CLIENT CASE STUDY · PLATFORM REVITALIZATION

Back In Active Development

How a trusted industrial documentation platform went from three years of standstill to shipping new features again.

CLIENT	CFC Industrial Training, a Livingston & Haven company · Charlotte, NC
PRODUCT	Smart Manual, interactive technical manuals for industrial equipment
ENGAGEMENT	Platform revitalization and feature development, completed spring 2026
DELIVERED	Briar Creek Tech, with engineering partner Rock Agile

12
Features delivered, fixed price

30+
Issues resolved from real user feedback

~300
Component parts lists, loading reliably

3 yrs
Of standstill, ended

The starting point

CFC Industrial Training had a genuinely good product. Smart Manual turns the binders and PDFs that ship with industrial machinery into interactive digital manuals, with parts lists, schematics, photos and video, used every day by technicians servicing equipment from major industrial equipment manufacturers.

The product had simply outgrown its foundation. Three years had passed since the last meaningful update, and customers were asking for more than the platform could deliver. The largest parts lists, some approaching 300 components, had grown past what the code could serve in a single page. The team needed error monitoring, a staging environment, and a reliable path to production before anything new could ship safely.

> **The real constraint was not the feature list.** It was that no one could change the platform with confidence. Every improvement the team wanted was waiting behind that.

What we did

CFC and Livingston & Haven engaged Briar Creek Tech to get the platform moving again. We did it in two passes, and the order mattered.

First, a foundation worth building on

Before adding anything, we made the existing platform dependable. We started where users felt it most: the largest parts lists now load quickly in pages instead of timing out, and every page got faster once we cleared out a mass of unnecessary storage calls that had been running on every request.

From there we strengthened security, stood up a proper staging environment with a modern deployment pipeline, and turned on production error monitoring and logging. That last piece changed the working relationship as much as the code: today, if something needs attention, we know before the client does. Along the way we resolved more than thirty issues reported directly by the people using the platform every day.

Then, the features the team had been waiting on

- **Spreadsheet import.** Full bills of materials, parts, and categories imported from CSV or Excel instead of entered by hand, turning days of data entry into minutes.
- **In-browser image markup.** An editor for annotating equipment photos with arrows, callouts, and industry-standard warning labels, so documentation staff never leave the platform to prepare an image.
- **Reusable subcomponents.** Shared parts documented once and linked everywhere they appear, instead of re-entered for every machine, which compounds in value with every manual built.
- **Viewer improvements throughout.** Hotspot repositioning, sharper part imagery, better navigation, and a steady stream of interface refinements shaped directly by client feedback during staging reviews.

Every feature went to a staging environment for the CFC team to try before it touched production. Twelve features, fixed price, each accepted on their sign-off.

Where it stands

- **Pages that used to time out now load.** The largest parts lists serve quickly and reliably.
- **Problems surface to us first.** Monitoring and logging are live, so issues get attention before they reach the client.
- **Safe to change.** A staging environment and a modern deployment pipeline mean improvements can ship without holding your breath.
- **Shipping again.** The team can say yes to customer requests, which is the part that actually changes a business.

> *"We are thrilled with our decision to partner with Briar Creek Tech. They identified our immediate needs and, more importantly, they were able to grasp our entrepreneurial vision for the product. Briar Creek Tech brought the platform up to date, and did so with a sustainable, future-forward mindset."*
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> **Ian Ford**, Director of Product Development, CFC Industrial Training

> "*Some of the best software already exists. It just needs someone to make it solid again so the team can get back to building. That is the work we love most.*"
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> **Carl Zimmerman**, Founder, Briar Creek Tech

Have a platform that is ready for its next chapter?

Briar Creek Tech builds and revives custom software for businesses in Charlotte and beyond. We are at our best where something valuable already exists and needs a team that can make it dependable again.

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