

## Who Is The Deskless Worker?

“Deskless” refers to members of the workforce who don’t have a permanent, fixed workplace, or if they do remain in one spot, they aren’t sitting at a desk.

### The Importance

Between **40 - 60%** of deskless workers say they’re thinking about leaving or have active plans for leaving their current job. One constant is that year over year that percentage is going up.



# Needs of Deskless Workers

According to surveys of deskless workers, the highest priorities that have an impact on their satisfaction with their jobs are things like compensation and benefits.

- Workers look for stability (consistent income, predictable schedule, and job security)
- Connection to peers and organization through recognition from leadership

Through upskilling, development, career paths, coaching, and more our efforts can impact how much workers feel like they have mastery of their role, leading to stability. By connecting learners together, training can have an impact on the ways deskless workers perceive and experience community in their company.

**Culture**  
Vision, values, mission

**Community**  
Investment, recognition

**Stability**  
Scheduling, job security

**Livelihood**  
Wages, benefits





## Wants of Deskless Workers

**Communication with leadership:** Most deskless workers get most of their information directly from their manager via word of mouth, which means it can lose its impact.

- Misconception of Executive leaders think that the employee has more access to tools, technology, and resources. Deskless workers at the frontline either don't know about resources, weren't trained on them, or just don't have the time. Often enough, the investment is there, but the follow through and sustaining change management efforts fell short.

**Development and growth opportunities:** Development could very well mean the training on that new tool or system we just mentioned instead of more traditional upskilling for a more advanced role. Growth could be a clear career path towards a higher paying position.

# Obstacles to Training Deskless Workers



## Access

- Time in schedule – deskless workers almost never have down time during shifts to take training
- De-centralized – live or in-person training is difficult to coordinate and impossible for workers who can't travel to a single, central location
- Much of the common wisdom about developing training for the past decade has been to move to virtual



## Engagement

- Inconsistent experience due to various delivery tools
- Counting on facilitators or managers to get it all right and keep people interested
- No accounting for individual differences of learners



## Communication

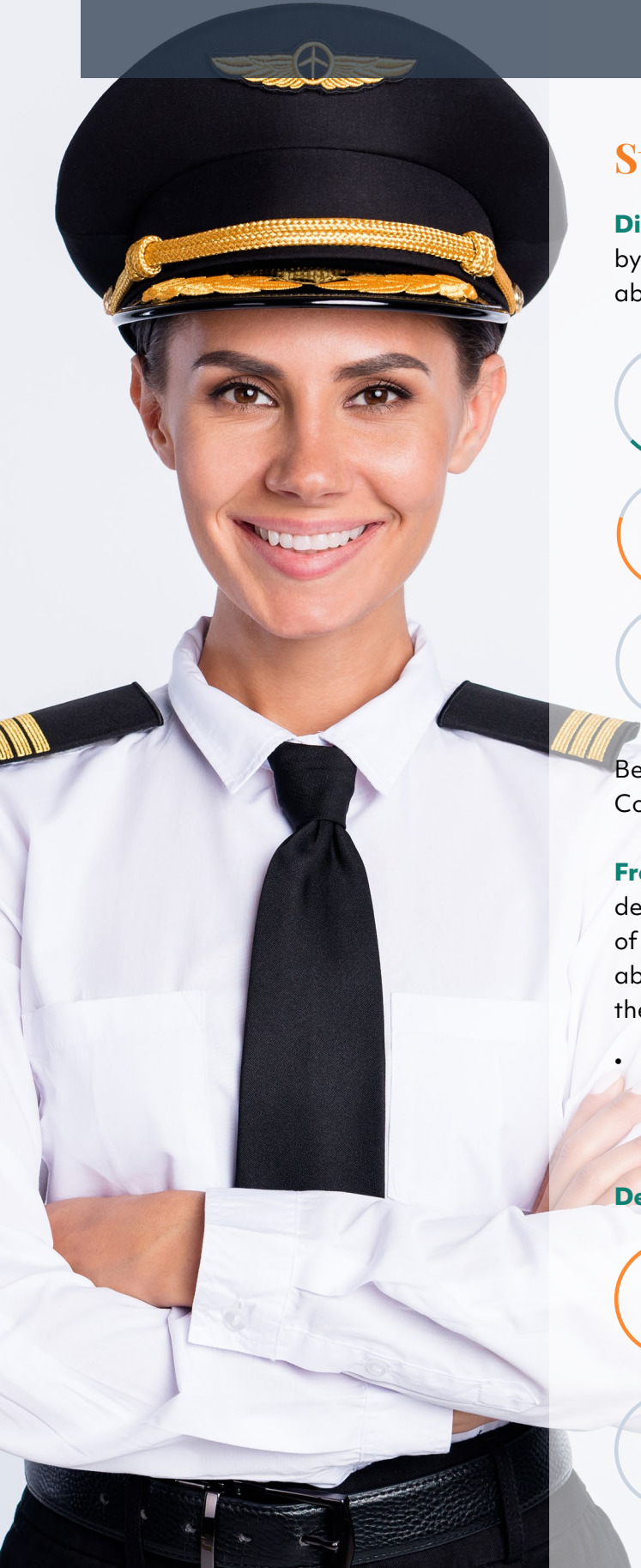
- Lack of standardized channels to receive information, most aren't using Teams or Slack
- Messaging from managers is inconsistent, especially at scale
- Leads to feeling isolated and disconnected



## Systems and Structure

- Lack technology, lack systems, lack email address
- Absence of a dedicated platform for training and development.
- No support to track progress or provide personalized learning paths.





## Structural and Systemic Approaches

**Direct input from the deskless workers themselves:** A survey by TalentCards revealed some of deskless workers' feelings about training:

63%

said that receiving more training would boost their connection to the organization

80%

said that they prefer to receive short training experiences delivered at regular intervals as opposed to infrequent, long trainings

53%

of them said that training will help them keep up with the necessary skills of today's job market, giving them an increased sense of job stability

Better ways to understand your employee challenges such as:  
Conducting surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews

**Frontline managers** play a pivotal role in the success of deskless workers, Axonify's survey data tells us that **nearly half** of deskless workers say most of the information they receive about the company comes directly from conversations with their manager.

- *Solution: Equip frontline managers with coaching, support, and feedback systems so they can receive help when they need it.*

### Deskless workers lack reliable access to technology

94%

A survey by Meta found that 94% of C-level executives planned to prioritize tech for frontlines in the same way they've prioritized it for office and desk-based workers.

52%

In the same Meta survey, 52% of deskless workers said that better tools and technology would be a compelling reason for them to switch jobs.

### Key Questions You Should Use To Evaluate Potential Technology Solutions:

- Is the tech mobile-friendly or mobile-first?
- Is the platform mobile-friendly and accessible on a variety of devices, including smartphones and tablets?
- Can deskless workers easily access training content while on the move or in the field?
- Is the UI intuitive and easy to use?
- Will deskless workers find the technology easy to navigate and use, even without extensive technical expertise?
- Does it require minimal training to get started?
- Is it scalable and flexible?
- Can the platform accommodate the organization's current and future needs as the deskless workforce grows?
- Is it customizable to adapt to evolving training requirements?
- Can it support diverse learning formats?
- Does the platform offer a range of content formats, such as videos, audio, infographics, and interactive quizzes, to cater to different learning preferences?
- Can deskless workers choose the learning format that suits them best?
- What analytics does it support?
- Can the platform track individual and group progress to assess training effectiveness?
- Does it provide actionable insights for continuous improvement?
- How does it integrate with other systems?
- Does the platform integrate smoothly with the organization's learning management system (LMS) or other HR software?
- Will it work seamlessly with other communication tools and platforms?



## Tactile and Applied Approaches

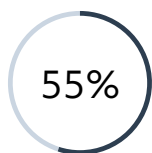
**Mobile learning:** Some deskless workers are provided a mobile device (phone or tablet) as part of their job. TalentCards' survey reported that a full three quarters of deskless workers were comfortable using their own device for training

- With mobile learning, deskless workers can fit training into their busy schedules, they can take advantage of short, bite-sized training modules that cater to their time constraints.
- By implementing mobile learning solutions, organizations can keep deskless workers engaged and connected to their training materials, leading to improved knowledge retention and skill development.

**Nanolearning:** Enhances information retention, making it easier for deskless workers to apply what they've learned in their daily tasks.

- Organizations can efficiently address the specific training needs of deskless workers, empowering them to learn at their own pace and stay engaged throughout the training process.

**Gamification:** Make training fun and engaging!



In the TalentCards survey, when deskless workers were asked what would improve their experience with training, **55%** said they want training to be fun. Gamified training modules can motivate employees to participate actively in their learning journey.

**Some ways to incorporate gamified elements into training include:**

- Points, Badges, and Leaderboards for Challenges and Achievements
- Assign points to learners for completing training modules, quizzes, or tasks.
- Award badges as learners achieve specific milestones or demonstrate mastery in certain topics.
- Virtual Rewards and Currency
- Introduce virtual rewards, such as coins, tokens, or gems, that learners can collect during training.
- Allow learners to use these virtual rewards to unlock additional content, access bonus materials, or customize avatars.
- Design training as a series of quests or missions that learners must complete to achieve specific learning objectives.



## “Just-In-Time” Training Mentality

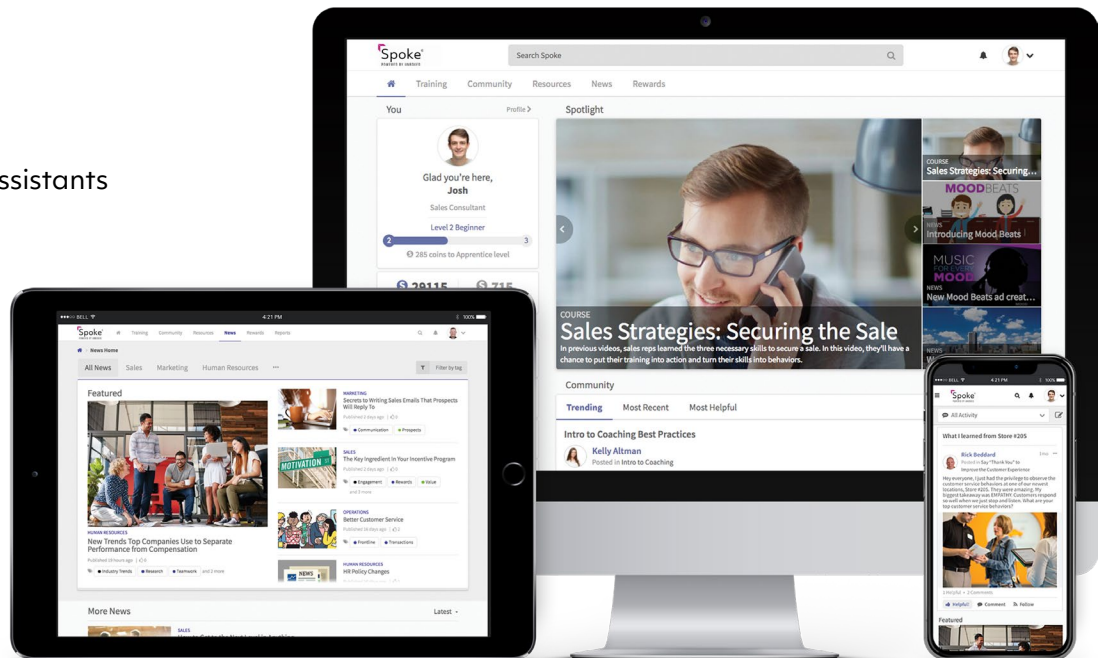
This takes concepts from mobile learning and gamification and applies them to deliver hyper-focused training to workers exactly when they need it, in the flow of work. In the same TalentCards survey, aside from making training more fun, deskless workers said their training experiences would be improved if the content was easier to access and it was shorter.

### Benefits of Just-in-time training:

- Accessibility/Convenience
- Deskless workers can access training materials on their mobile devices whenever they encounter a challenge or need to acquire specific information
- Hyper-targeted content
- Just-in-time training focuses on providing learners with the specific information they need in the context of their current tasks.
- Minimize downtime
- By addressing specific learning needs in real-time, deskless workers can avoid prolonged downtime caused by uncertainty or lack of knowledge.
- Adaptable to their work schedule and environment
- Deskless workers operate in dynamic and often unpredictable work environments.
- Some might work a third shift when support staff aren't in the office or difficult to contact

### Delivery of just-in-time training to your workers:

- Mobile learning apps
- On-demand videos
- Job aids
- Binders and guides
- Chatbots and virtual assistants





## Social Learning

Building networks allows deskless workers to collaborate, share knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences. Employees can exchange best practices, offer support, and gain insights from colleagues in similar roles. By facilitating communities of learning, organizations nurture a sense of belonging and camaraderie among deskless workers, ultimately driving motivation and productivity.

### Consider adding learning or training moments to some of the following:

- On-site team meetings
- Use part of the agenda for training content, preferably splitting people into small groups of peers or coworkers
- Mentorship and Peer-to-peer learning
- Create systems that encourage workers to share information and knowledge with one another
- Prompt workers to share their tips and tricks or best practices for accomplishing tasks or meeting objectives
- Create shared communal spaces where workers can share this knowledge or discuss with others
- Recognize achievement
- Develop systems that allow workers to recognize each other for good work and for leadership to recognize individuals or teams
- Don't just recognize output, and try to recognize workers who are putting in effort to learn and grow
- This helps create a social norm that learning is highly valued
- Lunch & Learn sessions
- Where possible, host sessions that workers can observe over lunch
- Use some of these for topics unrelated to discrete job tasks and focus on growth or development





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