

invenia.



## Case study:

# Identifying and Hiring a VP of R&D for Biotech Startup, Velvet Therapeutics

Velvet Therapeutics is a small but ambitious player in the biotech industry, based in Houston, Texas. The company employs break-through compact, supercoiled, circular DNA and a biodegradable polymer to deliver non-viral cell and gene therapies in vivo.

# The challenge:

The startup has under 10 employees and is without a dedicated HR resources team, meaning they have limited capacity to identify, engage with, and qualify talent. Being a small company, finding a candidate that would fit in well culturally with the current team was also crucial. These challenges marked our first interaction with Velvet Therapeutics and opened doors to a strategic partnership.

# Solution:

Velvet Therapeutics was looking for an R&D leader to lead pre-clinical development pursuant to clinical trials and ongoing capital formation. Understanding the unique goals of the company, our Biopharma team was able to shortlist six talented candidates for a Vice President of Research and Development position.

After engaging in in-depth discussions with Velvet Therapeutics surrounding their needs and wants, the firm confidently identified their ideal candidate in the candidates that we shortlisted. This selection process, which included two rounds of interviews, unfolded over a three-month period. Our teams' insights into the biotech sector, particularly in the realm of non-viral cell and gene therapies, were instrumental in recommending individuals who were not only highly qualified but also aligned well with Velvet Therapeutics' culture. This aspect was particularly crucial for the company, given the compact size of their team.

# Impact:

The successful candidate began their role of Vice President of Research and Development in November 2023, equipped with extensive knowledge and experience in both viral and non-viral cell and gene therapies. Their abilities to oversee projects from discovery to clinical trials was immediately apparent.

This successful placement has not only addressed a critical need for Velvet Therapeutics but has also positioned Invenia Group as a trusted recruitment partner for their future growth. With the company's plans to expand their team as they scale, we continue to collaborate with the company, working as a strategic partner to fuel their growth plans. Our successes were also apparent in the great feedback our team received:

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*“Invenia Groups Biopharma team did a fantastic job for us. They identified and pursued candidates persistently and politely. I'm grateful for their significant help.”*

**VP of Research and Development**

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*“Invenia Groups' Biopharma team has an ingenious gift to match people with where they are needed and what they love. Their abilities to be genuine, persistent, flexible, and yet always on the ball are crucial to building trust and commitment.”*

**Chris Coker, President & CEO**