

COMING FULL CIRCLE – WHEN THE CANDIDATE BECOMES THE CLIENT

Akcea Therapeutics develops RNA-targeted treatments for people living with serious and rare diseases. When the company was searching for a Chief Human Resources Officer, The Chase Group not only recruited the ideal executive, but also then partnered with her to fill two key leadership positions, turning the candidate into a raving fan and loyal client.

“The Chase team members are absolutely some of the finest people I’ve worked with when it comes to executive search. They care more, prepare better, and simply work harder than others. Their partnership has been vital in helping us build a world-class executive team.”



– Carla Poulson
Senior Vice President,
Chief Human Resources Officer



At first, Carla Poulson wasn't that interested in leaving Vertex Pharmaceuticals to take the offer from Akcea Therapeutics as SVP and Chief Human Resources Officer.

Yes, it was attractive, but she had two similar offers already.

Poulson's strong credentials gain attention easily. A steady track record over the last 20 years of increasing responsibilities and promotions at Exxon Mobil, PepsiCo, Stop & Shop, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals make her a prime candidate for C-level roles.

When The Chase Group provided additional perspective on the pros and cons of all the offers, Poulson appreciated the critical thinking and wise counsel.

Poulson was able to expand her thinking and imagine the future based on that wise counsel. Additionally, valuable insight was provided on the global growth potential and culture of Akcea.

Poulson said the approach was energizing and eye-opening. She had never had a search consultant take such a personal interest in her career path.

“The Chase Group was prepared and didn't just know Akcea inside and out, but also had great insights into the whole market,” Poulson said. “They weren't just trying to fill a role, they helped me realize this was the time for the leap to the CHRO role. I felt supported, informed, and appreciated throughout the process.”

The Candidate Becomes the Client

Poulson started at Akcea just as the pandemic was beginning to spread across North America. Her first day on the job was spent at her home office leading discussions on employee health and safety, work-from-home enablement, and company communications.

Poulson also had to quickly complete searches for two executive team members. The Chase Group was retained and partnered with Poulson to quickly hire a new CMO and SVP, Global Medical Affairs.

“Based on my own experience, I knew exactly what I was getting by hiring The Chase Group,” Poulson said. “They have an incredible network, I knew it would be done right, and I knew that our candidates would be treated with the utmost care and respect.”

Poulson said The Chase Group prepared and planned every candidate encounter meticulously. Executive summaries and assessments were thorough, and telephone briefings were provided as well.

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“The team at The Chase Group delivered great background on the people and personalities,” Poulson said. “Their precision and professionalism kept us on task and moving forward. Most importantly, they helped us find and attract two outstanding executive colleagues: Dr. William Andrews, our Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Christophe Hotermans, our SVP, Global Medical Affairs.”

The Pains and Gains in Brief

- > Akcea Therapeutics develops treatments for unaddressed and under-addressed diseases.
- > The Chase Group was retained by Akcea to conduct a search for its Chief Human Resources Officer and ultimately placed highly qualified HR exec and biopharmaceutical veteran Carla Poulson in the role.
- > Poulson subsequently used The Chase Group to find and place Dr. William Andrews as Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Christophe Hotermans as SVP, Global Medical Affairs.

Poulson said The Chase Group team members are at the top of the list in terms of performance and professionalism. She also regularly shares her opinion and experience with The Chase Group with other talent acquisition executives and is not afraid to explain her bias.

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