



## Music Is Good Medicine Kaiser Permanente’s Music-Health Initiative

Brand Timbre helps America’s largest health care provider harness the connective, inspirational power of music to amplify its message and inspire members to thrive.

### A Call to Thrive

With its award-winning branding campaign, *Thrive*, Kaiser Permanente (KP) effectively shed its industrial, blue-collar image in 2004 and repositioned itself as an innovator in integrated, preventive medicine. Ten years after it was launched, *Thrive* continues to inspire audiences to adopt the kinds of lifestyle changes that lead to “total health” — a key concept that KP defines as an overall sense of wellness in mind, body and spirit.

Soon after launching *Thrive*, KP’s Brand Strategy team recognized that music had great potential as an emotionally engaging complement to their total-health message. But they didn’t know how to put music to work in a strategic, systematic way within an organization of over 150,000 employees. What should the KP brand sound like? And how can music or sound be used to help tell the KP story, project its identity, and enhance the member experience?

To answer these questions and craft a comprehensive audio-branding strategy, KP turned to Brand Timbre.

“We all understand on an intuitive level that music is good for us. It consoles us when we’re down, it lifts us up, it energizes and revitalizes us. And that’s exactly what we want to do here at Kaiser Permanente: inspire our members to take charge of their health and make their lives better.”

**Deborah Cantu**

Senior VP, Brand Marketing  
Kaiser Permanente

### Assessing KP’s Audio Ecosystem

Brand Timbre began with an audit of KP’s “audio ecosystem” — all of the member touch points that involve (or could involve) sound as

a valuable part of the experience. From on-hold music and the messages that play in reception areas, to live performances, the “soundtracks” for online videos, and the music and voice-over talent used in broadcast advertising, Brand Timbre analyzed each touch point to determine how sound and music should be used to achieve KP’s branding and member-experience goals.

### What Does Health Sound Like?

KP’s audio identity describes how key brand concepts are best expressed or evoked through music and sound. As with any large organization, reaching consensus on this topic was a challenge; it’s difficult to see beyond one’s personal tastes, and without a common frame of reference, even talking about sound or music can prove frustrating.

But Brand Timbre’s audio-identity process minimizes subjectivity so that consensus

# The Music-Wellness Connection

Music has particular relevance to health care. Its use as a therapy goes back thousands of years, and nearly everyone has experienced its healthful effects first-hand. Brand Timbre helps KP take advantage of this insight with music-based engagement programs that leverage music's power to soothe, reassure, inspire and motivate its members.

about what is on or off-brand is much easier to achieve. To this end, we distilled KP's brand identity down to its essential



Kaiser Permanente's online Music Library gives KP employees easy access to a catalog of pre-cleared music that expresses key aspects of KP's brand identity.

building blocks. Then, we mapped out the desired emotional takeaway of each of these core elements. From there, Brand Timbre drew on its expertise to articulate the various musical modes and tonal "colors" that would elicit the desired emotional responses.

This process culminated in the Kaiser Permanente Audio-Identity Profile: a "prescription" for expressing KP's brand identity consistently through sound and music, along with an objective framework for evaluating audio-

branding assets and tactics to ensure that all sounds work in concert to present a coherent and distinctive brand voice.

## Putting Music To Work

Over the past seven years, Brand Timbre has worked with KP to develop and roll out a wide range of successful audio-branding tactics, which may be organized into two basic categories: Member-Engagement and Music-Wellness tools.

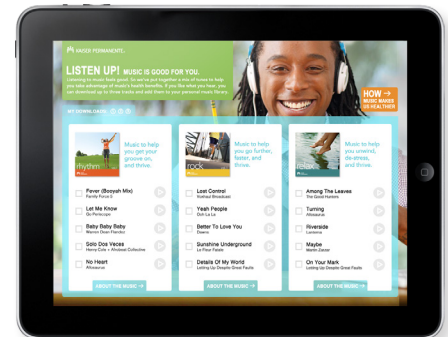
*Member-Engagement tools* include everything from MusicWell, KP's online brand-music library, to branded "listening stations" and music-download cards for distribution at health fairs and KP-sponsored events. These and other tactics have been very successful in differentiating KP from its competitors, reinforcing its position as an innovation leader, and helping audiences understand KP's holistic approach to good health.



Music kiosks help differentiate KP at health fairs and call attention to their holistic approach to good health.

*Music-Wellness tools* harness the power of music to help KP members lead healthier lives. From getting a better night's sleep and reducing stress, to starting an exercise routine or a nightly living-room dance party, music is a highly effective, low-cost way to inspire and facilitate all-round well being.

One of the music-wellness tools that Brand Timbre developed was *HealthTunes*, which



*HealthTunes* music-download apps provide an enticing gateway to KP's website while delivering healthful music playlists to members.

enabled KP to easily extend the health benefits of music to its members. From streaming playlists to downloadable "albums" and mobile apps, *HealthTunes* delivers the revitalizing power of music straight to members' ears.



Branded music mixes designed specifically for various activities make it easier for members to adopt healthy habits like walking, meditation, and dancing.

Want to learn more? give us a call at **1-877-589-9909**

Or send an email to: **info@brandtimbre.com**

More case studies at [www.brandtimbre.com](http://www.brandtimbre.com)

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What does your brand sound like?®