



SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT MARKET ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2018 ELECTION YEAR

DAN KAHN

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:

I have been both a car guy and a communicator my entire life. As a teenager, I worked the counter at Performance Automotive Warehouse, and at 18 I became the youngest editor of a nationally distributed car magazine on record (*Rod Action*, as well as *Kart Racer* and *All American Chevys* magazines later). I worked my way through a journalism degree at Cal State Northridge while editing the aforementioned magazines, and upon graduation took a job with Petersen Publishing as a technical editor at *Rod & Custom* magazine.

After a few years (and a few company ownership changes) I wanted to expand into the digital realm and moved to an editorship at Edmunds.com, where I helped them develop their vehicle testing program and launch their enthusiast channel, InsideLine. After a few years at Edmunds I wanted to jump to the other side of the table—PR—and worked as an account executive at Automeia2000, managing PR and advertising for several motorsports sanctioning bodies and speed parts companies, before being recruited to a senior position at another agency where I ran PR programs for Meguiar's, Aston Martin, Airstream, Callaway Cars and more.

At that time, I wrote a white paper called "PR 2.0: A Primer on the Convergence of Digital Marketing and Public Relations" that foretold that companies would soon need a single agency that could speak to the consumer in a variety of ways, both through traditional PR and marketing but also through social-media marketing and direct influencer engagement. Agency ownership didn't agree with my premise and asked me to backburner it. Instead, I left and started my own firm in November 2008.

In the decade since, Kahn Media has grown into the largest full-service marketing firm in the automotive aftermarket, offering everything from public and media relations to digital marketing, social-media marketing, video production, design, branding, event promotion, pricing and search engine marketing strategy, website development and even data management. We have a staff of 24 full-time in-

house employees at our 7,000-sq.-ft. office just north of Los Angeles, and a satellite office in Chicago to serve our Midwestern accounts. We work with 24 of the best brands in the automotive, aftermarket and luxury space, including Jay Leno's Garage, Coker Tire, MagnaFlow, Phillips 66, Rolex, Nitto Tire, Lund International, the Petersen Automotive Museum, Superformance, Heidt's, Ringbrothers, Honeywell Garrett, The Thermal Club, Grand National Roadster Show and many more.

In my current role, I am responsible for managing my team; handling new business; managing the financials of the company; leading a creative team on PR/Video/branding projects; leading a data team on new initiatives ranging from client data and pricing strategy to search engine marketing strategy; and consulting clients on branding, product development, marketing, messaging and go-to-market strategies.

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:

The automotive aftermarket has been my home my entire adult life, so I feel very strongly that giving back is critical so that I leave the industry in a better place than I found it. If not for a few key mentors, I would not be where I am today, and I hope to one day offer that same experience to younger people in the industry myself. I have served as a SEMA volunteer in a variety of roles for the past eight years, including as a select committee member, chair-elect, chair and immediate past chair of the Young Executives Network (YEN). I served a full year as a council-board liaison the final year of the full-time liaison format (auditing five councils on every call and meeting). I am also fortunate to be wrapping up my first term on the SEMA Board of Directors—where I have served in a variety of roles, including working on the Youth Engagement Task Force and most recently leading the SEMA Show Committee as its chair. I have attended every SEMA Washington Rally in the past six years and am very proud that after two attempts I got our Democratic congressperson to sign on and support the RPM Act—one of only a few Democrats to do so.

Outside of SEMA, I am on an advisory committee to the local community college where I guest lecture about public relations and marketing, and I am on the board of directors of the Checkered Flag 200, which is the Petersen Automotive Museum's key membership organization and charitable organization.

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:

I'm very fortunate that SEMA has asked me to present as a speaker at the last four SEMA Shows—presenting on topics ranging from PR to digital marketing to storytelling as branding tool. I have also been a speaker at several SEMA leadership summits speaking about volunteerism, something I am very passionate about.

I volunteer for personal fulfillment and to help protect our industry, not for awards, but I was very honored to receive the SEMA Young Executives Network's "Vanguard Award" for contributing to the growth and success of YEN in 2012; the same year my company was honored by YEN with a special recognition award for creating career opportunities for young people in the industry. I was named to the *SEMA News* "35 under 35" three years ago, and more recently this year I was named by the *Los Angeles Business Journal* as part of their "Valley 200," a list of the most influential business leaders in the region.

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

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|--|--|
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Financial Planning/Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting |
| <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet Utilization |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning | Other (specify): |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crisis Management | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Compliance | _____ |
| <input checked="" 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?

Part of my job is to fully immerse myself in my clients' business—and my clients are very diverse—from speed/truck/hot-rod parts manufacturers to sanctioning

bodies, service businesses, events and even museums. With that in mind, I have knowledge of many channels in our industry, my finger is on the pulse of the aftermarket in a unique way.

I am a professional marketer with deep knowledge of both public relations and media management, but also cutting-edge digital marketing ranging from social media and search marketing to production, web development, e-commerce and even augmented reality. That skillset allows me to bring guidance to board conversations about everything from marketing, consumer outreach and youth engagement initiatives to strategic thinking on how SEMA messaging impacts its members and the consumer.

Most importantly, I am a small-business owner that started with nothing other than a spare bedroom and an idea, and I have grown that into a multimillion-dollar enterprise with the help of an extremely talented and hardworking staff and amazing clients who took a chance on me years ago. We see clients as partners, and we grow our businesses together—as such I like to think I've not only helped grow the industry in a small way, but have also had the sense to listen and learn from the amazing industry people around me.

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

As a volunteer—serving on the SEMA Board of Directors has been a highlight of my career. I have not only been fortunate to be “ringside” for some amazing developments in our industry—hopefully contributing to strategic and generative conversations along the way. I have also been fortunate to listen and learn from several extremely bright and talented leaders over the course of this experience.

As a business leader—2017 was a banner year for my firm. The Petersen Automotive Museum experienced record ticket sales and was named “Museum of the Year,” The Thermal Club was named “Motorsports Facility of the Year,” and Lund International was named “Georgia Business of the Year,”—all with our help and support. We also hit several stretch goals this year—both financially and regarding staff. We now employ two dozen people that all receive full benefits, including health/dental/eye care/retirement and 401K with matching, something that as a small business we struggled to accomplish but felt was critical. Our mission is to recruit, train and retain the best and brightest car people in the industry.

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.

The large-scale retirement of the Baby Boomer generation tied to a strong economy and a strong housing and credit market means most of our members are experiencing a boom time right now. Companies are growing and sales are strong as the last true “gearhead generation” is in an economic position to build and buy collector vehicles, RVs, etc. There is short-term gain to be mined over the next decade here, and as that generation continues to become more comfortable with online purchasing and digital marketing the continued march of our members towards a direct to consumer communications and sales model will result in strong sales.

However long term, I see the following challenges facing our industry.

We not only **need new consumers**, we also need to pivot and adapt to find ways to communicate with them and develop products they want. The Youth Engagement Task Force and consumer-engagement programs have made good strides in both of these categories, particularly exploring ways to connect with both consumers and young people as quickly and on as large a scale as possible. However, if our members don’t have products (or applications) the next-gen consumers want, it will be a moot point. I believe we need to act quickly to push the research department to mine big data to help our members prepare for this. Global vehicle platforms, the continued demise of both manual transmissions and ICE engines and shifting young consumer tastes away from pre-’72 domestic vehicles to ’80s–’00s European and Japanese vehicles are all going to change our market whether we like it or not, so we need to help our members prepare for it.

The distribution model is changing rapidly. A decade ago nearly all of our manufacturers sold through multi-step distribution. Now more than half sell direct to consumer, and that number grows exponentially every year. This is not only affecting WDs and brick-and-mortars, it also creates new challenges (and opportunities) for the manufacturers. Proper MAP policies and enforcement, learning now the navigate the minefield of Amazon sales, e-commerce sales tactics and even taxation are all issues the industry is having to tackle quickly. SEMA has done a good job pivoting to help all the companies affected by this change with education on these topics, but it needs to continue and we need to address that as our industry continues to become more focused on the consumer, the Show and even our association will need to reflect this change as well.

The dramatic increase of **private equity** funding in our industry, where company founders and innovators are selling to investment groups who are bundling companies, is both an opportunity and a threat. The culture of our industry will change, but if managed correctly we can become stronger as a result. However, without the proper guidance and attention, many legendary brands and the community nature of our industry may disappear. I believe this can be managed by offering business owners information, seminars and education on how to manage this process in the best possible way.

Government regulation is a looming threat that keeps me up at night. While I think the RPM Act and its “Save our Race Cars” campaign felt like a step in the right direction, it is only the tip of the iceberg (and the RPM Act hasn’t passed yet). That issue only affects race cars, but our entire industry and way of life is in peril if politicians decide to start leaning harder on enforcement and regulation of parts for street cars. Even with the current administration leaning toward less regulation on emissions and fuel economy, we are still faced with a Washington, D.C., bureaucracy that—no matter who is in office—increasingly sees our industry as a threat. We must act decisively and quickly to protect our individual rights and our industry from government overreach so that our businesses and the trade show and association it supports continue to exist in the coming decades.

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 have been studying the current contraction in the powersports industry, and it scares me. As Harley sales boomed in the '90s, the Japanese brands shifted to big twin products to capture some of that market. As a result, the industry experienced incredible sales for two decades, but they ignored the youth market and did not continue to fill the pipeline with new potential customers. Now that boomers are starting to get older and aren’t riding as often, the next gen is not interested in motorcycling because they weren’t brought up around Trail 80s and scramblers and little bikes most of us rode as kids; the industry was too focused on selling big twins to older customers. As a result, the market is contracting quickly. One of their biggest WDs just declared bankruptcy, the OEMs are suffering and dealers are folding. Even strong side-by-side sales can’t help, because many of these vehicles are sold at boat and RV dealerships as well as motorcycle shops.

I share this because I don’t think there is a single “ONE issue” as asked in the question above. In 2018, these things are all intrinsically linked. We need to fill our pipeline with new engaged consumers; we need to adapt both our product focus and our marketing strategies so that we accommodate the current customers while preparing for a totally new mindset from the next gen; and we need to pivot our sales and distribution model to make it as easy as possible for consumers to both be exposed to our culture and to buy our products. Most importantly, we need our members to be ready to make the products the next wave of consumers gets excited about. That’s a lot for a trade association, but with collaborative work, long-range planning, proper use of big data and market research and engaging educational programs for our members, I believe we can do it to ensure the survival and continued success of our industry.

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?

As a Board member for the past two and half years, I feel we have made good headway toward the goals handed to us by our membership. The consumer awareness initiative is going well as both SEMA Ignited and Battle of the Builders (BOTB) are reaching large audiences and the SEMA staff are doing an excellent job of adapting to social media and new media marketing strategies. Youth engagement is off to a good start, albeit I'd like to see things move with a little more urgency. I am very pleased with the current financial reporting, and feel that staff did a good job transforming the way reports are delivered; the association is in a strong financial position for continued prosperity and to help its members. Finally, the SEMA Show continues to grow with high favorability numbers from attendees and exhibitors.

I would like to the youth engagement program expand, and quickly. We need more programs, more budget and more reach for this to be effective, and the clock is ticking. We also need to get much more aggressive in our work to monitor government overreach, increasing our SEMA Political Action Committee fundraising efforts and activating the SEMA Action Network to advocate on behalf of car people around the country with politicians so they know we are a large and vocal group, much how the NRA does within its industry.

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 already familiar with the current high-priority initiatives, both from board meetings and from serving on the Youth Engagement Task Force and as chairman of the SEMA Show Committee. However, I think we have much more work to go and a long row to hoe. I believe I can bring fresh ideas to both the Board of Directors and these breakout groups on how to reach new consumers and streamline the way our association and our members communicate with each other and the general public through methods I have developed and employed at my own marketing and communications agency.

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

There is a disconnect where the people outside our industry who do know the word "SEMA" associate it with a big car show in Las Vegas. They do not know we are an association, what that association does or why it exists. And yet, we are spending a significant amount of time, money and resources on programs like Ignited and BOTB. I believe SEMA (both the Board and the staff leadership) need to have an existential conversation about long-term goals—if we are going to try and use the SEMA name, SEMA brand and SEMA Show as a tool to engage the general public, then we need to do it on a grander scale. However, if we are not

“selling SEMAs” as some people like to joke, then we need to do more to focus the message and budget of these programs on promoting the hobby and trade and less about promoting the Show and the brand. Look to the RVIA/RVDA “Go RVing” ad campaign and marketing program; they have done an excellent job promoting their industry and creating a sales funnel for consumers, yet the RVIA/RVDA names and logos are almost nowhere to be seen.

I’d also like to see the association do more to make members (both volunteer leaders and regular members) feel like they have more understanding and ownership of their association. Many members feel “outside the circle” when it comes to the association, and yet are afraid to speak up about issues they may be having with a council, network, event, the Show or even staff because they are afraid of being “punished” by staff who could affect their livelihood with decisions about Show booth placement, etc. This is a toxic cultural issue and one that could be remedied with a more transparent, open and honest communication channel between staff and members, much the way relations have improved between the Board of Directors and the councils by simply increasing communication and transparency between the two groups.

12. How about its strengths?

SEMA has done an excellent job building a successful trade show that is both financially sound and a tremendous tool for exhibitors large and small. It has also developed an excellent council and network system that creates tremendous networking opportunities for members to grow their careers and their businesses. I also commend the staff on doing a fantastic job monitoring a growing list of state and federal legislative issues, helping to create meaningful change on everything from the Johnson Valley OHV situation, to creating an excellent working relationship with the California Air Resources Board to the ongoing development of the RPM Act.

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?

Those outlined above, particularly the product and marketing demands of the next gen consumer, the association’s core philosophy on youth engagement and self-promotion, and how to best prepare members for the continued change in the distribution and sales model.

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 first job was working the parts counter at a speed shop at 16. I literally grew up in this industry, and I am very passionate about protecting it. Over the course of my career, and with the current growth of my firm, I have also been very fortunate to surround myself with people that are smarter and more experienced than I am. I try to learn from these people, and apply those lessons as both a business leader and as a volunteer.

Kahn Media continues to work with more than two dozen of the best brands in the aftermarket, but we also work for global brands outside our industry like Rolex, Peninsula Hotels, Gulfstream and more. Exposure to these markets and their leaders have allowed me to see how other industries function and how they connect with people on a B2B and B2C level.

Over the past year I have also made an effort to attend as many shows and events outside our world as possible, including SHOT Show, CES and E3, in an attempt to gather data and ideas about what they do, how they do it and how we can apply those lessons to SEMA and our membership.

I currently employ two dozen people at my firm. I take that responsibility very personally; each and every one of them depend on me for their livelihood. I have to ensure that we have work for them to do, that our clients are happy and that the future is bright. If my serving as a Board member and volunteer leader for SEMA can, in some small way, help ensure that that our industry will be around for many more years to come to support these jobs and the thousands of jobs created by our member companies, then there is no more noble a calling for a guy who set out to “write about cars” for a living.

Finally, I would be remiss in filling out an “about you” section without talking about my family. It sounds corny, but I am a third-generation car guy. My grandfather grew up in Chicago with no money, yet after the war he came back and—as time allowed—he liked to restore pre-war vehicles. My dad was the typical Baby Boomer car guy. He grew up cruising Van Nuys Boulevard in the early '60s, built hot rods and still does to this day. I got my very first car on the cover of *Hot Rod* magazine and have been a gearhead since day one. I have three beautiful children who are the center of my universe along with a wonderful and very patient wife. My son is, at 3 years old, already a car guy. He loves playing with his Hot Wheels and he works with me in the garage whenever he can. I will not push him into a career in this industry, but should he decide he wants to follow in my footsteps, I want to make sure there is an industry here waiting for him. That is my driving force as a volunteer.