

Luxury carmaker Bentley to axe 1,000 UK jobs

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German-owned luxury car brand Bentley on Friday said it would axe around 1,000 jobs in the UK as the market weathers the coronavirus-induced downturn.

The carmaker, a Volkswagen division that employs 4,200 workers in Britain, said fallout from the COVID-19 outbreak "hastened" its move to cut almost one-quarter of the UK workforce.

"Losing colleagues is not something we are treating lightly but this is a necessary step that we have to take to safeguard the jobs of the vast majority who will remain, and deliver a sustainable business model for the future," said Bentley Motors chairman and chief executive Adrian Hallmark.

"COVID-19 has not been the cause of this measure but a hastener," he added.

Friday's news caps a grim week for Britain's automotive sector, which has been slammed by tanking demand as a result of the coronavirus lockdown.

Car dealership group Lookers said Thursday that it would axe about 1,500 jobs and shut 12 showrooms.

James Bond's favourite carmaker Aston Martin meanwhile cut 500 jobs in response to tumbling demand and ballooning losses at the luxury group that began long before the virus appeared.

It comes as car dealerships in England reopened this week as the UK government relaxed COVID-19 measures that slammed the brakes on vehicle sales.

Car sales had screeched to a near halt in April and May after Britain's lockdown imposed on March 23.

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