

One Company, Two Markets, Zero Confusion

- Ekso Bionics
- Head of Marketing
- 2019–2020



The Situation

Ekso Bionics created technology that didn't fit any existing category. Their exoskeletons help stroke and spinal cord injury patients walk again in clinical rehabilitation settings and protected construction workers from repetitive injury on job sites. Two genuinely transformative use cases served by the same brand, with the same language, as if they were the same product for the same buyer.

They weren't. Hospital system and distributor clinical buyers needed evidence, reimbursement pathways, and workflow integration. Industrial buyers ranged from enterprise safety managers purchasing at scale to individual tradespeople buying direct. Using inspirational mobility language for all of them served none of them. The company sounded like a robotics lab searching for markets rather than a focused solutions partner. Sales cycles dragged. Customers struggled to justify purchases internally.

The Diagnosis

The surface problem was messaging. The real problem was structural.

Ekso had two fundamentally different businesses operating under one brand with no architecture. There was no shared north star, no product-level differentiation, no audience-specific proof. It wasn't a language problem — it was an identity problem. You can't write your way out of a structural incoherence.

Before

Single inspirational brand voice for two incompatible audiences

Clinical content confused industrial buyers — and vice versa

No proof architecture: claims weren't backed by evidence

No eCommerce: every sale required a human rep

No recurring revenue: capital equipment only

After

Unified brand architecture with two distinct product narratives

Audience-specific proof frameworks for clinical and industrial

Evidence-led positioning across both business lines

Industry's first eCommerce channel for direct purchase

Industry's first subscription model for clinical adoption

"Ashley approaches creative like an architect: with structure first and aesthetics second. Before we touched a single visual, she'd built the positioning spine, the audience frameworks, the rules for what we'd never do. That foundation is why the work held across two markets and five languages without ever feeling inconsistent."

— John Lendved · Creative Director, Ekso Bionics

The Work

I rebuilt the brand from first principles, redesigning the positioning logic. The architecture needed to acknowledge the fundamental difference between clinical and industrial markets while establishing what unified them.

The unified promise I designed: "Evidence-backed, purpose-built exoskeleton technologies that improve human outcomes in clinical and industrial environments." "Human outcomes" as shared north star. "Evidence-backed" satisfying both proof requirements. "Purpose-built" acknowledging specialization without fracturing the company.

Brand Architecture

Rebuilt entire positioning logic, unifying brand spine with two distinct product narratives that ladder up without forcing false coherence between incompatible markets

Full Rebrand

New logo, design language, and multilingual website across 5 languages executed with global product launches across clinical and industrial markets simultaneously

Narrative Shift

Clinical

"Look what this robot can do" → "Look what your rehab system can achieve"; repositioned EksoHealth around patient outcomes, therapist workflow, and provider ROI

Narrative Shift

Industrial

"Exoskeletons make workers superhuman" → "Exoskeletons reduce injuries and protect your workforce"; repositioned EksoWorks around occupational ergonomics and measurable safety ROI

eCommerce

Industry First

Launched the category's first direct-to-consumer eCommerce channel, enabling self-service purchase without rep involvement, expanding geographic reach and buyer types

Subscription

Industry First

Introduced the category's first recurring revenue model for clinical exoskeletons, lowering the adoption barrier from capital expenditure to a manageable recurring cost

Marketing Flywheel

Created customer marketing activation packages (~\$20K each) hospitals paid Ekso to produce co-branded content and patient stories that Ekso needed to sell the next hospital

3 Global Launches

Orchestrated international product introductions with coordinated global press coverage, while executing the rebrand simultaneously

The Proof

2× industry firsts

eCommerce + subscription — category innovations

~300%

Growth in MQLs & digital engagement

3 global

International product launches with press

5 languages

Multilingual rebrand executed

Both commercial innovations, eCommerce and subscription, were subsequently adopted by competitors, validating them as category-level shifts rather than one-off experiments. The customer marketing package created a self-funding proof library: the content hospitals paid to produce became the evidence that closed the next deal.

"Ashley thinks like a creative director and a strategist at the same time, which is rare. She protected the work without being precious about it, pushed us to go further when it mattered, and never lost sight of what the brand needed to earn. The result was a rebrand that looked premium and functioned as one."

— Ian Douglass · Co-Founder, Single Origin Media (Ekso's Web Team)

"Working for Ashley taught me what real brand leadership looks like — clear vision, high standards, and the generosity to bring your team along with you."

— Daniel Arrienda · Digital Marketing Manager, Ekso Bionics

What this demonstrates

Premium hardware brands in new categories face a specific challenge: the technology is genuinely impressive, but "impressive" doesn't close deals. Credibility does. The work at Ekso was about building the proof infrastructure that earns the right to be taken seriously: evidence-led positioning, audience-specific narratives, commercial models that match how buyers actually buy. And doing all of it simultaneously — rebrand, global launches, new business models, multilingual execution — under startup constraints. Uniquely, it required doing this across both B2B enterprise sales and direct-to-consumer channels simultaneously: two completely different buying experiences, one coherent brand.

The result wasn't just a better-looking brand. It was a company that moved from novelty to necessity in two completely different markets at once.