

Should HR Tell Employees Layoffs Are Coming? Workplace Experts Weigh In.

HR Brew | Mikaela Cohen | May 27, 2026

The short answer is, it depends.



Illustration: Anna Kim, Photo: Getty Images

Last week, Meta started layoffs affecting roughly 10% of its workforce, or 8,000 employees, CNBC reported.

The cuts are just the latest at the company, which laid off 21,000 workers in 2023 and more than 1,000 between January and March of this year. More are expected in the coming months.

Meta had nearly 78,000 employees as of March 31. It informed them of this latest round of layoffs in late April after the news unexpectedly leaked, Business Insider reported.

“Normally, we would want to nail down more details before communicating about this broadly, but since this has leaked, I want to share what I can right now. I know this is unwelcome news and confirming this puts everyone in an uneasy state, but we feel this is the best path forward,

given the circumstances,” Meta’s chief people officer, Janelle Gale, said in a memo to employees.

But with any layoff strategy, workplace experts told HR Brew there are pros and cons that people leaders should be aware of.

“I get the spirit of what they did but...they were not specific about departments or individuals, and I think that causes anxiety, because then you don’t know who is on that list,” Patrick McCue, SVP at Manpower Group’s talent solutions firm Right Management, told HR Brew.

Should HR let employees know layoffs are coming? The WARN Act requires employers with at least 100 full-time employees to give at least 60 days’ notice of layoffs affecting 50+ workers, or 33% of the workforce, HR Brew previously reported. Beyond that, communication is up to the individual employer.

Meta’s decision to inform employees of the reduction in force ahead of time can be seen as “forward thinking,” Patrick Leddin, co-author of *Disrupt Everything—and Win: Take Control of Your Future*, told HR Brew. Such notice can help employees prepare and make decisions about what to do next.

“I like the idea of opening up the dialog a bit and letting people see, as adults, the challenges the organization faces and the tough decisions that may or may not have to be made,” Leddin said. “And allowing them to at least get a little bit of insight of where this is going. That just seems like a right way to treat a human being.”

But there isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach for communicating layoffs, McCue said. Advance notice may work better at a smaller company, because, he said, HR can more easily reach out to employees to try to alleviate their concerns.

No matter the size of the company, McCue said advance notice needs to be as specific as possible. Noting, for example, the departments that will be impacted can help reduce widespread anxiety across the organization.

“There’s no sense in causing anxiety with people who have no chance that their department is going to be affected,” McCue said. “It’s one of those really tough situations, and you have to know your organization well.”

What else HR should consider. Layoffs are typically followed by drops in productivity, McCue said.

“People stop working. They start talking about what happened. They are thinking about what happened. They’re reaching out to their affected coworkers,” he said. “That kind of productivity dip doesn’t show up the next day, but it does show up.”

People leaders can help employees through layoffs by setting clearer expectations, Leddin said. From the time that employees are hired to when they leave, he said HR pros can outline how

processes will look and what form of communication can be expected, especially when it comes to layoffs.

“It’s hard when you’re in the throes of it to deal with these things, but the reality is, in studying disruption, I can tell you that whatever disruption you’re dealing with right now is just a prequel to the next one you’re going to deal with,” he said.

Meta did not respond to HR Brew’s request for comment by the time of publication.