How Tanium gave AutoNation confidence after a third-party ransomware attack

A major U.S. auto dealer's endpoint management modernization pays off after third-party partner is breached

ORGANIZATION

AutoNation

LOCATION

Florida, United States

This was a supply-chain-style ransomware attack. aimed at crippling an entire industry. Cybercriminals targeted AutoNation's dealer management system provider, forcing critical back-end systems offline.

The attack's impact was devastating: 15,000 dealerships were affected, pushed completely offline, with collective estimated losses reaching $944 million.

The attack also exposed a growing risk: businesses increasingly rely on third-party vendors and supply chain partners for critical operations, this interconnectedness introduces new vulnerabilities – especially when key partners become cyberattack targets.

For a company the size and scale of AutoNation, the risks were even greater. As one of the largest auto retailers in the United States, AutoNation employs over 25,000 people and offers nearly 35 vehicle brands. It operates 350 sites, including 270 franchises, 50 collision centers, 20 used-vehicle stores, four auto auctions, three parts distributors, and a mobile auto-repair business. Its reach also extends beyond retail, with stakes in Waymo, TrueCar, an auto financing business, and a digital marketplace – all contributing to a $27 billion industry giant.

Even after the vendor restored its systems, AutoNation faced another challenge: ensuring its own internal systems hadn't been compromised. With 25,000 endpoint devices across 25 states, verifying security across its network was a massive undertaking.

A strategic shift to Tanium

"We needed something better," Adam Rasner, VP of Technology Operations at AutoNation. "Something more reliable. Something we could be more confident in."

That's why AutoNation replaced its fragmented endpoint management solutions with Tanium's unified platform.

Today, AutoNation relies on Tanium for proactive security and real time patching. "As soon as new patches come out, we deploy them to a test group," Rasner says. "Then, a week later, we're deploying to production."

Rapid response to ransomware

Tanium played a critical role in helping AutoNation fully restore operations. After the vendor's ransomware attack in mid-2024. the breach crippled the vendor systems, forcing AutoNation to halt operations.

Once systems were restored, Rasner's team used Tanium to verify AutoNation's endpoints, ensuring no malicious code had spread. With real time visibility, they confirmed a clean environment, allowing AutoNation to resume operations with confidence.

"Tanium's speed was essential," Rasner says. "We could scan thousands of devices in minutes and get the data back just as quickly. Every second counts."

"Tanium is a foundational product for us."

Adam Rasner
VP of technology operations
AutoNation
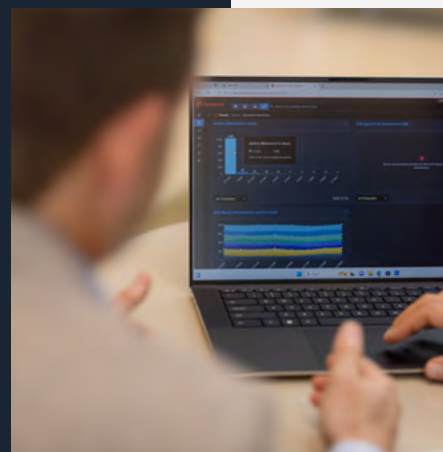
AutoNation was prepared to withstand a supply-chain attack

The good news? Thanks to AutoNation's longstanding partnership with Tanium, it was able to restore operations quickly. Their partnership predated the 2024 attack by several years, so AutoNation was proactively prepared.

Before partnering with Tanium, AutoNation had struggled with a glut of endpoint management point solutions. "They worked okay, I guess," recounts Adam Rasner, AutoNation's VP of technology operations. "But we were trying to stitch together telemetry from multiple different products. It was clunky and hard to do, and we couldn't move quickly."

> "Tanium brought our security and IT operations teams together to learn from each other. Security's not just a security problem; it's really the whole company's problem."

Adam Rasner
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Stronger security through consolidation

Beyond security, Tanium has helped AutoNation streamline operations and reduce costs by replacing multiple-point solutions with a single platform. AutoNation continues to partner with Tanium for essential IT and security use cases. The company now uses Tanium proactively, handling endpoint management, vulnerability management, and incident response.

"Tanium is a foundational product for us." says Rasner. "At first, we brought Tanium in to solve one problem, now it's solving a couple of different problems. It's continued to be best of breed and innovative in this space."

Another major benefit has been stronger collaboration between AutoNation's IT security and operations teams. With a shared source of truth, teams now work together seamlessly.

"Tanium brought our security and IT operations teams together to learn from each other. Security's not just a security problem – it's really the whole company's problem," says Rasner.

Winning with automation

AutoNation also leverages Tanium for patch deployment and to manage software distribution and eliminate time-consuming manual processes.

"Automation is a huge win for us," says Rasner.

Looking ahead, AutoNation plans to expand its use of Tanium's automation capabilities, to further enhance efficiency and resilience. As part of the core platform, Tanium Automate makes it easy for teams to create custom playbooks – with little to no code – in turn, freeing up staff to work on higher-value tasks and lower the rate of errors.

Results: A more secure and agile AutoNation

Fewer tools, more efficiency

Tanium replaced multiple endpoint-management tools that lacked integration and scalability, improving security while lowering costs. Tanium helped AutoNation consolidate tools and simplify operations, while providing a best-of-breed solution at less cost.

Stronger collaboration

With a single, unified platform, AutoNation's security and IT operations teams now work together seamlessly, encouraging collaboration and reinforcing cybersecurity as a companywide responsibility.

Faster threat response

After the third party ransomware attack on AutoNation, Tanium enabled real-time scanning of over 25,000 endpoints, ensuring a clean environment and restoring operations quickly and confidently.

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Adam Rasner
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