YOUR CO

# Closing the Comms Gap:

## How Business Leaders are Unlocking Non-Desk Employee Engagement

Whitepapers

2025

# Introduction

What if the key to stronger employee engagement was as simple as improving communication with your non-desk workforce?  In industries where employees are not in front of a computer all day–whether at a job site, out in the field, in the production line, or on the plant floor—keeping them in the loop can be the difference between smooth operations and costly breakdowns. Yet, many business leaders acknowledge that they struggle to reach these essential workers. Missed updates, disengaged teams, and delayed responses are all-too-common, and they can derail progress.

This raises an important question: how can companies rethink communication to bridge the gap between desk-bound leaders and their non-desk employees?

## Who this whitepaper is for



**HR leaders**
looking to improve communications with non-desk employees



**Operations managers**
responsible for overseeing non-desk teams



**Internal communications specialists**
trying to bridge the gap between leadership and non-desk staff



**Business leaders**
interested in boosting productivity and gathering data from the frontlines



**Employee engagement professionals**
focused on reducing turnover

# Table Of Contents

**01** The biggest challenges HR leaders face when communicating with non-desk employees.

**02** The most effective strategies HR leaders are using to reach non-desk employees.

**03** How communication tools impact engagement and retention for non-desk employees.

**04** Why SMS often outperforms mobile apps for maintaining long-term engagement.

**05** How better communication practices can drive productivity, retention, and satisfaction.



# Abstract

New research from an independent research firm commissioned by Yourco reveals a critical issue. Many non-desk employees feel disconnected from leadership, and poor communication is at the heart of it. Half of HR leaders report that non-desk workers often experience inadequate communication from management, leading to frustration, missed deadlines, and even operational failures.

This whitepaper looks into the tools and strategies that can transform how companies engage with their non-desk teams.

Mobile apps, while popular, lose traction quickly. On the other hand,

**91%** of HR leaders report that **SMS is far more effective**, with significantly higher response rates.

**96%** of leaders agree that **better communication tools boost productivity**.

**88%** believe these **tools can reduce employee churn**.

## Survey Methodology

Yourco commissioned an independent research firm to survey 150 HR leaders on the topic of non-desk employee communication. The margin of error for this study is +/- 8% at the 95% confidence level.



# The biggest challenges companies and HR leaders face when communicating with non-desk employees

Communicating effectively with non-desk employees remains a significant challenge for HR leaders. These employees, often on the move and lacking access to traditional communication tools, encounter unique barriers that hinder connection and engagement.

**64%**

of HR leaders say it's much harder to reach non-desk employees than desk-based employees.

**69%**

of HR leaders say missed/poor communication with non-desk employees is a recurring discussion of frustration.

**50%**

of HR leaders say their non-desk employees report that communication from leadership is frequently poor.

**85%**

of HR leaders say their non-desk employees express frustration about how they communicate with their managers.



> Many HR leaders are eager for a solution that offers simple and accessible communication with their dispersed teams. To close this gap, companies must invest in communication strategies and tools that are designed with the unique needs of non-desk employees in mind.

**Based on our survey, here are the six biggest communication challenges HR professionals face, along with data-driven insights into their impact on workplace communication:**



## Low response rates

Only 40% of non-desk employees consistently respond to the communications sent by their companies.



## Inconsistent communication methods

Only 43% of non-desk employees consistently receive the communications sent by their companies.



## Low read rates

Only 36% of non-desk employees consistently read the communications sent by their companies.



## Privacy concerns

Many HR managers are hesitant to share their personal cellphone numbers because it blurs the line between work and personal life. They worry about being overwhelmed with after-hours messages, compromising their privacy, or being harassed by terminated staff. Without tools that protect their contact information, it's difficult to maintain professional boundaries while still staying connected with non-desk employees.



## Language barriers

Multilingual workplaces often struggle with delivering clear, inclusive messaging. When employees cannot understand important updates, such as safety instructions or company announcements, it creates risks for compliance and productivity.



## Message delivery delays

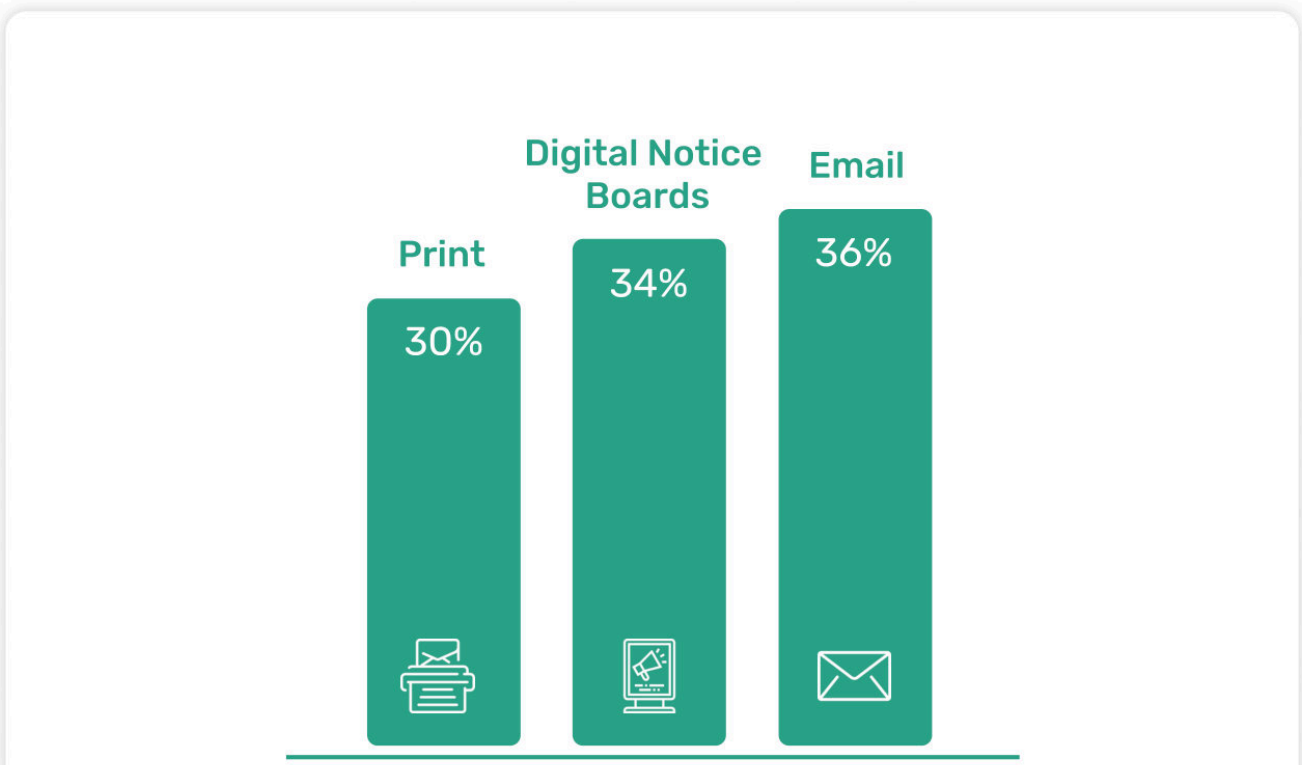
Delays in message delivery disrupt the flow of critical information. Whether it's notifying employees of shift changes or sending urgent updates, such lags can lead to operational setbacks and employee dissatisfaction.

# Current Challenges:  Ineffective Non-Desk Communication

Many HR leaders share a common struggle—getting crucial updates to their non-desk teams quickly and effectively. When issues like machinery troubleshooting, production changes, or transport coordination need immediate action, relying on emails or mobile apps is not practical.

In-person updates take time, and when communication is delayed, it can lead to production slowdown. And for teams with many non-native English speaking employees, the challenge grows. Translating messages or finding interpreters can take 20-30 minutes, slowing down task completion even further.

## HR Leaders Satisfaction Levels: Non-Desk Worker Communication Channels




**30%** of HR leaders are highly satisfied with printed materials

**34%** of HR leaders are highly satisfied with digital notice boards

**36%** of HR leaders are highly satisfied with email

**88%** HR leaders say they need a bullet-proof way to consistently communicate with non-desk employees, but only 55% are sure they have that solution now.

# Current Challenges: Workplace Safety

Non-desk workers often forget safety protocols and training materials after in-person sessions, raising the likelihood of workplace accidents. Also, lack of communication around benefits and wellness programs can lead to lower participation in benefits, increased workplace injuries, and higher company insurance claims.



**79%**

HR leaders say ineffective communication can result in a **drop in benefits participation.**

**93%**

HR leaders believe that clear communication on **safety reduces workplace incidents.**

## Current Challenges: Absenteeism



**85%**
of HR leaders say improved communication would reduce absenteeism

Many HR leaders say they're dealing with unreported absences that create last-minute gaps, leaving operations managers scrambling without reliable communication tools. These last-minute surprises can lead to costly production delays.



# The most effective strategies HR leaders are using to reach non-desk employees

The primary reason why 64% of leaders say it's much harder to reach non-desk employees than desk-based employees is because of their unique working environment. They are always on the move—whether at a job site, out in the field, in the production line, or on the plant floor. These employees often lack regular access to email, Wi-Fi, or mobile data.

The most successful HR leaders use tailored approaches specifically designed for non-desk environments, ensuring that non-desk employees receive vital communications and stay connected with the company.



**Use Clear, Simple Language**
Keep your messages straightforward and free of jargon to ensure they're easily understood, even by employees with varying levels of language proficiency. Clear communication reduces misunderstandings and ensures your message resonates with non-desk employees.



**Send Timely, Relevant Updates**
Deliver updates at the right time to ensure employees can act on them immediately. Relevant, timely messages show that you value their time and understand their work environment.




**Use SMS for Urgent Messages**
SMS is fast and direct, making it the ideal channel for critical updates like safety alerts or last-minute shift changes. It ensures that urgent messages reach employees instantly, no matter where they are.



**Combine SMS with Other Tools**
Enhance SMS by layering on features like automatic translations, polls for feedback collection, or HRIS integrations for seamless updates. A combination of tools ensures more effective communication while catering to the diverse needs of your workforce.



**Provide Two-Way Communication Channels**
Enable employees to respond, ask questions, or share feedback through the same tools you use to communicate. Two-way communication fosters engagement and builds trust by showing that their voices are heard.

# How communication tools impact engagement and retention for non-desk employees

What are the biggest opportunities companies see with better comms to non-desk employees?



### Higher Productivity

Clear communication keeps non-desk employees aligned and focused, reducing misunderstandings and inefficiencies. For example, scheduled reminders about upcoming shifts or shift changes reduce absenteeism and late starts, directly boosting productivity.

### Faster Issue Resolution

Quick communication tools enable immediate action on urgent matters, minimizing downtime. For example, fast reporting of misplaced tools or malfunctioning equipment allows managers to reassign tasks promptly and maintain workflow continuity.

### Improved Employee Engagement

Transparent communication fosters a sense of inclusion and loyalty among non-desk workers. Sharing updates directly from leadership, such as CEO memos, makes employees feel valued and informed about company goals and achievements. Also, inviting employees to nominate peers for workplace awards reinforces a positive workplace culture.

### Better Job Satisfaction

Employees who feel informed about their benefits are more content and likely to stay with the company. For instance, timely communication about benefits, such as open enrollment reminders, shows employees that their well-being matters to the organization. Offering support to help employees understand healthcare plans or 401(k) options can make a big difference. By empowering them to make informed decisions, you're fostering trust and building a workplace where employees feel valued.

### Enhanced Teamwork

Effective communication creates alignment and builds trust among teams, leading to better collaboration. Daily discussions on shared goals and responsibilities, such as toolbox talks, improve group understanding and cohesion. Also, recognizing group successes or individual contributions fosters unity and cooperation, even among employees working across different shifts or locations.

# Why SMS often outperforms mobile apps for maintaining long-term engagement

After implementing effective communication strategies, choosing the right communication tools is equally important and cannot be overlooked.

**91%**

of HR leaders say use of SMS increases non-desk employee response rate

**36%**

of HR leaders are satisfied with how they communicate with non-desk employees via mobile app

Mobile apps have become a popular tool for internal communication within organizations, yet they often fall short in reaching non-desk workers.  One of the primary limitations of mobile apps for non-desk workers is the reliance on Wi-Fi or mobile data. Many non-desk environments lack consistent access to the internet, and non-desk employees don't want to use their personal mobile data plan, increasing their mobile expenses.

Also, SMS has much higher open and response rates compared to app notifications. Text messages are usually read within minutes of receipt, whereas app notifications can be easily ignored or lost, especially if the app is not used regularly.

SMS is easy to use, without the need to download, update, or navigate through an app. For many non-desk employees, particularly those who may not be tech-savvy or who rely on older devices, SMS provides a user-friendly solution that doesn’t require additional software or complex user interfaces.

## Why HR leaders prefer using SMS for communications?

**Top HR leaders prefer using SMS to communicate with non-desk employees because of its simplicity and effectiveness. SMS ensures instant message delivery, allowing important updates to reach employees in real-time without delays. Its ease of use makes it a practical tool for HR leaders, eliminating the need for complex systems or extensive training.**

**SMS serves as a direct communication channel, bypassing barriers such as email or app logins, which are often impractical for non-desk workers. It’s also ideal for providing quick employee updates, such as schedule changes or shift reminders, keeping the workforce informed and aligned. Also, SMS is perfect for urgent messages, ensuring critical information is delivered immediately, whether it’s a safety alert or an emergency announcement.**

**By leveraging SMS, HR leaders streamline communication, keeping non-desk employees connected and engaged in a fast-paced work environment.**

# Top communication use cases and metrics for measuring effectiveness

**The topics that companies most communicate about with non-desk employees:**

- Task assignments
- Company updates
- Shift schedules
- Training reminders
- Safety alerts

On average, HR leaders send mass communications to non-desk employees 3-5 times per week. This frequency highlights the importance of consistent and accessible communication practices that keep employees informed, engaged, and connected across the organization.

**How do companies measure the effectiveness of comms with non-desk employees?**

- Task completion rates
- Retention rates
- Response rates
- Productivity metrics
- Message read rates

**By measuring these areas and refining communication strategies and tools, HR leaders can better meet the needs of non-desk employees, creating a more aligned and productive workforce.**

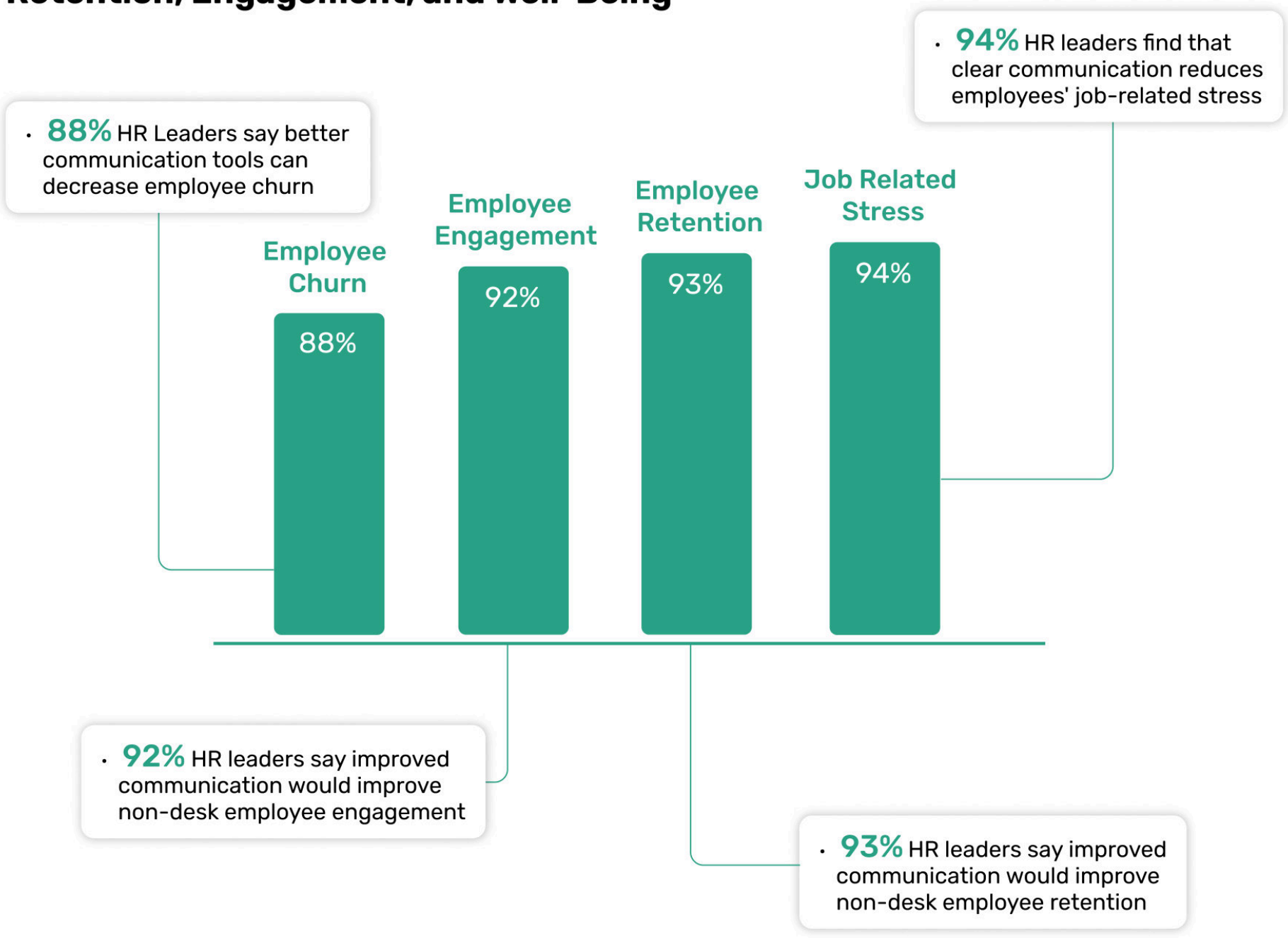
# How better communication practices can drive productivity, retention, and satisfaction

**93%** of HR Leaders say better communication tools can increase **productivity**

**56%** of HR leaders say their company has **missed vital deadlines** because they couldn't reach a non-desk employee in time

This data reveals that HR leaders recognize how communication tools and better communication practice impact engagement and retention for non-desk employees. With the right tools, companies can foster higher engagement, lower turnover, and create a more connected work environment for non-desk employees.

## The Impact of Communication on Non-Desk Employee Retention, Engagement, and Well-Being




If you're reading this, you likely know that there's room for improvement in how your company communicates with non-desk employees. Like many other HR leaders, you understand that clear communication drives key metrics—such as productivity, engagement, safety and cost efficiency—which leads to a stronger workforce, greater customer satisfaction, and sustainable growth.

# Yourco: #1 SMS-based Employee App

## An easier, more effective way to connect with your non-desk workers.

### Two-Way Communication

Connect with your non-desk workers in 135+ languages, and gather employee feedback via polls and surveys.

### Flexible Setup Tailored to Your Organization

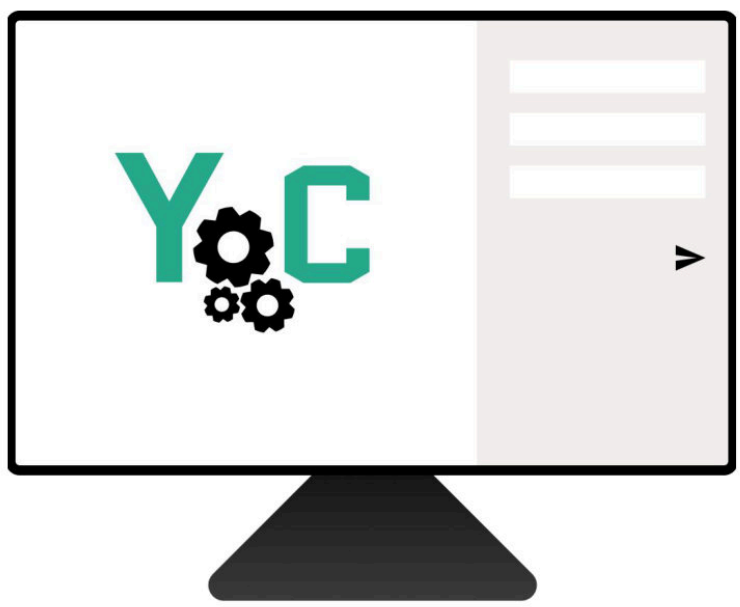
Configure Yourco to align with the needs and structure of your organization.

### Increase Productivity with Automation

Automate manual tasks and streamline your workflows, allowing HR leaders to focus on strategic goals.

### Enterprise-Grade Security

Protect your data with purpose-built security features, roles-based permissions, and enterprise-grade identity and access management.




Connect, Engage, & Grow With Your Non-Desk Workforce

Contact us for a demo or get started today for free.