



CASE STUDY

Mission-Critical, Mission-Driven: How HVO Keeps Its Operations Running

HVO manufactures medical products to some of the strictest quality standards in the industry while creating meaningful work for adults with disabilities. See how a long-standing partnership with Katalyst keeps HVO's systems current, protected, and ready for whatever comes next.

CLIENT

Haywood Vocational Opportunities

WORKING TOGETHER

Partnered with Katalyst since 2013

KATALYST'S ROLE

- Managed services with proactive monitoring of servers, switches, and backups
- Patching and firmware updates scheduled around production
- Backup monitoring, issue resolution, and restoration support
- Network modernization, including the move to Meraki switching
- Lifecycle and project planning aligned with nonprofit budgets

About Haywood Vocational Opportunities



Haywood Vocational Opportunities (HVO) is a nonprofit social enterprise in Waynesville, North Carolina, guided by a simple promise: "We Bring People and Jobs Together." For more than 50 years, HVO has provided vocational training and employment opportunities to adults with disadvantages and disabilities.

Today, HVO is also a medical device contract manufacturer producing surgical drapes, kitting, and repackaging under FDA and ISO 13485 quality standards. Its programs include job assessments, community job coaching, and paid work on the production floor, so every order HVO ships supports real careers and independence in the community.

Partnership Goal

To keep HVO's regulated manufacturing and community programs running on secure, current, and well-supported technology, with a partner that understands its mission, its schedule, and its budget.

Executive Summary

At HVO, technology supports two missions under one roof: a production operation held to medical device standards, and programs that serve adults with disabilities every day. With a lean internal IT department, HVO needs a partner that knows its environment as well as it does.

Katalyst has supported HVO since 2013, starting with network and hardware support and growing into a managed services partnership with proactive monitoring, patching, and backup oversight. Along the way, the two teams modernized HVO's network and brought its environment to a best-practices setup.

The result is a stable, well-supported environment, faster recovery when issues arise, and more time for HVO's IT leadership to focus on its people and projects.

50+

years serving the
Waynesville community

ISO 13485

medical device quality
standards

2 shifts

of production, plus daily
client programs

3

connected buildings on one
network

The Challenge: Technology That Can't Stop

A typical day at HVO starts early. Production employees arrive as early as 4:00 a.m., clients begin their workday on the production floor or in program areas by 8:30, and a second shift keeps orders moving into the evening. Office staff, job coaches, remote users, and clients all rely on the same network, phones, and systems.

Every system that touches product quality must meet the requirements of a regulated medical device manufacturer. Changes are documented and tested before they go live, equipment is validated and revalidated, and records must be easy to produce for FDA, ISO, and customer audits.

Balancing Uptime, Compliance, and Budget

As a nonprofit, HVO plans every project carefully through an annual budget process and takes advantage of nonprofit pricing wherever possible. It also invests in accessible technology, using grants to equip clients and employees with hearing or vision impairments.

With ERP, email, and phones increasingly in the cloud, and production spread across three buildings, HVO needed infrastructure that stays current, recovers quickly, and can be maintained without interrupting a facility that is almost always running.



The Partnership: Built Over Time

HVO's relationship with Katalyst began well before a formal managed services agreement. When a switch failed and took down part of a building, Katalyst and Cisco SmartNet support had it back up and running in less than a day. When a phone server had hardware problems, Katalyst helped assess the issue and worked with Cisco on the repair.

Over the past several years, the partnership has grown into managed services. Through ongoing conversations about servers, switches, and firewalls, HVO and Katalyst brought the environment to a best-practices setup, including an upgrade from Cisco to Meraki switching. Now the focus is steady lifecycle management: refreshing equipment at end of life and keeping hardware and software under support.



“Katalyst is good at educating me and walking me through and helping me understand what I'm working with so I can do things on my own.”

Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, HVO

Standing Together Through Hurricane Helene

When Hurricane Helene struck Western North Carolina, HVO lost internet service for two days, affecting its cloud-based ERP and manufacturing systems. HVO's downtime procedures and production pipeline kept work moving. Before HVO's team could even reach the office, Katalyst had already seen the network go dark and reached out by text to check in.



“Katalyst was one of the first check ins when Helene hit.”

Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, HVO



“I know that whatever crisis that I may encounter, I'm partnering with a good company that's gonna help us get through it... I don't feel like I'm alone.”

– Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, Haywood Vocational Opportunities

The Results & Outcomes

With a stable foundation and proactive support in place, HVO's environment runs reliably, and issues are caught and resolved before they affect production or programs.



“With Katalyst we have our systems and everything is in a good spot so I'm not battling huge fires.”

Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, HVO

<1 day

to restore service after a failed network switch

2-3 clicks

to restore a file from backup

On-prem + cloud

backup copies, scheduled throughout the day

0

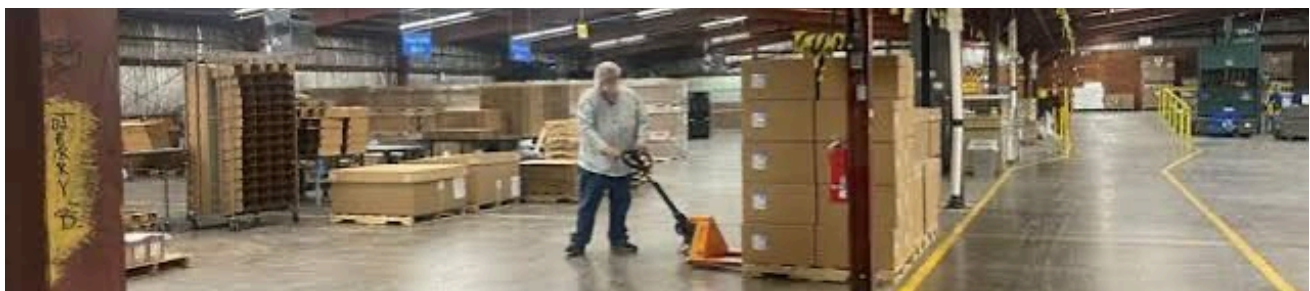
backup tapes to change, store, or rely on

- **Proactive monitoring.** Katalyst watches HVO's servers, switches, and backups, investigating issues like a missed backup before HVO has to dig in.
- **Updates that respect production.** Patches, firmware, and Meraki updates are scheduled around HVO's shifts, after hours or on weekends.
- **Budget-aware planning.** Project scoping and equipment refreshes are planned with HVO's nonprofit budget expectations in mind.
- **Resilient backups.** On-premises and cloud copies replace the tape rotation of years past, and a crashed server can be stood up through the backup system until new hardware arrives.
- **Coverage when it counts.** Katalyst knows HVO's network well enough to monitor systems and restore data even when HVO's IT director is out of the office.
- **Fast, responsive support.** When larger issues come up, a help ticket gets quick attention and resolution.



“You guys understand our schedules so you know when those can be applied without interrupting... our operations.”

Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, HVO



Looking Ahead

With Katalyst handling monitoring, patching, and backups, HVO's IT department has more time for the work that moves the organization forward: supporting users, advancing internal projects, and learning the full range of Microsoft 365 tools. The two teams will continue to plan equipment refreshes and upgrades together as HVO's operations and programs evolve.



"You're gonna have a friend that's there when you need them and they're gonna understand who you are... You understand who we are, what we do, the importance of what we do and our needs."

- Nancy Warren, Information Technology Director, Haywood Vocational Opportunities

Meet the Team



Nancy Warren

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Haywood Vocational
Opportunities*



Luke Johnson

*CEO,
Katalyst*



Ashley Wallace

*Team Lead, Client Success,
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Kaki Kleisch

*Director of BD & MKT,
Katalyst*

Running systems that can't afford to go down?

Schedule a call with the Katalyst team to talk through how we can keep your operations moving.



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through Managed Services, Cybersecurity, and Cloud Solutions.



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