

# How Omic Uses AI and Upwork to Help Save Lives: From Heartbreak to Breakthrough

## RESULTS

~0 recruiting

— freeing resources for core priorities

< 1 week to hire

— accelerating project starts

20 specialized skills

— expanding capabilities as needed

### EMPLOYEES

15–20

### CATEGORIES

AI & Machine Learning, Development & IT,  
Data Science & Analytics

### INDUSTRY

Biotechnology Research

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**Gabriel Richman**  
Founder and CEO, Omic

For Gabriel Richman, founder and CEO of [Omic OS](#) — a systems biology AI platform built to accelerate drug discovery — the motivation to transform the field is personal. “My mom was killed by chemotherapy that, based on her unique genetics, should never have been given to her,” Gabe shares. “That’s why I started Omic. So nothing like this happens to another person ever again.”

Gabe is quick to point out that the drug discovery process isn’t broken. “Incredibly smart and dedicated people are doing their best working with massive volumes of imperfect information. But we are now in an era where AI has evolved to handle exactly this type of complexity. This is our chance to fundamentally reimagine drug discovery from the ground up and rebuild pharma for the AI era.”

Omic isn’t replacing scientists with AI; its teams are using AI to help them achieve more. “We’re building for scientists who want to discover life-saving therapies,” says Gabe. “Just like how AI multiplied the productivity of software developers of all skill levels and opened up an entirely new class of developers like vibe coding, we see the same opportunity now for scientists.”

The passionate startup is making progress toward this future, but reaching their goals relies on finding the right experts to help a small team tackle a massive mission.

## The challenge: Finding rare expertise in a fast-moving field

Omic’s 15-person team does exceptional work, but they regularly need external expertise that is both highly specific and rare.

For example, a computational biologist who understands modern transformer architectures, or someone who can build data pipelines for multi-omics datasets. “We require specialists with both deep biological knowledge and modern AI expertise. These aren’t skills we can easily find locally,” Gabe notes.

## The solution: Building a global network with Upwork

To find these unique skills, Gabe turned to Upwork from the start. His reason: “We want the best talent available, no matter where they are located.”

Although Omic is based in Seattle, Washington, having a distributed team is an advantage. Their first freelance hire through Upwork was a clinical geneticist based in Scotland who proved so valuable over time that she became the company’s chief scientific officer. Their freelance systems engineer, located in Vietnam, manages the company’s high-performance computing cluster.

“It’s perfect — he’s on while I sleep,” Gabe notes appreciatively. “We couldn’t find this level of expertise locally in Seattle. And if we could, we wouldn’t be able to afford their wages. By hiring globally, we get world-class expertise for competitive wages that fit our budget.”

Upwork’s built-in protections help teams feel confident working with unfamiliar freelancers, especially when dealing with sensitive data and proprietary code. “The safety features are nice, but what really builds our confidence in Upwork is how we consistently find experts who deliver on highly technical, complex projects,” states Gabe.

“We’re not replacing human judgment, but enhancing it with better data and insights. Any tool that helps us find the right expertise faster is valuable to our mission.”

## The results: Scaling possibility, not just productivity

With Upwork’s support, Omic’s lean team operates with the capabilities of a much larger organization. “Sometimes, with just one talented freelancer and AI, we can complete specialized projects that would normally require hiring several full-time experts,” says Gabe.

How fast they find an expert matters as much as the expert themselves. “Traditional hiring often took months. But every month spent recruiting was a month away from working on new therapies, platform improvements, or fresh ideas,” Gabe explains. With Upwork, the team often finds the right match within days.

At first, Gabe viewed Upwork as a transactional site, but it became much more. “A large percentage of the freelancers we hire are referrals from freelancers we first met on Upwork,” Gabe explains.

**“Upwork helped us build a community of incredible talent, which means we now spend even less time recruiting than before.”**

Looking ahead, Gabe sees Upwork as an essential part of Omic’s future. “Our next big goal is to enable biotech to operate at the speed of software while maintaining its high standards of safety and efficacy. We aim to provide the infrastructure that lets any biotech company move from discovery to clinical trials in a few months instead of years, without compromising the rigor that all patients deserve.”

Achieving this vision will demand even more specialized expertise across new therapeutic and technical domains. But Gabe is confident:

**“The pool of talent available on Upwork is tremendous. We will continue to use the global talent pool on Upwork to find the right expertise at the right time. It’s a core part of how we stay agile and competitive as a very small company trying to solve very big problems.”**