



Melanie Hellwig White

President

Hellwig Products

Just because she was the fourth generation to join the business her great-grandfather started didn't mean Melanie Hellwig White expected preferential treatment. She began doing cold calls, which she says "helps you grow a thick skin and understand that it's not always going to be that fun. But it was an awesome way to get started."

After a while on the job she says she noticed the company needed better marketing, so she started investigating what needed doing and doing it. This began a pattern.

"At no time in my career did I ever get a promotion before doing the work. I saw a space, stepped in, and did what needed to be done," she says.

Along the way, Hellwig White fell in love with the markets served by her company, including the RV industry. (Hellwig Products also makes sway bars and helper springs for the truck/SUV, off-road and muscle car markets.)

"The industry is like a big family and the organization is like an offshoot of that family," she says. "I love that I get to help people go to amazing places."

There were special individuals, too. Hellwig White met a female business owner through a mentoring program.

"She allowed me to go with her on (business) trips. ... At the time, I thought that was so nice and so generous. And it was. Later, I understood that it also allowed me to observe and learn her habits. Although we went out for a drink with colleagues, we were never the last ones to leave, and we were always up early. This kind of thing has a huge impact on your credibility."

According to Hellwig White, "the industry is full of mentors. When you say you don't understand something, or don't know something, or that you need help, people are always willing to step up."





Women making an impact.

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What about being a woman in a male-dominated industry? “As you can imagine, I get this question all the time. I used to hate it. I just wanted to be known for my contribution – what I did, what I worked on, how I showed up,” she says. “However, being a woman in a male-dominated industry has been hands-down so helpful – especially in sales. It makes me more memorable, as people expect a dude. They might not remember my name, but they remember ‘that gal who works at Hellwig.’” Hellwig White says she once told a consultant, “the thing I was most worried about was being a woman in a male-dominated field. He made me stop talking right then and said he never wanted to hear me say that again. (He said) if I made sure to always be the most prepared person in the room, being a woman would not matter one way or the other – and he was right.”

And she has been sharing that insight ever since, along with a recommendation to others to volunteer.

“Volunteering supports the greater good, gets you connected with people who have the same mindset, and connects you into the larger industry,” she says. “You don’t do it to make connections, but that is a happy byproduct. Besides, people who volunteer to make things better are the people I want to hang out with.”

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We are thrilled to see RV PRO publicly recognizing Missy for something Tredit and its customers have known for a long time. Missy is one of many women serving in important leadership roles at Tredit, and has remained firmly committed to the task of delivering trust and security within all aspects of the trailer tire and wheel industry throughout her career.

