

Niobium Expands Leadership Team with Key Hires in Product and Finance as It Builds Toward an Encrypted Cloud Platform

Niobium adds accomplished veterans from Groq and Celestial AI as it advances a vision for cloud computing where data never needs to be decrypted.



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[Niobium](#), a leader in hardware acceleration for fully homomorphic encryption (FHE), today announced the addition of two senior executives to its leadership team: John Barrus as Vice President of Product, formerly of Groq, and Evan Scott as Vice President of Finance, formerly of Celestial AI.

The appointments come as Niobium reaches a major milestone in its FHE Accelerator development program, a platform that could fundamentally change how sensitive data is processed in the cloud, enabling organizations to run computations on encrypted data without ever exposing it. The company recently announced a manufacturing partnership with SEMIFIVE and Samsung Foundry to bring the world's first commercially viable FHE accelerator ASIC to production, designed to enable encrypted computation at speeds practical for real-world applications.

John Barrus joins Niobium from Groq. As Groq's VP of Product, Barrus helped build one of the most talked-about AI inference companies in the industry, which has been recently acquired by NVIDIA. Before Groq, Barrus held leadership roles at Amazon and Google, where he helped bring Google's Cloud TPU to market, a platform that has since grown into a multi-billion-dollar business.

"When I first engaged with Groq in 2018, it was obvious what the team should be building and why it would matter," said Barrus. "I have the same conviction about Niobium. The hardware opportunity in FHE is real, the team is exceptional, and the timing is right."

Evan Scott joins Niobium from Celestial AI, where he served as Senior Director of Finance and led financial planning and analysis, and managed investor reporting during a period of rapid growth in AI infrastructure, including the company's \$250 million Series C-1 financing. Scott also helped

guide the company through a major strategic transaction culminating in its acquisition by Marvell. His experience building financial infrastructure and managing investor relations at a fast-moving semiconductor startup gives him a strong foundation as Niobium advances toward commercial deployment and scales its operations.

“What stood out to me immediately was the strength of the leadership team and the caliber of engineers building this technology,” said Scott. “Niobium is tackling one of the hardest problems in computing—making encrypted computation practical—and the opportunity to help bring that to market was incredibly compelling.”

Building the CUDA of Encrypted Computation

Today, organizations that move sensitive workloads to the cloud must trust that their data will be protected during processing when the data is decrypted and exposed. This creates risk across industries from healthcare and financial services to government and AI, and it remains one of the biggest unresolved challenges in cloud computing.

Niobium is addressing the two barriers that currently hinder broad FHE adoption: performance and usability. While the industry has long recognized the computational demands of FHE, Niobium's approach goes beyond raw acceleration. The company is developing higher-level software frameworks designed to make encrypted computing accessible to a far broader developer community, mirroring the role CUDA played in democratizing GPU-accelerated computing for NVIDIA.

"If you want to know where next-generation computing is headed, follow the talent. John saw the AI inference wave early at Groq. Evan helped navigate Celestial AI through a landmark acquisition. The fact that they're both here tells a story about where encrypted computation is going," said Kevin Yoder, Niobium CEO. "We're building more than just an accelerator. We're building the platform that makes encrypted computation something that developers can actually use. John and Evan have done this before, at scale, and that's exactly what this stage demands."

About Niobium

Niobium is building the first dedicated hardware platform designed to advance FHE into commercial applications. FHE keeps data encrypted even during computation, mathematically guaranteeing privacy. Niobium is headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, with offices in Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco, California. More information is available at niobiummicrosystems.com.

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