

# How did Carina Hong, a 24-year-old Stanford dropout, recruit META's brightest minds into her super-intelligence startup?

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**Carina Hong - A 24-year-old Stanford dropout has successfully hired top Meta AI researchers for her newly formed startup, which is building an AI "mathematician."**



**Axiom Math is the brainchild of Carina Hong**, a Rhodes scholar who dropped out of graduate school at Stanford to start the company in March.

The company recently announced that Axiom has solved two Erdos problems that have puzzled mathematicians for decades, and based on that, the company announced its first \$64 million funding round in September.

The company has 17 employees, many of whom come from Meta's Fundamental Artificial Intelligence Research (FAIR) lab, as well as Meta's GenAI group and Google Brain, which merged into DeepMind in 2023.

Axiom is focusing on advanced mathematics, an area that AI researchers and leaders see as essential to achieving superintelligence. Hong said this mission has helped her attract top talent from major tech companies.

" *One thing I've heard from some of the top researchers and mathematicians I've recruited to Axiom is that solving mathematical superintelligence will be their legacy ,*" Hong told Business Insider. " *When the problem is hard enough, the talent density is very high, and that makes you a magnet for other great thinkers.* "



Hong told Business Insider that she focused part of her initial recruiting efforts on FAIR because " *they consistently bring in great research .*"

FAIR is one of the oldest pillars of Meta's rapidly growing AI organization, focused on long-term research. Meta laid off some of its staff in October and then lost its chief scientist, Yann LeCun, who announced he was leaving Meta in November to start his own AI startup.

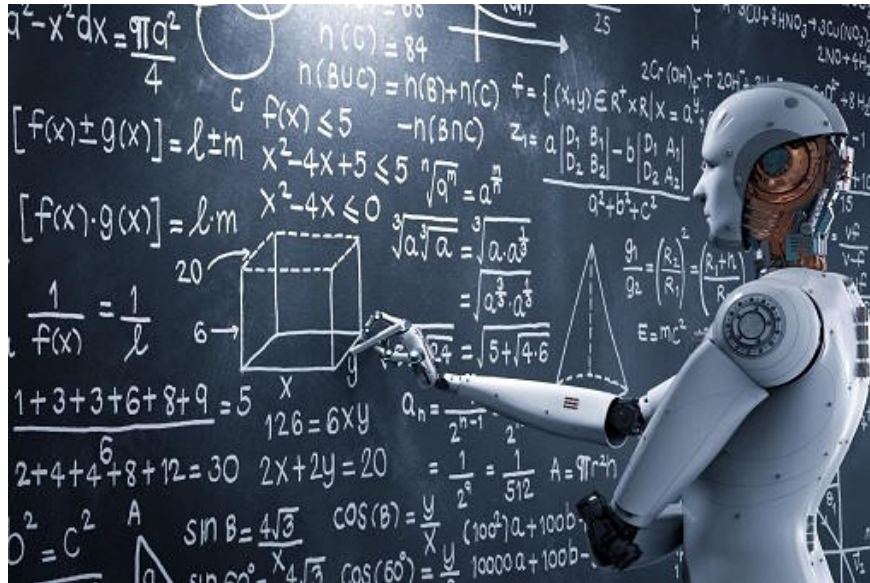
Some of the hires made by Axiom Math include Shubho Sengupta — Axiom's first member and current Chief Technology Officer (CTO), whom Hong met by chance at a coffee shop — as well as Francois Charton, Aram Markosyan, and Hugh Leather.

Carina Hong said that while Meta offered significant talent retention packages across the industry as she built her team, she was unaware of any specific competing offers.

In a highly competitive talent market, Axiom's long-term growth potential played a role in attracting researchers. Moreover, she said, they were excited about the mission from day one, when the office was furnished with a plastic folding table and a spare sofa from a friend.

Carina Hong isn't just recruiting talent from big tech companies. The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that she has also managed to recruit her former professor, the renowned mathematician Ken Ono.

Hong said she viewed age and experience as ' *a kind of artificial concept ,*' and had grown accustomed to working with more senior researchers during her time in academia. She also sought to instill a 'non-hierarchical' culture at Axiom.



The company's mission isn't limited to mathematics—another attraction for candidates. Carina Hong says Axiom's commercial applications could include *"any area where provably correct reasoning is needed,"* such as hardware and software verification, quantitative finance, and cryptography.

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