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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

BT Group AI programme

IMPLEMENTED 2023 ONWARDS · TELECOMMUNICATIONS · UK · BAND C · CLAIMED ONLY

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In 2023 BT's chief executive said AI and automation could replace about 10,000 roles by the end of the decade. BT has since reported an AI assistant at EE and automated fault fixing in its IT estate. How many roles AI has replaced is not reported.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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Facts and figures are as reported by the sources listed below, which may be incomplete, self-reported or out of date. Check the original source before relying on any figure.

The impact band, proof marker and SEAM view are MarLuc's opinion. The organisation is not a MarLuc client and has not reviewed or endorsed this synopsis. Names and trademarks belong to their owners.

NOTICE WORDING LAST UPDATED 16 NOVEMBER 2026

AT A GLANCE

AI and automation used: Generative AI customer assistant (Aimee at EE) and automated fault fixing (AI Ops), alongside wider automation.

Implemented: 2023 onwards. Grade: band C, Process change, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: EE's assistant Aimee handles up to 60,000 customer conversations a week, by BT's account; roles replaced by AI are not reported

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 6 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

BT Group. UK telecommunications group: BT, EE and the Openreach network business. About 130,000 staff and contractors in 2023, per the Guardian; 108,000 by March 2026, per TelecomTV. Canvas block: 4. Operations and process. Also 5. People and skills, 3. Customers and proposition.

Business challenge

The challenge. In May 2023 BT said it would reduce its workforce by as much as 55,000 by 2030 as its full fibre and 5G build ended. The company said AI could make call handling and network diagnostics less labour intensive, per the Guardian. The chief executive at the time, Philip Jansen, said AI could remove the equivalent of about 10,000 roles.

Who implemented it

Sprinklr (Software vendor): Supplies BT's customer contact platform.
ServiceNow (Software vendor): Platform for BT's AI Ops programme, per BT's November 2026 results.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T1 Chat assistants, T2 Embedded AI in existing software. Deployment: Mixture. Vendors and products: Sprinklr, ServiceNow, Aimee (EE virtual assistant), AI Ops, AI Receptionist (business customers).

Where it was built in: In BT's customer contact platform, which powers EE's virtual assistant and online chat, and in the operation of BT's digital estate.

What changed

Before: Not reported. After: Aimee answers up to 60,000 customer conversations a week and AI Ops fixes about 23% of incidents in BT's digital estate, by BT's account. Total headcount fell from 120,000 to 108,000 in two years, per TelecomTV; the share due to AI is not reported. In November 2026 BT said its total labour resource was down 11% to 90k and its FY30 headcount target was now 65 to 70k excluding International; it does not state how much of this is due to AI. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

What it cost

Not reported for the AI programme. BT's wider cost programme is expected to cost £1.4bn in total, per TelecomTV.

What it saved

By BT's account: Aimee handles up to 60,000 customer conversations a week and halved the need for online support for international travel. Automation success on several customer journeys is approaching 50%, according to EE's data. AI Ops fixed an average of 2,900 incidents, about 23% of the total; the period for the average is not stated. BT cut annual operating costs by £1.5bn over two years, per TelecomTV; the part due to AI is not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]

Governance and control

BT's 2025 annual report names the Chief Security and Networks Officer as sponsor of its data and AI risk category. BT says it has AI guidance for staff, runs data and AI impact assessments on all relevant changes and has a defined approach to buying, selling and developing AI. None of this is independently checked in the sources. A customer's route from Aimee to a person: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
BT's 2025 annual report names the Chief Security and Networks Officer as sponsor of its data and AI risk category. [2]

A1 · Safe use · Claimed
BT says it developed AI guidance to help its people manage AI risks and stay in line with regulation. [2]

A2 · Human in the loop · Not reported
BT says Aimee frees guides to focus on more complex issues; a customer's route from the assistant to a person is not reported. [2] [3]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Claimed
BT says it runs data and AI impact assessments on all relevant changes; EE reports automation success rates for customer journeys. [2] [3]

A4 · Vendor AI · Claimed
BT says it has a defined, responsible approach when buying, selling and developing AI, and that it is agnostic about which large language model it uses. [2] [3]

A5 · Agent controls · Not reported
Not reported.

A6 · Standards and regulation · Claimed
BT says it must follow global data and AI regulations and scans for changes in regulation. [2]

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Volume through the EE assistant, by BT's account.

– Automated fixing of about 23% of incidents in BT's digital estate, by BT's account.

– Use of AI productivity tools by more than 48,000 employees, by BT's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported. ISPreview noted it was unclear how much choice customers have over using Aimee.

UNPROVEN

– How many of the roles removed since 2023 were replaced by AI.

– Whether customer satisfaction and resolution held as Aimee took more conversations.

– Cost per contact before and after.

– How much of the lower FY30 headcount target (65 to 70k excluding International, November 2026) depends on AI: BT's results statement does not say.

Timeline

May 2023 BT announces plan to cut up to 55,000 jobs by 2030; chief executive says AI could remove about 10,000 roles [1]

Dec 2024 BT says EE's assistant Aimee handles up to 60,000 customer conversations a week [3]

2025 Annual report lists more than 50 internal AI solutions in production and AI Ops fixing about 23% of incidents [2]

Jun 2025 Chief executive Allison Kirkby says the cuts plan did not reflect the full potential of AI [4]

May 2026 BT raises its cost target to £3.7bn and expects headcount of 75,000 to 80,000 by March 2030 [5]

Nov 2026 Half-year results: BT says total labour resource is down 11% to 90k and re-presents its FY30 headcount target as 65 to 70k excluding International; says AI Ops is being extended through ServiceNow and launches an AI Receptionist for business customers [6]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: B. Grade: C, Process change. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Process change.

Process change (Level 2, band C). The 2023 statement points to an operating model change (Level 3, band B); headcount has fallen, but no source shows the part due to AI.

Graded C, claimed B. BT reports AI built into customer contact and IT operations, with its own usage figures. The 2023 statement that AI could replace about 10,000 roles is a plan: no source shows how many roles AI has replaced.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

BT set a headcount figure for AI before the deployments existed. Three years on, the evidence is of AI working inside customer contact and IT operations, on BT's own usage figures. The workforce has shrunk, mainly as part of a wider cost programme, and the sources do not separate the effect of AI from the end of the fibre build. For a larger organisation, the transferable point is to track what AI changes in each process, so a headline number can later be checked.

1. Separate AI savings from other cost programmes when you report them.
2. Publish a baseline before quoting volumes handled by an assistant.
3. Treat a headcount forecast as a plan until the results are measured.

Evidence

Score 2 of 4. Self-reported: the deployment figures are BT's own, from its annual report and a December 2024 announcement; headcount comes from press reports of BT's results.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: annual report and announcement figures on usage; no evaluation of results.

Sources disagree. The Guardian reported the 2023 plan as up to 55,000 jobs. Reuters, carried by RTÉ, reported that the chief executive described it in 2025 as more than 40,000 jobs. The Guardian's headline figure of about 10,000 jobs replaced by AI rests on a quote in which Jansen tied the reduction to "automated digitisation".

Status. Ongoing: in May 2026 BT raised its cost target and said greater use of AI and automation would help reduce headcount to between 75,000 and 80,000 by March 2030, per TelecomTV.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/bt-group-ai-programme

[1] The Guardian: BT to axe up to 55,000 jobs by 2030 as it pushes into AI (May 2023)
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/may/18/bt-cut-jobs-telecoms-group-workforce

[2] BT Group: Annual Report 2025
https://www.bt.com/bt-plc/assets/documents/investors/financial-reporting-and-news/annual-reports/2025/2025-bt-group-plc-annual-report.pdf

[3] ISPreview: BT claims to be enhancing UK customer support via AI tech and chatbots (December 2024)
https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2024/12/bt-claims-to-be-enhancing-uk-customer-support-via-ai-tech-and-chatbots.html

[4] RTÉ (Reuters): BT boss Kirkby expects AI to deepen job cuts, FT reports (June 2025)
https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2025/0616/1518659-bt-boss-kirkby-expects-ai-to-deepen-job-cuts-ft

[5] TelecomTV: BT plans further cuts as sales growth proves elusive (May 2026)
https://www.telecomtv.com/content/access-evolution/bt-plans-further-cuts-as-sales-growth-proves-elusive-55537/

[6] BT Group (RNS, via Halifax Share Dealing): Results for the half year to 30 September 2026 (November 2026)
https://www.investments.halifax.co.uk/research-centre/news-centre/article/?id=36329697&type=rns

BT Group website: https://www.bt.com

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VERSION HISTORY

v1.1 15 November 2026 Added BT's November 2026 half-year results: labour resource down 11% to 90k, FY30 headcount target 65 to 70k excluding International, AI Ops on ServiceNow.
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