

Aug. 30, 2006, 11:42PM

You've got mail, about your layoff

RadioShack tells 400 workers the bad news electronically

Associated Press

FORT WORTH — Radio-Shack Corp. notified about 400 workers by e-mail that they were being dismissed immediately as part of planned job cuts.

Employees at the Fort Worth headquarters got messages Tuesday morning saying: "The work force reduction notification is currently in progress. Unfortunately your position is one that has been eliminated."

Company officials had told employees in a series of meetings that layoff notices would be delivered electronically, spokeswoman Kay Jackson said. She said employees were invited to ask questions before Tuesday's notification on a company Intranet site.

Jackson said the electronic notification was quicker and allowed more privacy than breaking the news in person.

"It was important to notify people as quickly as possible," she said. "They had 30 minutes to collect their thoughts, make phone calls and say goodbye to employees before they went to meet with senior leaders."

Employees met with supervisors and human resources personnel before leaving. At coffee bar areas on each floor, the company provided boxes and plastic bags for employees to pack their personal belongings.

"Things went very smoothly. Everyone left very graciously and very professionally," Jackson said.

Derrick D'Souza, a management professor at the University of North Texas, said he had never heard of such a large number of terminated employees being notified electronically. He said it could be seen as dehumanizing to employees.

"If I put myself in their shoes, I'd say, 'Didn't they have a few minutes to tell me?'" D'Souza said.

Laid-off workers received one to three weeks' pay for each year of service, up to 16 weeks for hourly employees and 36 weeks for those with base pay of at least \$90,000, the company said.

The company announced Aug. 10 that it would cut 400 to 450 jobs, mostly at headquarters, to cut expenses and "improve its long-term competitive position in the marketplace."

RadioShack has closed nearly 500 stores in an effort to shake a sales slump.