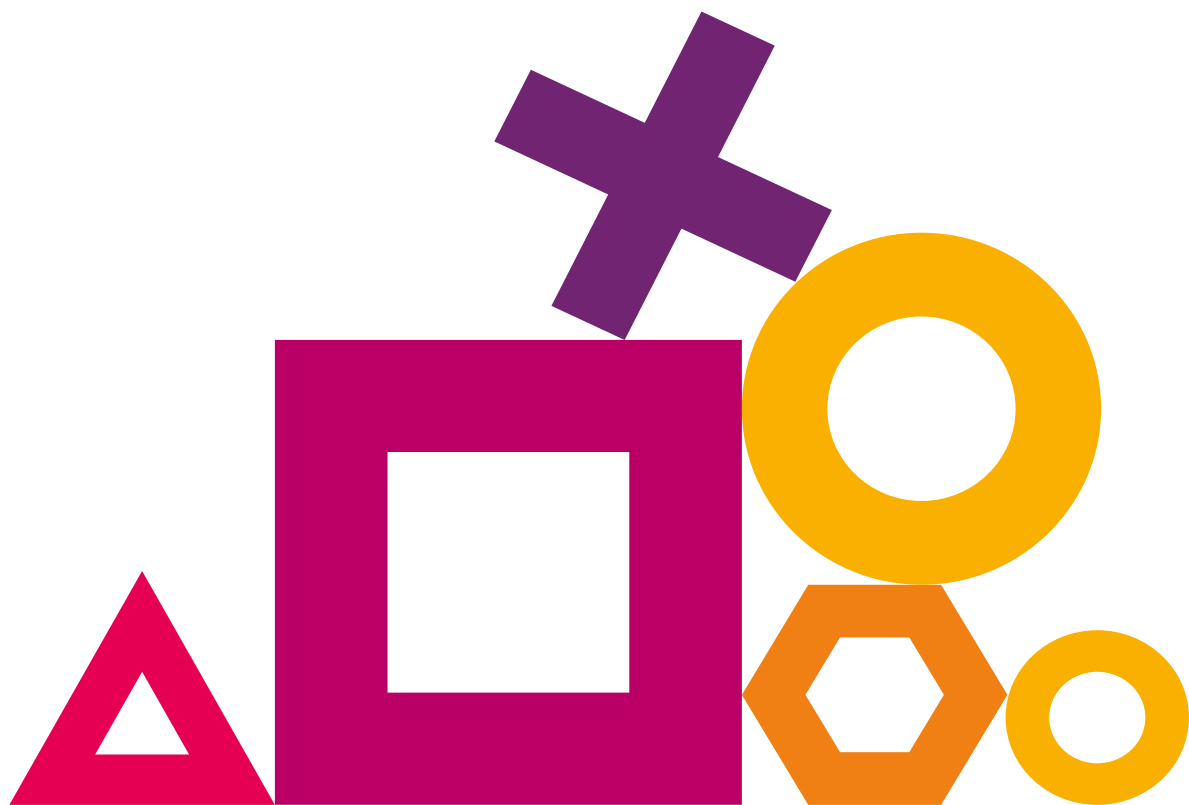


Case Study:

A Collaborative Recruitment Partnership Supporting Growth at Amber Therapeutics



Executive Summary

When Amber Therapeutics, an ambitious and rapidly growing medical technology business in Oxfordshire, needed support with two pivotal hires during a period of rapid growth, the company partnered with Allen Associates to achieve a flexible and high-quality recruitment solution.

Working in close collaboration with HR consultancy Highlight People, we placed both an Office Manager and an Executive Assistant on a temporary-to-permanent basis, offering the business flexibility while ensuring long-term alignment. By focusing on quality over volume and combining deep knowledge and insight into the local Oxfordshire market, we successfully identified candidates who not only met the technical specifications of the role but also aligned strongly with the company's culture, rapid pace of growth, and long-term ambitions to strengthen the business.

Both hires quickly demonstrated their value and were subsequently transitioned into permanent positions, proving the effectiveness of our approach and the long-term impact that well-matched temporary talent can have on an organisation.

This assignment highlights Allen Associates' proven ability to support fast-moving, high-growth organisations with expertise, precision, and flexibility.

Introduction

Amber Therapeutics was undergoing a period of growth when it approached Allen Associates. The company required support to secure two key individuals who could operate in a fast-moving environment and contribute to the day-to-day running and strategic effectiveness of the business, from day one.

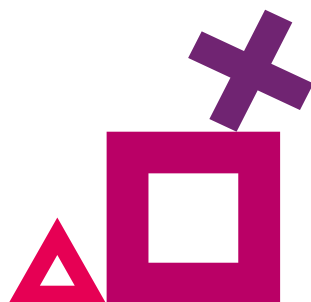
The brief spanned two business-critical roles:

1. A hands-on Office Manager who could keep daily operations running smoothly.

2. A highly capable Executive Assistant to provide CEO support while contributing across multiple business functions.

We were introduced to Amber Therapeutics by Highlight People, an established HR consultancy that acts as the company's outsourced HR and People Development partner. This partnership enabled us to develop a highly informed, collaborative approach to the recruitment process, combining our expertise in candidate sourcing and assessment with deep organisational insight.

Both roles were expected to evolve alongside the business, so it was decided that a temporary-to-permanent approach offered maximum flexibility to ensure long-term fit.



Client Background

Amber Therapeutics is a medical technology business based in Oxfordshire, developing an innovative treatment for women's mixed urinary incontinence. As a scaling organisation, it combines scientific excellence with the challenges of a growing business, such as evolving structures, expanding teams, and increasing operational complexity.

The company had previously dealt, first-hand, with the limitations of direct hiring, having experienced high volumes of unsuitable applications and the ensuing difficulties of identifying candidates who possessed the right blend of skills.

The key challenges included:

- Niche, blended and multifaceted role requirements, especially for the Executive Assistant.
- Sourcing candidates who would be comfortable working in a fast-paced, evolving environment.
- Satisfying high expectations in areas such as documentation, presentations, compliance and stakeholder support.
- Finding experienced candidates who could combine technical capability with strong cultural alignment within a close-knit, expanding team.

We understood that success in this case would depend on precision, not volume and, in order to achieve this, we worked closely with both Amber Therapeutics and Highlight People throughout the process. Highlight People's existing relationship with the founder and CEO of Amber Therapeutics, Aidan Crawley, provided us with valuable insight into the company's culture, expectations, and long-term goals, enabling us to develop an informed, fully aligned, and highly effective recruitment approach.



Objectives

Amber Therapeutics required support with two hires, which were both initially on a temporary basis but had the potential to become permanent:

Office Manager: this was a broad, hands-on role with the successful candidate being responsible for:

- Office coordination, including communications, supplies, and couriers.
- Supporting weekly team logistics.
- Providing general administrative support across the business.

The key requirements for the post included:

- Highly organised with strong attention to detail.
- A proactive self-starter with initiative.
- A friendly, approachable presence within the workplace.
- Strong Microsoft Office experience.

Executive Assistant: this was a broader role than a traditional EA position and included:

- Senior stakeholder and CEO-level support.
- The preparation of complex presentations and board documents.
- Experience with GDPR, compliance, and record-keeping processes.
- HR administration, including onboarding, benefits, and offboarding.
- ESG reporting and operational coordination.
- Event planning and office oversight.

The key requirements for the post included:

- A highly capable and adaptable individual.
- Strong communication and organisational skills.
- The confidence to work autonomously with minimal supervision.
- The ability to work across multiple business functions.

Given the potential of both roles to evolve over time, we recommended that the best approach was temporary-to-permanent appointments, to ensure long-term suitability.



Challenges

Amber Therapeutics had already experienced the difficulties of direct hiring, having encountered high volumes of unsuitable applicants and challenges in identifying candidates who possessed the right blend of skills and experience. Several factors made this assignment even more complex:

- A high volume of unsuitable applications when hiring directly. For example, the company reviewed over 100 CVs without success, thus making it difficult to identify candidates with the right balance of skills and experience.
- The need for candidates who could combine adaptability, initiative, and strong organisational capability across multi-faceted roles.
- The requirement for candidates to produce high-quality presentations and business-critical documentation.
- The need for them to be able to operate and thrive in a fast-paced, evolving start-up environment.
- Candidate pipeline management via Highlight People's ATS to avoid duplication.
- The importance of balancing cultural fit with technical capability.

These challenges required a targeted, insight-led strategy rather than a volume-driven approach.

Approach

Allen Associates delivered a focused, consultative and highly targeted solution which was based on insight, experience, and local expertise. We:

- Leveraged our extensive Oxfordshire-based candidate network and database.
- Conducted proactive candidate searches and carefully focused advertising campaigns to identify relevant, high-quality candidates, rather than relying on a large volume of applicants.
- Worked in close partnership with Highlight People to continuously refine the brief and ensure alignment.
- Maintained consistent communication, feedback, and transparency throughout.



Approach

Office Manager process:

- 73 candidates approached.
- 6 final CVs submitted (more were sent earlier in the process in order to obtain feedback).
- 2 candidates interviewed, with the preferred candidate receiving an offer almost immediately.
- Placement made within one week.
- Our focus was on quality over volume to ensure that only well-matched candidates were presented to the client, resulting in a quick and successful hire.

Executive Assistant process:

- 72+ candidates screened against the role requirements, including GDPR and compliance knowledge.
- 10 shortlisted.
- 4 submitted (with careful management of the client's ATS system to avoid duplication).
- 3 candidates interviewed.
- Second-stage interview including a practical presentation exercise to assess real-world technical capability, strategic thinking, and communication skills.

Rather than presenting large numbers of CVs, we curated a small number of carefully selected, high-quality candidates. We remained agile throughout the process and continued to source candidates in order to ensure a strong pipeline.



Results

Both roles were successfully filled, and both appointees transitioned from temporary to permanent placements within a short timeframe.

Office Manager

- Identified and placed within one week of initial search.
- Candidate integrated into the team quickly, making an immediate positive impact.
- Successfully converted to permanent within two months.

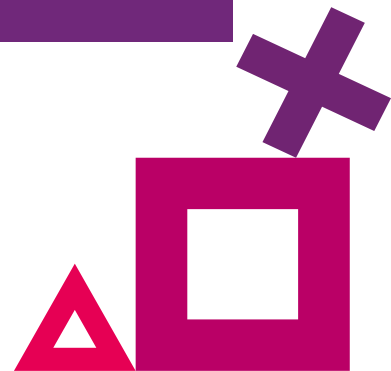
Executive Assistant

- End-to-end process completed within a matter of weeks.
- Candidate successfully navigated a rigorous, multi-stage interview process.
- Transitioned from temporary to permanent within three months.

In both cases, the candidates:

- Demonstrated strong cultural alignment with the business's values.
- Integrated quickly into the organisation.
- Added value across multiple business functions from the outset.
- Provided long-term stability and support for a growing organisation.

“Working with Allen Associates has been a genuinely positive experience. They took the time to understand Amber's requirements and company culture and successfully placed two great candidates for Office Manager and Executive Assistant roles on a temporary-to-permanent basis. Both candidates have integrated seamlessly into the team and gone on to become valued permanent members of staff. Allen Associates were highly responsive, professional, and supportive throughout the process. We would highly recommend them to any organisation looking for a trusted recruitment partner.”



Conclusion

This highly successful partnership demonstrates Allen Associates' ability to deliver an insight-led, consultative approach to achieve strong outcomes when supporting high-growth, innovation-led science and technology businesses.

By combining our deep local market expertise, a strong candidate network, close collaboration with both Amber Therapeutics and Highlight People, and a commitment to quality over volume, we enabled the company to make confident hiring decisions at pace and secure the right talent at the right time. Our suggested candidates have already made a lasting impact on the company.

The success of the temporary-to-permanent model in both appointments highlights not only its effectiveness in a dynamic environment but also the value of a flexible, low-risk, high-impact recruitment strategy that ensured both flexibility and long-term fit.

Allen Associates is proud to have supported an innovative business like Amber Therapeutics and we look forward to helping other ambitious organisations across Oxfordshire build the high-performance teams they need for the future. This case study demonstrates that, with the right recruitment partner, hiring can become a genuine strategic advantage and deliver measurable impact quickly.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can help you find exceptional talent across HR, Finance, Marketing or Administration, we'd love to hear from you.

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