

# Case Study

## Ekso Bionics

### European launch of the exoskeleton



## 1. Objectives

- Launch Ekso, a new bionic exoskeleton in the UK
- Find a platform / event to launch the innovation at
- Generate widespread national news coverage

## 2. Planning

**Ekso Bionics** - formerly Berkeley Bionics - is a US-based developer and manufacturer of bionic exoskeletons that enhance human strength, endurance and mobility. In 2010 the company unveiled a new bionic device in the US, called Ekso, which helps people with spinal cord injuries to walk again. The device received an overwhelming media response in the US with coverage on major news channels including CNN.

Ekso Bionics was keen to emulate this success in the UK and attract the attention of their target market, spinal injury rehabilitation centres, with a launch event.

The PR team decided to position the product as a new advancement in bionic technology, rather than a medical device, in order to give the story mass media appeal. The London International Technology Show (LITS) at London's Excel, was seen as the perfect platform to launch the Ekso as it provided the right environment and access to relevant media.

The team from the US, including Ekso Bionics CEO Eythor Bender and Ekso test pilot Amanda Boxel were briefed about the event and it was agreed that they should attend to give a live demonstration at the show and be available for press opportunities.

Working with the show's organisers we planned a live stage event on the opening day of the event as well as media call outside of the venue.

As we only had a couple of days when we would have the equipment and the Ekso spokespeople in the UK, the PR team had to devise a targeted media relations strategy in order to achieve the best possible coverage, within a small window of opportunity.

Test pilot, Amanda Boxtel, was paralysed 20 years ago and had only just learnt to walk again using Ekso – so it was essential that Souter communicated her emotive story to create engaging photo and filming opportunities for national media.

### 3. Implementation

- Drafted a detailed press pack, which included information about the company, the technical breakdown of the device and information about our media spokespeople
- Liaised closely with LITS press team to maximise Ekso as lead media story at the event
- Organised media call opportunity on Royal Victoria Dock Bridge outside of the Excel – where Amanda would get up from her wheelchair and walk – creating a stunning filming and picture opportunity for media, with a iconic London backdrop
- Briefed media spokespeople and created detailed Q&A documents
- Approached broadcast and print media – ensuring that each journalist had their own unique take on the story
- Sold in and managed photshoot with national technology magazine, Wired
- Managed media on the day, which included live TV, print, radio and online

### 4. Results

- Extensive broadcast media coverage including ITV1's Daybreak, SKY News and BBC Worldwide
- Half page feature in the Daily Telegraph
- Lead feature in London Metro
- Coverage in the Guardian technology pages
- Secured features in key target audience titles; Able and Disability Now
- International reach via National Post (Picture of the Day) and widespread pick up from Getty Images
- Consumer coverage in technology magazines iGizmo and Wired
- 18 x online news pieces including Mail Online

### 5. Feedback

*“The team at Souter managed the media relations for our Ekso European launch with professionalism and expertise. They demonstrated excellent handling of national media contacts and news delivery, creating an enviable amount of attention for Ekso Bionics. Despite some very tight timelines and our limited amount of material, they managed to far surpass our objectives and led to the most successful launch we have ever had.”* Ekso Bionics European Managing Director, Andy Hayes