



CONTACT

Colleen Madden Blumenfeld, Director of Public Relations

Office: 312-422-5074

Mobile: 314-807-1568

colleenmadden@challengergray.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Worst Midyear for Newsrooms on Record
NEWS CUTS UP 170% OVER 2019

CHICAGO, July 15, 2020 – In a time when the public needs to stay informed more than ever, journalists are currently facing furloughs, pay cuts, and, in many cases, permanent layoffs. According to analysis from global outplacement and executive and business coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., newsrooms have announced 11,027 job cuts this year, up 169.8% from the 4,087 cuts announced in the first half of 2019.

This year’s total through June is 116% higher than the 5,104 newsroom cuts announced through June 2018. That year’s full-year total of 11,878 was the worst year for newsrooms since 2008, when 14,265 newsroom cuts were announced. Through June, newsroom cuts are their highest point since Challenger began tracking them in 2003.

Announced News Cuts

*Recent Years and Years with High News Cuts

Year	Annual	Through June
2020		11,027
2019	5,389	4,087
2018	11,878	5,104
2017	2,362	1,330
2013	9,584	5,029
2009	11,637	9,240
2008	14,265	8,675

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©

“Newsrooms have had a rough few years, as revenues declined and consolidation in the industry decimated news teams. Coupled with a hostile environment for many journalists, news has become an increasingly difficult career path,” said Andrew Challenger, Senior Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“That said, the importance of reporters and newsrooms that hold themselves to a high journalistic standard cannot be understated, especially during a global pandemic and a divisive election year,” he added.

In addition to layoffs, many newsrooms are forcing journalists to take paid time off or, more often, furloughing them without pay for a period of time.

In fact, in a recent Challenger survey, 23.3% of respondents said they furloughed workers due to COVID-19, but have recalled some or all of them. Another 30% of companies said they cut pay and 56% of those companies were able to avoid layoffs.

The survey was conducted online between June 11 and June 20 among 150 Human Resources executives at companies of various sizes and industries nationwide.

“Taking dedicated journalists off their beats, even temporarily, ultimately hurts the general public. However, many companies, not just newsrooms, are opting for other cost-saving measures to avoid layoffs, such as pay cuts, and finding them preferable to losing valuable staff,” said Challenger.

###



How are you currently addressing COVID-19 for your business? (Please select the most relevant options.)	Response
We instituted a hiring freeze, but are now hiring again.	26.7%
We furloughed workers, but have recalled some or all of them.	25.3%
We conducted permanent layoffs.	20.0%
We instituted a hiring freeze, and we are still not hiring.	6.7%
Our workers were furloughed and will continue to be.	4.4%
Our workers were furloughed and now some or all have been laid off.	2.2%
We instituted temporary layoffs, but have recalled some or all of those workers.	1.3%

Have you instituted pay cuts?	
Yes.	30.0%
No.	70.0%

If you have instituted pay cuts, how were they structured?	
We instituted pay cuts across the board.	44.4%
We cut pay for executive- or senior-level employees only.	34.2%
We cut pay for certain positions.	11.1%
Other (please specify).	10.2%

Did the pay cuts allow you to avoid layoffs, furloughs, or temporary layoffs?	
Yes.	55.6%
No.	44.4%
Other (please specify).	0.0%

How long will the cuts last?	
Pay cuts will last until business conditions allow for reinstating full pay.	55.6%
Pay cuts will last until the end of the year.	25.2%
Full pay will be reinstated at different times for different workers.	19.2%
Pay cuts will last until the pandemic ends.	0.0%
Pay cuts will last indefinitely.	0.0%
Pay cuts will be permanent.	0.0%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©