and parts-installing perspective. I strive to help others, and I want to see the industry grow and be more supportive of the builders, the purchasers and installers of the parts. I am passionate about the future of our industry and its ability to attract new enthusiasts and technicians. But I am most passionate about improving the lives of those who choose to make careers in the automotive aftermarket industry and their families who depend on them. I feel that serving on the SEMA Board will provide me opportunities to contribute in these areas, and give back to an amazing industry that has provided me with not only a successful business and career, but has also become a great extended family.