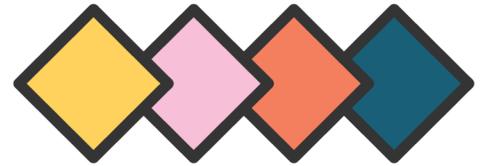


# Case Study

## NASA Johnson Space Center

Reframing the International Space Station as a research product



[ciandratjackson.com](http://ciandratjackson.com)

### Challenge

While leading NASA's Destination Station campaign, I recognized a critical gap. Our outreach celebrated the awe and inspiration of human spaceflight, but that was not what scientists needed. Researchers were not looking for spectacle; they needed clarity on how real experiments could be executed in space. As a result, scientific engagement was stagnant, and proposals were limited.

### Insight

The International Space Station (ISS) was being marketed as an icon, not as a functional research platform. Scientists could not see how their work fit into the environment, what tools were available or how NASA supported end-to-end investigations. The problem wasn't interest, it was relevance.

### Strategy

I reframed the ISS as a product built for scientists, not a symbol of exploration.

The campaign pivoted from wonder to capability:

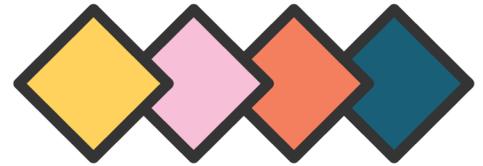
- Highlighted specific research infrastructure: Centrifuges, incubators, freezers and microscopes.
- Showcased operational support: Astronaut time, payload integration, data return
- Communicated in the language of researchers: experimental design, feasibility, outcomes
- Shifted messaging from "look how cool space is" to "here's what you can accomplish in microgravity"

This repositioning made the ISS feel less like a distant marvel and more like a viable laboratory.

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### Execution

- Developed capability-driven content and technical storytelling (example: Speaking points and presentations)
- Created targeted outreach events for universities, research institutions, and principal investigators (**Emory University, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Barrow Neurological Institute**)
- Partnered with NASA scientists to translate complex facilities into accessible, actionable value propositions
- Built a narrative around scientific results, not spectacle

### Outcome

The shift transformed engagement:

- An increase in inquiries from researchers - **233 researchers attended seven ISS business development events**
- New proposals from universities and research institutions worldwide - **The University of Arizona partnered with NASA to develop new Earth observation technology**
- Expanded business development opportunities for NASA - **Three researchers at Emory University inquired about submitting to a NASA STEM cell RFP**

By treating the ISS like a product with clear value, I helped convert curiosity into commitment and repositioned NASA's orbiting laboratory as a serious, accessible platform for groundbreaking research.