

UK telecom company BT plans to shed up to 55,000 jobs, replace some with AI

May 18 2023, by Kelvin Chan



A woman walks in front of the BT headquarters, in London, Thursday, May 18, 2023. U.K. telecom company BT Group said Thursday that it plans to shed up to 55,000 jobs by the end of the decade as part of an overhaul aimed at slimming down its workforce to slash costs. Credit: AP Photo/Kin Cheung

U.K. telecom company BT Group said Thursday that it plans to shed up

to 55,000 jobs by the end of the decade and replace some of them with artificial intelligence, as part of an overhaul aimed at slimming down its workforce to slash costs.

BT, which has 130,000 workers including both staff and contractors, said in its latest earnings report that its number of employees would be reduced to between 75,000 and 90,000 by 2030.

"By the end of the 2020s, BT Group will rely on a much smaller workforce and a significantly reduced cost base," CEO Philip Jansen said. "New BT Group will be a leaner business with a brighter future."

Tech and [telecom companies](#) have been [cutting jobs](#) as the industry undergoes a painful shakeup amid flagging [economic growth](#) and surging inflation. U.K.-based wireless carrier Vodafone, which operates in Europe and Africa, said days earlier that [it's laying off 11,000 workers](#) as part of a major revamp.

BT, a former state monopoly previously known as British Telecom, will eliminate about 10,000 jobs through digitization, automation and the use of AI in its processes.

"That's about using technology to do things much more efficiently," Jansen said.

The cuts also include 15,000 jobs building fiber-optic broadband and 5G [mobile networks](#) and 10,000 servicing and repairing them. Once those networks are fully rolled out, BT won't need as many workers to build or maintain them.



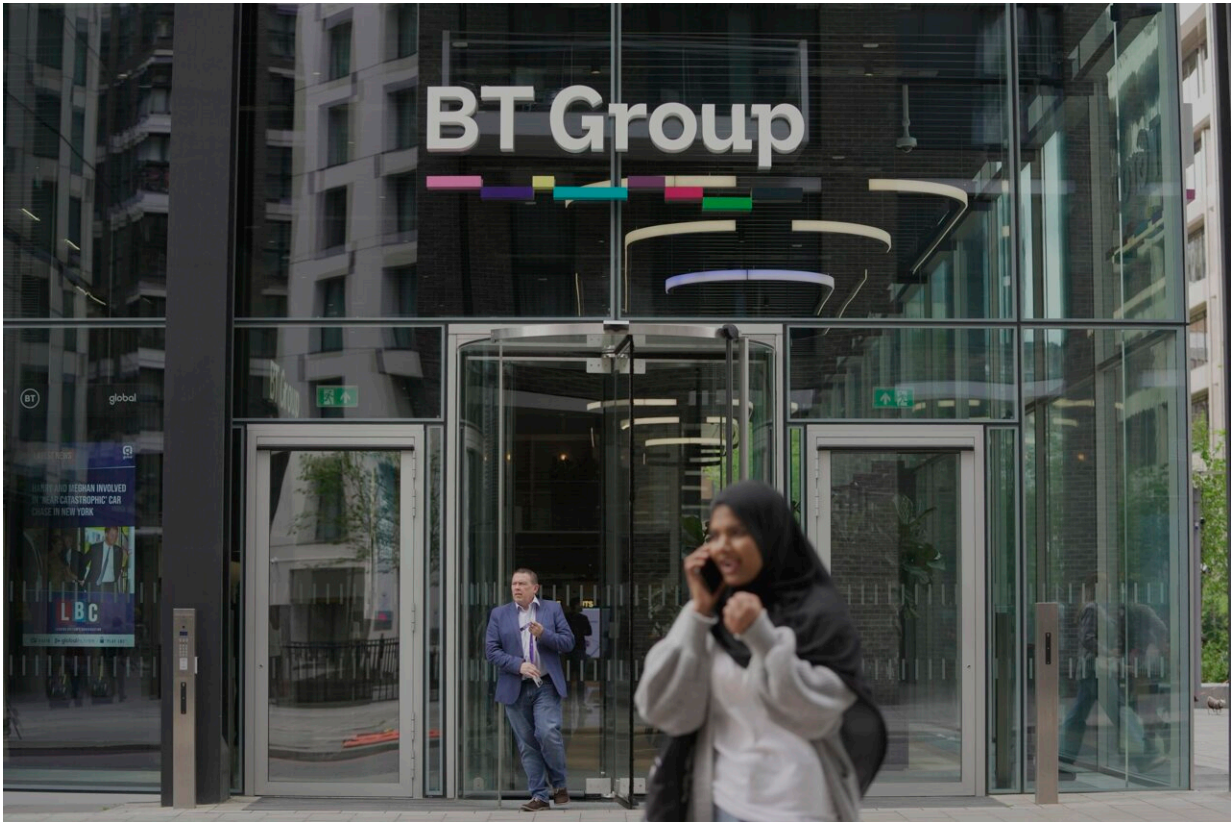
A man walks in front of the BT headquarters, in London, Thursday, May 18, 2023. U.K. telecom company BT Group said Thursday that it plans to shed up to 55,000 jobs by the end of the decade as part of an overhaul aimed at slimming down its workforce to slash costs. Credit: AP Photo/Kin Cheung



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A logo of the BT group is displayed at the headquarters, in London, Thursday, May 18, 2023. U.K. telecom company BT Group said Thursday that it plans to shed up to 55,000 jobs by the end of the decade as part of an overhaul aimed at slimming down its workforce to slash costs. Credit: AP Photo/Kin Cheung



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"All the equipment's simpler and newer and more flexible, more nimble. And we've got AI and all the data that can help create self-healing networks," Jansen said. "So we're going to be a massive beneficiary on efficiency and costs, which is why we know we won't need all these roles in the future."

Jansen said 5,000 jobs will be lost through "conventional restructuring." BT would work with union partners as it cuts [jobs](#) and also rely on attrition, he said.

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