Liran Belenzon – CEO and Co-founder

Liran was born in Israel and was an army commander in the Israeli Defense Force. After achieving his commerce and law degrees and selling his first startup, he immigrated to Canada to do his MBA at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. While at Rotman, he worked in the Creative Destruction Lab (CDL), where he met three Ph.D. students—all immigrants like him—who were working to discover how AI could solve the declining productivity of drug discovery. Together, they founded BenchSci in 2015 and launched the ASCEND™ platform in 2023. Since their time at CDL, BenchSci has gone from four co-founders to a more than 400-employee operation that has raised more than $100 million from top investors, including Google's Gradient Ventures, F-Prime, TCV, and iNovia and works with 16 of the world's top 20 pharma companies, over 4,500 academic institutions, and more than 50,000 scientists.

As CEO, Liran strives to inspire team members to be the best version of themselves and positively impact the world. Liran is a 2021 Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist and is passionate about using AI to exponentially increase the speed and quality of life-saving research.

Luigi Gentile – Chief Revenue Officer

With a background in neuroscience, Luigi has spent over two decades helping life science research and healthcare institutions develop and adopt innovative technologies to improve patient care. Luigi has held senior leadership positions across start-ups, SMEs, and large multinationals such as Olympus and GE Healthcare, where he was a commercial leader and Executive Director of Innovation for Healthcare IT, driving sales, marketing, service, product development and clinical collaborations. At BenchSci, Luigi leads the commercial business with a focus on working with pharmaceutical R&D executives to help drive the speed and success of the research organization.

Luigi is a graduate of GE's executive development programs and is frequently a lecturer on innovation across pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. He holds a Master's in both physiology and neuroscience, as well as an Honours BSc Specialist degree in human biology, all from the University of Toronto.

Casandra Mangroo – SVP Product and Science

As SVP of Product and Science, Casandra has been instrumental in developing ASCEND™, empowering scientists in leading research laboratories to accelerate preclinical drug discovery with cutting-edge deep learning technology. She joined BenchSci in 2017 as a scientific associate—where she was able to leverage her own experience at the bench from her time doing her Ph.D. research in Lab Medicine & Pathobiology with a focus on Virology at the University of Toronto. Having spent many hours manually reading through scientific literature for the purpose of experimental design, she experienced first-hand the challenges BenchSci is trying to solve and was passionate about finding a better solution.

Today, Casandra is leading teams of more than 100 PhD Scientists and Product experts in building a robust scientific knowledge base and the transformative ASCEND platform that empowers preclinical research scientists to perform more successful experiments, and ultimately accelerate drug discovery. Working closely with leadership and scientists across top pharmaceutical companies, Casandra translates organizational research challenges into impactful solutions through new data initiatives and the expansion of platform applications.

Equally passionate about diversity in STEM, Casandra acts as a mentor by empowering women leaders in tech as the executive sponsor of BenchSci's first ERG, BenchShe+.