

Olivia Velasco, under the supervision of Xavier Lavergne and Judith Jayasuriya with the partnership of Crash Safe Dog has written this case solely for the 2025 24-Hour Case Crack Competition. The author has no intention to comment on or evaluate the handling of managerial decisions within Crash Safe Dog. Photocopying, transmitting, distributing or reproducing this case in any form or by any means is strictly prohibited.

Crash Safe Dog: Seeking Paws-itive Growth

Please consult the competition rules provided to your team. You may (and should) conduct outside research and use other sources of information beyond those provided in the case. However, teams are strictly prohibited from contacting or speaking with Crash Safe Dog's staff directly.

Introduction

Crash Safe Dog is a young and growing company that designs and manufactures crash-tested harness systems for pets. Founded by Andrew Churley and Gorden Templeton, the company was built to address a critical gap in pet travel safety: while many owners assume any harness offers protection in a collision, few products are designed or tested to withstand the forces of a real crash. Gordon, a mechanical engineer, developed the first crash-tested harness, while Andrew built the tools, processes, and relationships that would shape the company's small-batch, quality-driven approach. Together, they established a foundation defined by precision, persistence, and purpose that continues to guide Crash Safe Dog today.

Today, Crash Safe Dog positions itself not only as a product provider but as a voice for education in pet travel safety. Its mission is anchored in three guiding values: safety, craftsmanship, and education. Through these principles, the company strives to raise awareness of overlooked risks, set higher standards across the industry, and build trust among customers who view travel safety as non-negotiable.

The Key Ask

How can Crash Safe dog accelerate its growth while staying true to its values of safety, craftsmanship, and education?

In your breakdown of the case, your team is encouraged to consider the following:

- How can Crash Safe Dog build understanding and trust through education-driven promotion that helps customers clearly grasp the unique safety and quality of their products?
- How can Crash Safe Dog deepen or expand its sales strategy in a way that allows it to scale sustainably without sacrificing product quality or integrity?

A strong recommendation will go beyond stand-alone ideas and instead present a detailed plan supported by a clear implementation strategy.

About Crash Safe Dog

Crash Safe Dog is a growing pet safety company that has developed an innovative solution to one of the most overlooked issues in vehicle travel: protecting pets in the event of a crash. Founded from a passion for engineering and animal welfare, the company designs and builds its harness and restraint systems entirely in-house, giving it complete control over safety, quality, and innovation. Each product is produced in small batches rather than mass-produced, meaning that orders are made through a careful, deliberate process that ensures every detail meets high standards of durability and reliability. This approach enables Crash Safe Dog to deliver a product that does what others cannot: stand up to real crash conditions.

The business today is primarily direct-to-consumer, leveraging online sales and early partnerships with pet-travel-savvy owners who see their dogs as companions deserving the same care and protection they give themselves, and for whom they are willing to invest in premium safety. The current consumer tends to be a conscientious pet parent with a mid-to-large sized dog, prioritizing crash-tested protection over generic harnesses. With this base established, Crash Safe Dog's ambitions are larger: to become the trusted name in pet travel safety across North America and beyond.

Values

Crash Safe Dog is built on a foundation of safety, craftsmanship, and education. Every aspect of its business, from product design to marketing, is guided by a commitment to protecting dogs with the same care and attention their owners bring to every journey.

The company strives for transparency in an industry where skepticism is common. However, access to official crash-test footage is limited due to costly licensing restrictions, creating challenges in demonstrating product performance to consumers. Despite this, Crash Safe Dog maintains its commitment to raising awareness and promoting higher standards of pet travel safety by highlighting clear risk-based commentary and working with community partners to advance safer travel practices.

As part of its educational commitment, Crash Safe Dog engages with organizations such as Canine Health Canada, where its founder, Andrew, is certified as a Canine CPR and First Aid Trainer. This partnership reinforces the company's credibility in animal welfare and provides a bridge between engineering precision and pet health advocacy.

These values extend beyond product development into sustainability and social responsibility. By aligning with broader animal welfare efforts and operating with integrity, Crash Safe Dog ensures its values are not just brand differentiators but guiding principles for growth.

About the Product

The flagship Crash Safe Dog harness and restraint system is the result of years of design and testing. Built to keep dogs secure during sudden stops or collisions, the harness distributes force safely and minimizes risk to both pets and passengers.

The harness is part of a modular system, requiring both upper and lower tethers to function as intended. Each harness is available in multiple sizes to accommodate a range of breeds and weights, reflecting the company's belief that every dog, regardless of size, deserves reliable protection.

Crash Safe Dog's harness is engineered to withstand real crash conditions, offering verified protection unmatched by most competitors. Built through rigorous testing and small-batch production, the system costs roughly \$150–\$200 CAD per unit to produce, and retails between

\$299–\$400 CAD depending on size. Its higher price reflects the cost of maintaining uncompromising safety and quality.

Current Position

Crash Safe Dog has seen rapid growth since its 2022 inception, driven largely by organic sales and word-of-mouth. Paid marketing has been quite limited to date, with small tests using Google Ads, Meta ads, and a local TV commercial totaling under \$10,000 CAD. Please see Appendix C for specifics on these marketing initiatives and their results. These efforts have had minimal impact, and the company has not yet established a long-term digital strategy.

While the majority of revenue is generated online (~\$67,900 year-to-date compared with ~\$27,000 from sales made in-person), Crash Safe Dog's strongest conversion still occurs face-to-face. High-fit venues such as Pineridge Hollow have seen considerable success, generating as many as 6 harness sales per day, while low-fit or food-focused markets are volatile and may generate none. An important point follows: although most purchases are completed online, customers often gain the clearest understanding of the product's quality and purpose through hands-on interaction or direct conversation. Strengthening how that value is communicated digitally will be essential to improving online reach.

Canada's pet care market continues to grow, creating a strong opportunity for Crash Safe Dog to expand beyond its Manitoba base. The pet accessories segment in Canada is growing at an estimated 7.5% CAGR through 2033, and more owners are seeking reliable products for everyday travel. To tap into national demand, the company will need to strengthen its online presence and improve how it communicates value digitally. A more effective e-commerce strategy will be essential for reaching customers in markets where in-person education and hands-on interaction are not possible. Furthermore, a strong growth plan must account for the operational shift required to fulfill both a higher order volume and larger order sizes.

Challenges

Despite its strong offering, Crash Safe Dog faces several obstacles that may limit growth:

As outlined above, the first challenge is **awareness**. While the company provides online educational content and works with partners such as Canine Health Canada, many customers still struggle to understand the product's safety value when shopping online. Without seeing the harness in person or speaking with someone directly, many customers lack a clear

understanding of the product's quality and safety value. This gap highlights the need for clearer, more engaging education that conveys verified crash safety in a digital environment.

The second challenge is **price perception**. Without public crash footage or third-party certifications, the brand competes against players like Sleepypod and Kurgo, whose large retail presence and marketing budgets dominate the category. Costly licensing fees for official crash-test videos prevent Crash Safe Dog from using them in marketing, making it harder to showcase its superior protection. Its higher price point further limits accessibility and requires a clear, evidence-based value story.

Finally, Crash Safe Dog faces challenges in **channel expansion**. Its direct-to-consumer website drives most sales, but opportunities exist in pet-specialty retailers, automotive accessory stores, and veterinary clinics. Expanding into these spaces while preserving its small-batch, made-in-Canada identity will be key to scaling sustainably.

Summary

Crash Safe Dog stands at a pivotal moment. It has built a differentiated, crash-tested product that addresses a real and underappreciated problem: the safety of pets during car travel. Its values of safety, craftsmanship, and education provide a strong foundation for loyalty and long-term impact.

Yet scaling the business will require addressing challenges of awareness, price sensitivity, and competition. The key case question remains:

How can Crash Safe Dog accelerate its growth while staying true to its values of safety, craftsmanship, and education?

Achieving this will require aligning the business model with the company's founding mission: expanding reach without sacrificing the integrity that defines Crash Safe Dog.

Appendix A - Operational Context and Cost Information

Crash Safe Dog designs and manufactures crash-tested dog harnesses, seat covers, and related accessories in Winnipeg, Manitoba. All production is done in-house, from machining components to sewing and final assembly. The company's e-commerce division is the focus of this case.

Production Costs

- The **average cost to produce one harness** (including materials, hardware, and labor) ranges from **\$150–\$200 CAD**, depending on size, materials, and current supplier costs.
- All harnesses are made domestically, which provides superior quality control and safety standards but increases production costs compared to overseas manufacturing.
- Overhead (rent, equipment, utilities) is already accounted for in this production cost range.

Appendix B - Financials

E-Commerce Financial Summary (CAD)

Crash Safe Dog

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025 (Q3 YTD)
Total Sales	3,765	25,532	48,174	94,995
Average Order Value (AOV)	428	440	281	306
Discounts	(59)	(300)	(2,177)	(3,955)
Shipping Charges	158	3,645	832	2,595
Net Sales	3,434	20,759	43,488	87,293
<i>Conversion Rate</i>	<i>0.29%</i>	<i>0.18%</i>	<i>0.27%</i>	<i>0.70%</i>

Balance Sheet (CAD)

as at November 3rd, 2025

Crash Safe Dog

Current Assets				
Cash		20,000		
Accounts Receivable		3,000		
Inventory (raw materials & finished goods)		40,000		
Total Current Assets			63,000	
Fixed Assets				
Equipment & Machinery		100,000		
Total Assets			163,000	
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities		7,000		
Credit Card/Short-Term Debt		0		
Accounts Payable		0		
Other Current Liabilities		0		
Total Liabilities			7,000	

Appendix C – Examples of Marketing Initiatives to Date

Please use each of the hyperlinks below to view examples of past marketing initiatives by Crash Safe Dog.

[Andrew's Demonstration Video](#)

This demonstration video featuring Andrew was boosted on Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook, where it received solid viewership across all three platforms. Its clear walkthrough of how the harness works provided strong educational value and helped drive a handful of sales, reinforcing that product understanding is essential for converting prospective customers.

[A Better Way – Instagram Ad](#)

This ad was boosted on Instagram and while it received a decent number of views, saw low engagement and no clear conversion to sales.

[Interview on the Marc & Mandy Show](#)

Crash Safe Dog co-founder Andrew Churley gave an interview with Mandy Atiyolil of the Marc & Mandy Show, a national lifestyle show based in Manitoba. The segment provided a concise explanation and demonstration of the product, but did not lead to notable conversions.

Appendix D - Community Support

Beyond their products, Crash Safe Dog also extends its commitment to canine safety by supporting various community organizations:

CANINE HEALTH CANADA

Canine Health Canada (CHC) is a training organization that delivers hands-on canine CPR and emergency first-aid courses for dog owners and professionals who work with dogs. Crash Safe Dog by Optimus Gear is the only product CHC has partnered with, offering products such as canine first aid kits as well as a discount on Crash Safe Dog products for Canine Health Canada clients. Crash Safe Dog's co-founder Andrew is also a certified instructor with Canine Health Canada, offering canine CPR and emergency first aid courses in Manitoba.

LIONS FOUNDATION OF CANADA DOG GUIDES

Based in Oakville, Ontario, the Lions Foundation provides dog guides free of cost to Canadians living with disabilities. (Lions Foundation, 2025). Crash Safe Dog organizes a walk for dog guides in support of this program.

SHINE FOUNDATION

Shine Foundation is a national charitable organization focused on creating opportunities for young people living with severe physical disabilities (Shine Foundation, 2025). Crash Safe Dog is a donor to the Shine Foundation, in partnership with Canine Partners Canada. They worked to develop a custom harness for a service dog trained by Canine Partners Canada, to fit the unique needs of a young girl in Saskatchewan. Crash Safe Dog provides all service dogs trained by Canine Partners Canada with a Defender harness when they go home to their owners.

WINNIPEG POLICE K9 UNIT

Crash Safe Dog by Optimus Gear is a proud sponsor of the City of Winnipeg's K9 Memorial Fund. We admire the drive, skill, training and dedication required to be a police dog and handler team in the K9 Unit. The City of Winnipeg's K9 Unit is renowned as having one of North America's best training programs. Thank you for keeping our streets safe and ensuring that the K9 service members who are no longer with us have a special place to be remembered (Optimus Gear, 2025).