



"ProLabs provides us with a reliable source of quality OEM compatible optics that are delivered quickly, allowing us to provide state-of-the-art communications options to our customers."

- Network Equipment Engineer at Blackfoot

## Case Study

ProLabs simplifies ordering and provides cost savings for Blackfoot with a broad offering of OEM-compatible fiber optic transceivers.

### Business Challenge

Blackfoot provides reliable broadband infrastructure throughout Montana and Eastern Idaho, giving people the opportunity to connect through a dependable, high-speed network. With more than 14,000 residential and businesses customers across 16 states, the Blackfoot network ecosystem is responsible for terabytes of IP traffic to more than 30 rural exchanges every day.

**The challenge:** OEM optics were increasingly needed for Blackfoot's expanding network, but the costs were excessive, causing budgets to tighten for other infrastructure requirements.

To cut costs, Blackfoot began using numerous third-party optics vendors. At first, this was a great solution, but then they realized they weren't achieving the level of functionality, agility, and quick delivery necessary to serve their customers.

### Solution

Blackfoot consulted with ProLabs, its trusted optic partner since early 2012. From experience, they knew that ProLabs had a significant edge over competition when it came to reliability.

According to their lead Network Equipment Engineer, "ProLabs optics are products that we generally install and forget. It is rare that we have an issue with them, which can't be said about other suppliers." Blackfoot deploys thousands of optics and serves thousands of customers so the combination of ProLabs' low failure rate and low cost has a positive effect on lowering OpEx costs. The low cost and short lead-time of ProLabs optics gives Blackfoot the freedom to increase their backup optics stock, making it easier to quickly adjust or add transceivers in the field.

### Customer Advantages

When asked about the advantages for using ProLabs optics, Blackfoot's Network Equipment Engineer says, "In the rare case where we have an issue with an optic, ProLabs has always been able to help troubleshoot and identify the root cause. Sometimes it has been the equipment and other times the optic, but they have been helpful regardless. When needed, we receive replacements very quickly due to their extended warranty and superior customer service. Their support has been excellent."

Blackfoot goes on to say, "Availability is another major consideration. We have a very wide variety of optic needs and regardless of the need ProLabs can get them to us in a couple of weeks or less. We've had some cases where the OEM vendor wanted 6 weeks for delivery. This makes it very difficult to run a nimble network with such lengthy lead times. We don't have that issue with ProLabs."



## ProLabs Solution

Blackfoot turned to ProLabs, the leading provider of compatibles to service providers and enterprise networks. ProLabs' technical experts analysed the situation and provided replacement transceivers that had the necessary compatible hexadecimal coding to work with the new switches. With ProLabs as its partner, Blackfoot broke free of OEM dependence.

## Results and Benefits

The use of ProLabs optics has had a significant impact on cost and time savings. Blackfoot saves about 40% annually by using ProLabs optics over OEM branded optics. "We rely on ProLabs for all optical connectivity needs and they've delivered. The ProLabs partnership saves us the time and hassle of working with multiple optics vendors."

## About Blackfoot

Blackfoot began with the idea that when people connect they accomplish more than they do on their own. Founded in 1954 and headquartered in Missoula, Montana, Blackfoot provides broadband service to residences and businesses across Montana and Eastern Idaho with reliable technologies, including IP phone (VoIP), Ethernet, cloud solutions, network design, high-speed internet, and more. Blackfoot's high-speed fiber optic network delivers internet, digital voice, data, and communication solutions to customers across 16 states.

Blackfoot has expanded their markets and enhanced their service area and product lines through infrastructure investments and acquisitions. They've invested millions in broadband infrastructure which has given them one of the most advanced data backbones in the region. Blackfoot backs their customers with 24/7 support from more than 170 experts who monitor, answer questions and solve problems.

Blackfoot understands how to integrate technology to save customers money, improve efficiency and grow. They hold true to the fundamental purpose of their work; to connect people and businesses to help communities prosper and grow, and to provide useful and reliable technology to their customers.

To learn more, visit [www.blackfoot.com](http://www.blackfoot.com)

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### Availability

With our global presence, regional operations and warehousing, we can offer same or next day delivery on most of our product range.



### Interoperability

Our products are designed to bridge multiple platforms, which gives you minimum stock, maximum flexibility and ease-of-use.



### Support

You can rely on our industry experts, in region customer service and trusted advisers to give you a swift and personal service.



### Quality

Our stringent product testing processes, together with coding verification under operating conditions, gives you compatibility assurance and peace of mind.



### Warranty

You can expect quality products and thorough testing, backed by a lifetime warranty on transceivers.



### Value

On balance, our range of innovative compatibility solutions enable you to maximise your connectivity with minimal initial investment.