

Case Study: Retained HR Support for an AI Client



Who were our clients?

Speech Graphics is a successful multinational AI company which excels in bringing cutting edge innovation to audio driven facial animation in the video game sector. Their technology has been used in dozens of video games from AAA studios, such as household names like *Fortnite*, *Call of Duty* and *Hogwarts Legacy*.

Rapport is a fascinating product which uses that same technology to allow anyone to create, animate and deploy their own interactive AI characters. In the business world, *Rapport* is providing solutions in sectors including education, entertainment, customer services and more.

Founded by visionary entrepreneurs, Speech Graphics operates worldwide, with teams in the UK, USA, Hungary and Singapore.

Find out more on the [Speech Graphics](#) and [Rapport](#) websites.

What were their challenges?

Together with the client, we identified that their main challenges fell into four key areas:

Challenge area 1 – HR documentation

Given the company had grown from a start-up into an established business pretty quickly, the HR documentation in place with regard to policy, procedure and contracts was not fit for purpose.

Challenge area 2 – shared message and values

The company had teams in several locations all working in their own way without a shared message or values to unite them.

Challenge area 3 – people management experience

With a high concentration of subject matter experts, managers had a huge amount of technical expertise but limited people management experience.

Challenge area 4 – in-house HR team capacity and expertise

The in-house HR team of one meant there was limited operational capacity to support HR for such a growing company, alongside limited experience in resolving historical employee relations issues.

What were our solutions?

Challenge area 1 – HR documentation

- ✓ We began by conducting an audit of the company's suite of policies, procedures and contracts to gauge the level of compliance, good practice and identify priority areas.
- ✓ We carried out a rehaul of HR policies and procedures, reviewing existing ones and creating others from scratch.
- ✓ We implemented legally required employment checks and trained the in-house HR team to carry these out consistently.
- ✓ We developed and implemented a new system for performance reviews.

Challenge area 2 – shared message and values

- ✓ We collaborated with the Founders to develop the company vision, mission and values, launching these to the workforce and beginning to embed them in everyday practice.

- ✓ We reinforced communication of the vision, mission and values in regular written and verbal company updates, including messages from *Rapport* AI characters.
- ✓ We ensured communication flowed both ways, conducting regular pulse surveys and creating an Employee Forum to consult with people on key decisions.

Challenge area 3 – people management experience

- ✓ We identified people with unique knowledge of procedures and collaborated with them to ensure there was written guidance for managers to refer to.
- ✓ We accompanied the new HR policies with 'line manager toolkits' containing useful templates, resources, and even an interactive *Rapport* AI character designed to test managers' engagement and influencing skills.
- ✓ We embedded managers' learning and confidence with 'policy into practice' sessions and monthly 'top tips' articles on hot topics.

Challenge area 4 – in-house HR team capacity and expertise

- ✓ Two ChangeHR consultants provided a physical presence in the office, supporting the in-house HR team on a retained basis.
- ✓ This provided extra capacity to handle day-to-day, 'business as usual' HR support and administration for employees across the UK, USA, Hungary and Singapore.
- ✓ Being in the office meant we were also on hand to resolve ad hoc employee relations situations.
- ✓ We also coached and mentored the in-house HR team to enhance their skills and confidence.

What was the result?

On a strategic level, ChangeHR drove forward Speech Graphics' people strategy, allowing the Founders to focus on what they do best – growing the business and maintaining its excellent reputation. Communication is transparent and two-way, with everyone pulling together to achieve the company's mission.

On an operational level, employee relations and engagement have improved. Speech Graphics also now operate with confidence that their policies and procedures reflect legislation and best practice, and that their HR team have the skills and capacity to handle anything thrown at them.

For us, we faced some challenges and needed to adapt our approach accordingly:

- 💡 Everyone was busy delivering the growth, so time was often tight with key people – we learned to condense our delivery.
- 💡 Approaches were noticeably different depending on location – we learned to take account of cultural (and legislative) differences.
- 💡 Everyone possessed advanced technical knowledge – we learned to utilise AI where required to improve efficiency or get our point across.

All of this has meant that, although we started in October 2023 on a 6 month contract only, two years later we continue to support the business as it grows.

Why do they continue to choose us?

Speech Graphics' CFO had this to say about the reasons for choosing ChangeHR:

"We engaged ChangeHR after a thorough search because they offered a compelling middle ground between the local individual consultants and the larger, impersonal consultancy 'farms'. We chose ChangeHR because they provide a breadth of skills and experience, but balance this with a very personal service which is tailored to our specific circumstances. We continue to renew our contract with ChangeHR as retained generalist HR support covering both strategic and operational matters. What we value most is their pragmatism and solution focus, their expertise across the spectrum of HR matters, and their adaptability of approach to suit different situations."