



## How The Dermatology Specialists Consistently Ensures Powerful Patient Experiences and Team Morale Across 50 Locations

### AT A GLANCE

#### CHALLENGES

- No way to ensure seamless and consistent training within operations.
- No structure for integrating legacy staff into new network following acquisition.
- Lack of consistent patient experience across entire network.
- No formalized patient/customer experience training program to support and sustain growth.

#### SOLUTIONS

- Design of a custom training program.
- Facilitation of a hybrid training approach with in-person, online learning, and multi-media interactions.
- Facilitation of on-the-job training and coaching.



"Not every consulting group is flexible enough to modify and adjust their program to meet our specific needs. Working with them was truly a pleasure!"

#### GIL MESSER

Chief Operating Officer  
The Dermatology Specialists

### THE COMPANY

The Dermatology Specialists is New York City's largest full-service dermatology practice with locations across Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island. In their commitment to being community-driven, they operate seven days a week and strategically rotate their specialized services across all locations. This enables them to ensure continuous access and availability to patients. Averaging over 500,000 patient visits annually, The Dermatology Specialists regularly seek innovative ways to provide personalized service and patient-centered care for every patient who walks through their doors.

### CHALLENGE: GROWING PAINS

Beginning in 2019, The Dermatology Specialists entered a period of intense growth, as much as 45% year over year. They wanted a practical way to scale operations while maintaining consistent service levels, managing employee training and development for existing employees as well as new hires, meeting the evolving patient expectations and providing the tools necessary to handle interactions with patients that address complaints and feedback. The ability to deliver training at scale is paramount as the business is "constantly hiring."

Prior to engaging the Freeman Group, the company relied on site leadership to ensure a positive patient experience was delivered within each site. However, as the company continued progressing through in-house growth and acquisitions, the types of experiences patients were having across all locations started to vary. As COO, Gil Messer, explains, "We had some rock stars at certain sites, but we didn't necessarily have a formalized, consistent training program that focused on the front-end patient experience." Gil goes on to say, "Our primary goal was to create a training program that would immediately drive results, but to do it in a manner that would allow us to deliver it repetitively through our Learning Management System (LMS)."

## FREEMAN GROUP'S SOLUTION

Freeman Group partnered with The Dermatology Specialists to create a customized solution. This not only satisfied the need for customized training content, but addressed a greater need of having a practical and sustainable training and coaching process moving forward. Freeman Group designed a training program for frontline team members, leaders, and providers which was integrated into all levels of operations. Integration into daily operations, the hiring and onboarding processes, and The Dermatology Specialists' strategic planning efforts support long term sustainability across all areas and roles of the company.

To address the operational challenges, Freeman Group incorporated a blended learning approach. Freeman Group was able to incorporate the crucial in-person element into the pockets of time that fit best for the front-line team by leveraging online learning and multimedia interactions. Gil even commended Freeman Group's flexibility by commenting, "They were willing to modify their methodology and approach to fit our organizational need.... traditionally, a full-day workshop doesn't support our clinics, so we needed to stagger training over multiple weeks."

As a part of the process, Freeman Group began on-the-job training and coaching after the initial training sessions were implemented throughout the company. This on-the-job support enabled team members to implement the behaviors and standards learned in training, strengthened internal communications, and helped each site manager assess the patient's experience in real-time.



## OUTCOMES

According to Gil, a great deal has changed since first engaging with Freeman Group. He comments:

### **Satisfaction Scores Increased for Telephone Communications.**

The use of Freeman Group's recommended hospitality standards for phone calls, along with other process improvements, led to a statistically significant increase in telephone communications with patients and has been "maintained going forward for more than 14 months straight."

### **Focus on Patient-First Care Increased.**

Our Freeman Group trainers were able to identify areas within the daily operations that were critical touchpoints for patients thus incorporating the hospitality standards curated specifically to meet the needs of The Dermatology Specialists' patients. "From allowing late appointments and walk-ins to the way patients are addressed in the office and over the phone, every business aspect has realigned with providing patient-first care."

### **Improved Internal Communications and Interactions Among Leaders.**

Freeman Group not only improved interactions between staff and patients, but also equipped managers with the tools to enhance communication and interactions with their colleagues. At The Dermatology Specialists, "many managers are young and new to leadership roles. It has been great to see our managers prioritize internal communications and interactions alongside the flexibility of our business and the quality of our patient experiences."