



## A Healthy 360 System – A Case Study of Permanente Medical Group (USA)

Kaiser Permanente is one of America's leading healthcare organisations delivering quality care to more than 8 million members. A key part of the Group is Permanente Medical which provides the 6000 strong network of physicians located in medical centres throughout California.

### 360 Degree Feedback

Obtaining peer-based feedback across such an extensive number of employees, spanning a broad range of locations, is challenging. There are many different job roles and areas of specialisation, and widespread interaction within and between centres.

As an example, specialist physicians will not only have involvement with their immediate peers at their own medical centre, but also with those who share their specialist field elsewhere. The consequence is that interacting groups are hard to pinpoint as they evolve freely, rather than being pre-formed. Working relationships develop fluidly through the need to share best practice or refer patients, rather than being easily found within a defined team / location.

### The Approach:

Following initial consultation with Permanente Medical by Bowland Solutions' HR consultants, the conclusion was that it was virtually impossible to define who interacted with who. As a result, the accepted route of requesting feedback from known peers within a 360 degree framework would be extremely onerous and hard to achieve. Only the individuals knew who their peers were.

A solution was therefore required which was truly bespoke and had the following characteristics.

- Big enough - to accommodate a massive number of personnel across multi sites
- Robust, accessible and effective - to deliver sound, useful and easy-to-collate results
- Easy and quick to use – physicians are dedicated to their patients, can be saving lives and have little time for giving feedback, making the speed at which personnel understood the system, as well as being able to respond, extremely important.

In summary, a highly tailored, large scale, effective online 360 feedback system needed designing.



### The Solution:

Bowland Solutions' approach was to design an online 360 degree feedback system which enables physicians to quickly identify themselves who sits within their own peer group – as opposed to the traditional method of being asked to give feedback about pre-identified individuals.

To achieve this, the system allows the user to search in a matter of seconds for the people they interact with.

The elements of the question set, which need to be tailored, are driven by the professional category or medical centre that person sits in, ensuring meaningful feedback.

The feedback procedure is extremely user-friendly and quick. And because the process could become endless (if one physician knows hundreds of others) they have the opportunity to end their involvement in the 360 degree programme by clicking to say they have finished – which is overseen by an administrator through exception reporting to validate that they have fulfilled their feedback obligations.

### Benefits:

- No other approach to 360 degree appraisal could work for the unique dynamics and sheer size of Permanente Medical Group – this was an approach which combined HR innovation with powerful I.T solutions
- By swapping the emphasis, from one where peers are 'pre-determined' to one which lets personnel 'search and select' their own, enabled a vast number of people across many locations give and receive feedback
- The challenge to achieve 360 across such a diverse and disparate organisation is highly complex, however the final solution was so simple and easy to use it was completely self explanatory to all users
- A management system enabled nominated HR personnel to oversee the entire process in real time, establishing who had given and received feedback so that all quotas could be met.