

Ashley Pola	VP Marketing Brand & Narrative Strategy Category Design
ashleylynnpola@gmail.com www.ashpola.com linkedin.com/in/ashleypola	Brand executive with 15+ years building narrative systems, category positions, and integrated marketing engines for complex, early-stage, and frontier companies. Expertise spans AI, hardware-software, health tech, robotics, and consumer with a consistent track record of turning novel categories into coherent, investable brands. Known for building at the zero-to-one stage, owning the full brand-through-demand arc, and leading cross-functional teams that execute from strategic foundations.

Core Competencies

Brand & Narrative | Narrative architecture, positioning, brand systems & governance, creative direction, integrated campaigns, PR & experiential
Marketing Leadership | VP/Head of Marketing, cross-functional leadership, agency management, blended team building, global (NA, EMEA, APAC)
GTM & Revenue | Zero-to-one launches, product marketing, channel strategy, demand generation, ABM, pipeline generation
Specialty | Category design, AI & tech positioning, hardware-software, B2B enterprise, consumer lifestyle & fashion

CalmWave | Head of Brand & Marketing (VP) — 2022 - 2023 (Contract, 2022 - 2023 | FTE, 2023 - Current)

- Architected full positioning, narrative architecture, and brand system from stealth through enterprise adoption — defining a new category ('Operations Health') that repositioned the platform from point solution to system-level infrastructure.
- Built narrative and brand system adopted across product, sales, and executive leadership, driving cross-functional alignment and consistent external storytelling.
- Generated \$10M+ in contracted revenue; built pipeline from \$0 to \$100M+ within first enterprise deployments; supported Pre-Seed through Series A funding rounds.
- Directed global PR, campaigns, experiential activations, and design systems; built and led a hybrid internal/agency team.
- Awards: Inc. Best Workplaces, GeekWire Health Innovation of the Year, Fast Company Innovation by Design, TITAN Innovation of the Year.

Vave Health — Head of Brand & Product Marketing — 2020 – 2023

- Built brand and product narrative for category-defining wireless medical device launching against entrenched incumbents.
- Designed positioning and KOL adoption engine that established credibility in a conservative clinical category.
- Introduced subscription/UaaS model aligning product with modern buyer behavior; earned 7 global design awards.
- Drove 70x revenue growth through eCommerce launch, subscription model, and early adoption strategy.

Ekso Bionics — Head of Global Brand & Marketing Strategy — 2019 – 2020

- Rebuilt brand architecture for Ekso Bionics, a publicly traded dual-market robotics company, designing a unified narrative system with differentiated audience logic across clinical and industrial segments.
- Shifted positioning from 'interesting robotics' to credible solutions partner; eliminated category confusion and drove 98-account expansion during strategic repositioning.
- Introduced industry-first eCommerce and subscription revenue models, later adopted across the exoskeleton category.
- Led global brand system across NA, EMEA, and APAC; delivered 5x lift in qualified leads and digital engagement.

Tesla — Brand Experience & Partnership Strategy — 2017 – 2018

- Led brand experience and partnership strategy for the Northern California region during the Model 3 launch era.
- Directed Model 3 public debut at the LA Auto Show — led 120+ staff, generated 20K+ leads, ~\$50M in pipeline, and ~\$25M in press coverage across automotive, tech, and lifestyle media.
- Translated Model 3 from 'electric car' into a mainstream cultural moment, broadening Tesla's audience beyond early adopters through experiential design and cultural framing.
- Authored national showroom and delivery experience playbook scaled across all U.S. retail locations; served as spokesperson for Tesla's first delivery hub.
- Built a partnership strategy connecting Tesla to luxury, design, and cultural institutions, establishing brand adjacencies beyond the automotive category.

Additional Experience — Consumer Brands, SaaS, & Creator Partnerships

- Dimension Express, Contract (2022 - Current) — Repositioned and relaunched dormant SaaS platform; rebuilt commercial foundation into scalable subscription model.
- Earlier career in consumer, fashion, and lifestyle marketing — Saks Fifth Avenue, Michael Kors, Sephora, Tart Collections, and other luxury consumer brands: integrated campaigns, creator partnerships, cultural activations, and European market entry for Michael Kors.

Select Recognition & Media

Fast Company *Innovation by Design* | Industrial Designers Society of America *IDEA Award* | GeekWire *Innovation of the Year* | TITAN Innovation Award | London Design Award | Inc. Best Workplaces | Work Featured in Forbes, WSJ, TechCrunch, Axios, Bloomberg

Writing

ashpola.com/insights | Executive thought leadership development across Forbes, Fast Company, and Inc. | Independent video essay project in development focused on cultural and systems analysis

Education

Cornell University — Executive Women in Leadership Certificate, SC Johnson College of Business
University of Stirling — BA Hons / MA, Philosophy