



Michelle Andro

Head of Marketing and Communications
Hemlock Hill RV

Michelle Andro was 10 years old when her parents bought a condemned campground in Litchfield, Conn.

“It was on a dirt road in the middle of a valley out in the woods – and it was a disaster,” she recalls. “Our family got to work, and in six weeks it was renovated.”

Andro and her siblings grew up at Hemlock Hill Camp Resort. Their home was in middle of the grounds, across from the office and rec building. It was there that she honed her marketing skills, which would serve her well later in life.

“We all started in our family business at a young age. When you grow up like that, it’s a very different upbringing from most friends – from most people I know,” she says. “We always worked, and we were instilled with a strong work ethic.”

The business of running a campground eventually transitioned into the business of selling RVs.

“A manufacturer rep challenged my dad,” Andro recalls. “The company was looking for a new

distribution point and one Memorial Day my dad took on five trailers – and he sold them in a weekend. The RV business was a natural outgrowth of the campground.”

By the mid-1980s, the family chose to focus solely on running the dealership, which prospered. Hemlock Hill RV is now Connecticut’s largest RV dealer.

After college, Andro worked for the dealership for two years, but she says she realized she needed to “go out and experience more.” So, she applied her marketing background to the corporate world, working for several national clients.

“I was really lucky; I had a great career in marketing. I got to work for great companies and did a lot of things that not a lot of people get to do, especially for (clients) Pepsi and DirecTV. I learned a lot. Personally, I am proud of forging my own career ... but you can’t go at that pace forever,” she says, recalling lots of travel and working 12- to 14-hour days.

About five years ago, Andro returned to Hemlock Hill. She laughs, “I came back to bring us from the Stone Age to the digital age of marketing.”

When it comes to advice for up-and-coming industry professionals, Andro says she is a firm believer in training.

“Learn everything – take advantage of all training. We train our employees every day – we’re big fans of that. ... Whatever you do, make sure that you are heard and find that common ground.”

Reflecting upon her career, Andro says growing up in a business had the biggest impact on her, adding that working with family (her brother Chris is the owner and GM; her brother Jason heads up service/parts and warranty) has proven rewarding.

“My brothers have so much experience – they are in it day-to-day. We are all in our own lane. We have very different skill sets and we reach out to each other when we need – and it works.”

Andro says she is most proud of the dealership’s 2017 Top 50 North American dealer award and its ongoing work with the Make-A-Wish Connecticut Foundation.

“I want to be touting things that I believe in,” she says. “I like that I am helping people bond with their families and to get outdoors and create those memories like I had.”

