

Amazon creates 7,000 UK jobs as virus fuels online demand

3 September 2020, by Ben Perry



The new jobs will take Amazon's total permanent UK workforce past 40,000, up by a third in a year as the pandemic triggers a surge in online shopping

Amazon will create 7,000 permanent jobs in the UK by the end of the year, the US e-commerce giant announced Thursday as the coronavirus pandemic fuels online shopping while hurting bricks-and-mortar businesses.

Following Amazon's announcement, coffee chain Costa said it planned to axe 1,650 roles in Britain.

While several British retailers and eateries have together axed thousands of jobs following the country's virus lockdown, others including supermarket giant Tesco are creating lots of jobs to cope with booming online demand.

Amazon said it will add "7,000 permanent roles by the end of 2020 across more than 50 sites, including corporate offices and two new fulfilment centres".

Its total permanent UK workforce will number more than 40,000, up by a third in just one year as the pandemic triggers a surge in online shopping.

Stefano Perego, Amazon's vice president of European customer fulfilment, said his company is "employing thousands of talented individuals in a diverse range of good jobs from operations managers and tech professionals through to people to handle customer orders" across the UK.

"Our people have played a critical role in serving customers in these unprecedented times and the new roles will help us continue to meet customer demand and support small and medium sized businesses selling on Amazon," he added.

The company, which has already created 3,000 new permanent UK roles this year, added on Thursday that it will offer more than 20,000 seasonal positions across the country ahead of the festive period.

"This huge expansion announced in the UK by Amazon comes as little surprise, given the massive surge in sales the tech giant has experienced, as the e-commerce sector boomed during the pandemic," noted Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Bittersweet

Business Secretary Alok Sharma hailed Amazon's announcement, with UK unemployment set to surge after the government ends next month its Covid-19 furlough scheme that is paying wages for millions of private-sector workers.

"While this has been a challenging time for many businesses, it is hugely encouraging to see Amazon creating 10,000 jobs in the UK this year," Sharma said.

"This is not only great news for those looking for a new job, but also a clear vote of confidence in the UK economy as we build back better from the pandemic," he added.

Britain's economy shrank by one fifth in the [second quarter](#), more than any European neighbour, as the lockdown plunged the country into its deepest recession on record.

There is meanwhile much uncertainty surrounding the strength and pace of recovery, prompting Costa's announcement Thursday on its planned job cuts.

"We have had to make these difficult decisions to protect the business and ensure we safeguard as many [jobs](#) as possible for our 16,000 team members," Neil Lake, managing director for Costa Coffee UK and Ireland, said in a statement.

Although the huge drop off in visits to UK stores is easing after the government lifted its lockdown in late June, it was still down 30.8 percent in August compared with a year earlier according to a survey Thursday by data provider Springboard.

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