



## *How Strategic Focus and Teamwork Drove 142% Revenue Growth and Industry Leadership*

**With a focus on culture and communication, Heartland partnered with Keystone to reimagine how their business worked. The result: A reinvigorated team and a new position as an industry leader.**

In the upheaval of a global pandemic, Heartland Computers, a mobile computing technology and wireless network provider based in McHenry, Ill., found themselves at a turning point.

The challenge that they faced was existential: staying competitive in a high-tech, high-demand industry that moves fast and is growing faster. With the proliferation of new devices and the expansion of mobile workforces, the global mobile device management market is

exploding. The market saw a total revenue value of \$6.9 billion in 2022, and is projected to register a revenue value of \$22.0 billion by 2027.

Heartland was in maintenance mode, keeping up with the demand that they had. But there were challenges they needed to address in order to move the business to the next level: expanding services, improving efficiency, establishing a clear strategic plan and aligning team efforts. Each of those is

a demanding, complex undertaking, but combined, they required an organization-wide change in thinking and execution.

Ultimately, Heartland had two options. One, to maintain the status-quo reactive approach that was keeping things afloat. Or two, forging a new path, turning those as-yet unmet challenges into tangible successes, and to emerge as leaders in the eyes of their clients and the broader industry.

They knew that option two was the only way forward. And they took action by engaging Keystone as a partner that could help them make a revolutionary change.

“For us to sustain growth in this ever-changing marketplace, something had

to change,” says Todd Greenwald, who is president and general manager of the company his father founded in 1991. “Keystone was the beacon of light at the end of that tunnel.”

## A purpose-driven relationship

It all began with an invitation from a vendor partner to take part in a Keystone business leadership development event. The Heartland team took advantage of workshops and one-on-one team sessions, and saw the potential. After that experience, they reached out to forge a relationship that would address their unique needs and challenges.



### Maintaining momentum with Keystone’s Impact Assessment Model

As the partnership between Heartland and Keystone has evolved, it’s become important to balance maintenance with ongoing improvement. One tool that the team has implemented to achieve that balance is The Keystone Impact Assessment Model™. This 60-day assessment process is designed to drive alignment between strategy, culture and leadership; Heartland uses it to gauge their team health, as well as to assess their current status and set a path for growth. “It helped us put ‘pen to paper’ on the overall climate in our company,” says Michael Grudecki, vice president of sales and marketing. “The exercise helped to validate what was most important for us to work on.”

The ideas and methods that had intrigued the teams during those sessions formed the groundwork of the Heartland-Keystone partnership. But the next step was customizing them specifically for Heartland. Assessing the business’s existing strategy, culture and leadership led to three key areas of focus: getting the right people in the right seats, improving communication, and facilitating and driving task execution.

## Pushing boundaries to reshape the business

These initial stages were not always comfortable. It meant having tough—or rather *courageous*—conversations, something that Greenwald admits is not always his go-to style. But working with Keystone drew out the business leader in his naturally creative personality.

“I was part of a leadership group that told me, ‘Todd, you have to get some discipline in place,’” he says. “Being creative and trying new things is always good, but I also knew that I needed to plan and focus better. Keystone has really helped me do that.”

Putting Keystone’s core value of raw authenticity into action led to an environment where asking hard questions yielded a new strategy for Heartland, plus the tactics and tools to implement it.

## A partnership that goes deep

Uncovering the true potential of a business, team or individual can only come from a close relationship. The Heartland-Keystone partnership was forged through interactive in-person meetings that built a holistic understanding of challenges, goals and even idiosyncrasies.

Working from that deep knowledge, Keystone helped Heartland adapt ideas to specifically suit its needs, forgoing one-size-fits-all business frameworks for a custom approach. Structured

## Heartland’s three key focus areas

After a series of highly collaborative meetings, Keystone laid out three key areas of focus that Heartland needed to address to achieve their goals.



### Getting the right people in the right seats:

- ◆ Driving greater job satisfaction and effectiveness
- ◆ Better defining roles
- ◆ Eliminating redundancy



### Improving communication:

- ◆ Building group coherence
- ◆ Defining key goals
- ◆ Aligning efforts



### Facilitating and driving task execution:

- ◆ Creating a culture of accountability
- ◆ Moving beyond ideas to action
- ◆ Establishing consistent practices

meetings—held quarterly in person and monthly via video—are designed for accountability that keeps everyone on track.

However, anyone who’s ever done business knows to expect the unexpected. And the Heartland team knows that, whenever they need to, they can turn to Keystone for advice, support and help in keeping the business working toward the mission.

*“For us to sustain growth in this ever-changing marketplace, something had to change...Keystone was the beacon of light at the end of that tunnel.”*

—TODD GREENWALD,  
PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, HEARTLAND COMPUTERS

“Anytime we need to level set or do a baseline check to ensure that we’re doing things right, we know there’s someone in our corner who will tell us to either ‘snap out of that funk’ or that we’re doing things right to stay the course,” Greenwald says.

### **An operating plan like no other**

At the heart of everything is what the team has dubbed the HOS, or Heartland Operating System—a customized set of practices and principles that helps keep Heartland on track toward its goals. The HOS grew out of the early work that Keystone-Heartland team did and, once results were being felt—people in the right spots and stronger leadership team alignment with improved follow-through—it was time to broaden the scope.

The HOS serves as a touchstone for the entire company, for everything from quick realignments to high-level strategizing. Among its key features is an accountability chart that spans Heartland’s 70-person staff and details the top responsibilities for each role. Managers rely on it to ensure positive synergy between employees and their respective roles, but it also helps company leaders identify roles that are redundant or could be blended with other responsibilities.

Applying these practices and principles, Heartland revolutionized their way of doing business. Greater alignment created clearer goals. Better communication fostered a stronger team. Increased accountability led to getting more done—moving the entire business forward.

### **Elements of the Heartland Operating System (HOS)**

- ◆ Accountability chart
- ◆ Communication strategy
- ◆ High-impact meeting design
- ◆ Rigorous meeting cadence (Quarterly town hall, monthly management, weekly tactical)
- ◆ Team health assessment
- ◆ Use key differentiators to drive momentum

## ***Proof in the results***

The Heartland-Keystone partnership created a positive workplace culture built on aligned goals, strong communication and the drive to achieve more—and it’s paying off.



**30** *new employees added to the team*



**142%** *annual growth*

The new strategy has opened the door to growth, but also recognition. Vendors have reached out, curious to know more about the impressive changes, and Heartland has earned awards for business leadership. With the Heartland Operating System firmly in place, the company is ready to evolve alongside their burgeoning industry.