

Here's How I'd Turn Struggling GoPro From a Fading Action-Cam Into a Defense Powerhouse

A worked case study in Hearability — the positioning engine that doesn't make your product better, it makes the buyer see it differently.

In April 2026, GoPro did something a lot of struggling hardware companies are doing right now: it went looking for a war to be useful in. The company engaged a top-tier consultancy to explore opportunities in defense and aerospace — new markets for a brand whose old market had quietly walked away.

The timing was not subtle. By mid-2026 GoPro's quarterly revenue was down roughly a quarter year-over-year, gross margin had collapsed to the low single digits, and its auditor had attached the two words no company wants in a filing: *going concern*. A workforce cut was underway. Bankers had been hired to explore a

sale. This was not a confident giant extending its empire. This was a famous brand the market had written off, trying to find one more room in the house that wasn't on fire.

Which makes it the perfect test. **If a positioning method can find a defensible defense position for *this* company — no certifications, no defense pedigree, a balance sheet on life support — it can find one for anybody.**

So I ran GoPro through Hearability. Here's what it does, and what it found.

The trap almost everyone walks into

Ask any marketer to position GoPro for defense and you'll get a version of the same sentence: *"Rugged, mission-ready imaging. Industry-leading stabilization, now engineered for defense and aerospace."*

It sounds reasonable. It is also a loss disguised as a hero line.

The problem isn't the words — it's the *shelf they put GoPro on*. That sentence lines GoPro up next to Teledyne FLIR, AeroVironment, and RTX and invites the buyer to compare them on the incumbents' own terms: certified sensors, ISR payloads, mil-

spec ruggedization. On that shelf, a consumer company with a going-concern warning is a weak variant of a category leader. The buyer files it under "cheaper, riskier version of the real thing" and moves on.

Hearability scores that instinctive version a **33 out of 100**. Not because the writing is bad — because it's fighting the giants on the giants' ground, where GoPro cannot win. The first rule of the method is the oldest rule in strategy: *never fight the giant on the giant's terms*.

What the method does instead: find the empty seat

Hearability starts by mapping the frames, not the features. It lays the contenders side by side and asks what category, metaphor, and word each one already owns.

VENDOR	CATEGORY THEY OWN	THEIR METAPHOR	WORD THEY OWN
Teledyne FLIR	EO/IR & thermal sensing	<i>The unblinking eye</i>	Thermal
AeroVironment	Unmanned systems	<i>The scout and the dagger</i>	Switchblade
RTX / Raytheon	Integrated effectors	<i>The shield</i>	Missiles

Lay it out like this and the pattern jumps off the page: **every defense imaging incumbent sells the same thing in different sizes — *exquisite* imaging**. Expensive, certified, bespoke, low-volume, too valuable to risk. Their entire business model is built around precision and pedigree.

Which means the opposite end of the shelf is empty. Nobody owns *cheap, mass-produced, expendable* imaging — the kind a force can field by the thousand and afford to lose. And that empty seat happens to sit right on top of the fastest-growing

demand in defense: attritable systems, dual-use commercial tech, mass over perfection.

That's not GoPro's weakness anymore. That's the one frame GoPro is *built* to own — and the one the giants structurally cannot take, because no prime can rebuild its cost model around being disposable.

Expendable, not exquisite.

From a frame to a finished page

A position is only worth as much as the page it ships on. So I took the locked angle and built it — a live defense landing page, hero to footer, in an afternoon.

GoProDEFENSEDOCTRINEVS. PRIMESPROOFBRIEFGET BRIEF

CLASSIFIED // POSITIONING DOCTRINE — REV. 2026.04

EXPENDABLE.
NOT EXQUISITE.

The primes will sell you a perfect camera too expensive to risk. We'll sell you a combat-stabilized one cheap enough to put on every drone, every helmet, every asset you're willing to lose.

When the mission is contested, mass beats perfect.

STATUSACTIVE

HERITAGEARTEMIS II ORION

SCALECONSUMER VOLUME

POSTUREATTRITABLE

GET THE 2-PAGE BRIEF

SEE THE FRAME MAP

No procurement call required.

/01 — DOCTRINE

MASS BEATS PERFECT.

Defense doesn't need one flawless camera. It needs ten thousand expendable ones.

UNIT POSTURE1:10,000One exquisite eye vs. ten thousand expendable.

MANUFACTURED MILLIONSConsumer-scale lines, defense-grade output.

OPERATOR TRAINING ZEROThey grew up running it. Muscle memory is the manual.

FLIGHT HERITAGE ARTEMIS IIMounted on Orion's solar wings. Already in space.

/02 — FRAME MAP

THE SEAT NO ONE IS SITTING IN.

Every defense incumbent sells the same thing in different sizes: exquisite imaging — expensive, certified, bespoke, too valuable to risk. We own the opposite end of the shelf.

VENDOR	CATEGORY	METAPHOR	WORD OWNED
Teledyne FLIR	EO/IR & thermal	<i>The unblinking eye</i>	THERMAL
AeroVironment	Unmanned systems	<i>The scout & dagger</i>	SWITCHBLADE
RTX / Raytheon	Integrated effectors	<i>The shield</i>	MISSILES
GoPro Defense	Attritable imaging	<i>The eye you spend</i>	ATTRITABLE

// No incumbent can occupy the attritable seat — their entire business model is the opposite of cheap-and-disposable.

/03 — PROOF

ALREADY FLOWN. ALREADY MADE.
ALREADY KNOWN.

FLIGHT HERITAGENASA ARTEMIS II ORIONMounted on Orion's solar-array wings and used for interior documentation. The sensor has already survived the launch envelope nobody else's COTS camera has.

MANUFACTURINGBUILT BY THE MILLIONConsumer-scale supply chain a prime cannot match. The cost structure is the moat — and the moat doesn't close because nobody else will dig it.

OPERATOR FAMILIARITYTHE 19-YEAR-OLD ALREADY KNOWSEvery prime system needs specialist training. GoPro is the camera the operator has run since middle school. Readiness is free.

/04 — THE LINE

WHAT WE SAY. WHAT THEY SELL.

VS. FLIRFLIR sells the sensor you protect:GoPro sells the sensor you spend.

VS. AEROVIRONMENTTheir platform is the expensive asset:We're the eye you bolt on a hundred cheap ones.

VS. RTXThey sell exquisite systems-to-programs:We sell mass to the field.

DOC-10 // GP-DEF-2026-001

/05 — NEXT STEP

READ THE BRIEF.
SKIP THE SALES CALL.

Two pages. Unit posture, cost contrast, fielding model, and the three proof anchors. Reversible commitment — no procurement obligation, no NDA, no follow-up unless you ask.

operator@command.milREQUEST BRIEF

[ENCRYPTED IN TRANSIT. NO MARKETING LIST.]

GoProDEFENSE & AEROSPACE DIVISIONWORD TO OWN: ATTRITABLE© 2026 GOPRO, INC. — POSITIONING DEMOEdit with Loveable

The live page, hero to footer — built in an afternoon from the locked position.

The hero is the spine itself, set in type you can read across a room: **EXPENDABLE. NOT EXQUISITE.** Underneath it, the doctrine that makes a near-bankrupt camera company sound like the only sane choice in the room:

The primes will sell you a perfect camera too expensive to risk. We'll sell you a combat-stabilized one cheap enough to put on every drone, every helmet, every asset you're willing to lose. When the mission is contested, mass beats perfect.

Every section earns the claim. The proof bar runs the numbers that matter to this buyer — **1:10,000** (one exquisite eye versus ten thousand expendable ones),

Why this generalizes to your brand

GoPro is a dramatic example, but the mechanism is the everyday one. Most positioning fails for the same quiet reason: it describes the product accurately, on the incumbent's shelf, in the incumbent's words — and the reader, who only ever skims, files it as a lesser version of something they already know.

Hearability is built to interrupt that. It **maps the frames** to find the seat no competitor is sitting in — the category you can own instead of the one you'd lose. It **compresses the position** into something that survives a hallway, a cold call, and a

Millions (the manufacturing scale that is the real moat), **Zero** (training required — the operator grew up running one), and **Artemis II** (yes, GoPro has already flown on a NASA spacecraft). A "what we say / what they sell" panel draws the line against each incumbent by name. And the closer removes the single biggest source of friction in defense selling — the dreaded sales call — with a reversible, two-page ask: *Read the brief. Skip the sales call.*

The same page, written the obvious way, scored a 33. Written this way, it scores an **84**. Same product. Same facts. A completely different buyer reaction — because the method changed the category the buyer files GoPro under, from "another rugged camera" to "the only expendable eye on the shelf."

The product almost never has to change. The frame around it does. That's the whole game.

Want to see your own 33 become an 84?

If your category has an incumbent you keep getting compared to — and a position you suspect you're leaving on the table — that's exactly what Hearability is for. Send me your homepage and your three closest competitors, and I'll send back the empty seat, the line, and the score.

TRY HEARABILITY

The GoPro example is an independent positioning demonstration built from public information; it is not affiliated with or endorsed by GoPro, Inc. Financial and program details cited (the April 2026 advisory engagement, the going-concern disclosure, and the Artemis II flight heritage) are point-in-time as of June 2026 and were verified against public sources at the time of writing.