



## CASE STUDY

# From Compliance to Confidence: How Dick Smith Automotive Built a Managed Security Partnership with Katalyst

Discover how Dick Smith Automotive strengthened security and FTC compliance with Katalyst's managed security services, monthly reporting, and strategic IT guidance.

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## CLIENT

Dick Smith Automotive

## WORKING TOGETHER

Partnered with Katalyst since 2016

## KATALYST'S ROLE

- Managed security services & FTC compliance
- Collaboration and contact center management
- Network modernization + licensing simplification
- Backup, disaster recovery, and ongoing strategic IT guidance

## About Dick Smith Automotive

Dick Smith Automotive is a multi-location dealership group serving communities across the Carolinas. The organization handles sensitive financial data every day as part of the car buying process, including loan applications, credit checks and personal identity information. With a lean IT team of five employees, CIO Craig Barnes and his staff support everything from networking and infrastructure to security, collaboration and user support.



### Partnership Goal

**To meet new FTC requirements, strengthen security visibility and create a managed operational model that allows a small internal IT team to move from reactive tasks to proactive technology decisions.**

## Executive Summary

When new FTC regulations reclassified auto dealerships as financial entities, Dick Smith Automotive faced an urgent requirement to formalize security practices and implement continuous monitoring and reporting. Their systems worked, but compliance demanded structure, documentation and accountability at a new level.

Katalyst had previously supported Dick Smith Automotive with collaboration and networking initiatives, but this compliance challenge sparked a deeper partnership built on advisory support, monthly managed security reporting, standardized licensing through Meraki and modern disaster recovery with Rubrik. Today, Craig describes the relationship in one word: partner.



"I really feel like the team at Katalyst has my back. It has been a good partnership from sales to engineering and we love everybody there."  
said Craig Barnes, CIO, Dick Smith Automotive

# The Challenge

The FTC Safeguards Rule changed how dealerships were required to protect consumer data. The shift was not about adopting new tools but about implementing structure through documentation, reporting, training and visibility.

Before managed security, Craig and his team were doing their best to stay ahead of security needs while supporting every aspect of day to day IT operations. There simply was not enough time to fully investigate and address every potential security risk.



"We were just busy day by day and made a lot of assumptions. We took some risk mainly because we were so busy," Barnes explained.

With a compliance deadline approaching and a small internal team, Craig realized that oversight and consistent monitoring could no longer be optional. The new regulations created a demand for visibility that the team did not have. They needed a partner to help build a managed security practice without disrupting critical daily responsibilities.

# The Partnership

The relationship changed direction after Craig attended a Katalyst Security Summit in 2019. The event gave him clarity around security maturity, FTC expectations and the benefit of stepping back to address long term strategy rather than relying on quick fixes.



"I went to that Security Summit and it opened my eyes. There were things I had left on the plate and did not really address. I started reaching out to ask the big questions," Barnes said.

Katalyst began with a Security Analysis and Roadmap. This engagement provided visibility into vulnerabilities, prioritized remediation items and created a realistic path to improve security posture over time. "It gave us levels of things we needed to attend to. We could attack the high level risks immediately and lower our exposure," said Barnes.

As managed security services began to take shape, Katalyst worked closely with Craig's team to provide consistent support, monthly reporting and advisory guidance for decisions affecting network health and compliance.

From the Katalyst side, the partnership is rooted in accountability and advocacy.



“Craig can send a message and say I need this report and we will make sure it gets done. We are his safety net, making sure nothing slips through the cracks,” Emily Hennessee, Client Success at Katalyst said.

Katalyst’s support has naturally expanded beyond security. A Meraki Enterprise Agreement simplified licensing and budgeting, while Rubrik improved backup speed and resiliency without increasing operational overhead.



“The Meraki dashboard has been huge. My team can get in and immediately understand what is happening on the network. And with Rubrik, backups are fast and support has been fantastic. It has simplified how we manage and protect our environment,” Barnes explained.

## The Results & Outcomes

The partnership between Dick Smith Automotive and Katalyst has delivered clear operational and security advantages. The internal team maintains control of priorities while Katalyst provides resources, structure and execution.

- **Improved security visibility and decision making:** Managed security delivered monthly reporting with actionable insights into vulnerabilities, trends and remediation priorities. Craig and his team gained confidence in addressing issues before they became urgent problems.
- **Predictable budgeting and licensing simplification:** The Meraki Enterprise Agreement consolidated renewal timelines and created a three year contract model that aligns with automotive budgeting cycles. License portability allowed hardware refreshes without purchasing new licenses, reducing unexpected spending.
- **Increased backup resilience and faster recovery:** Rubrik provided a clear backup and recovery strategy. The internal team can recover quickly from on premises or cloud based storage without interrupting operations. Even minor restore requests have been handled quickly and effectively.
- **More time for strategic projects:** Managed services created operational breathing room for Craig’s team. They can address long term initiatives without the constant worry of day to day security issues.



“It has made a huge difference. It allowed us to do our normal jobs instead of worrying about security on a moment to moment basis,” said Barnes.

# Looking Ahead

Dick Smith Automotive continues planning for infrastructure improvements while keeping compliance and security maturity at the forefront. Ongoing conversations with Katalyst include potential Azure VDI deployment, enhanced firewall strategy and continued refinement of FTC documentation and training.

Craig encourages other dealerships beginning their compliance journey to start with partnership, not technology.



“Have a partner that knows automotive specifically. Someone who takes security off your plate and helps you be successful.”

– **Craig Barnes, CIO at Dick Smith Automotive**

## Meet the Team



**Craig Barnes**

*CIO,  
Dick Smith Automotive*



**Jake Biles**

*Account Manager,  
Katalyst*



**Emily Hennessee**

*Client Success Manager,  
Katalyst*



**Kaki Kleisch**

*Director of BD & MKT,  
Katalyst*



**Sean Webb**

*Manager, Managed  
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