

NISSAN CUTS 10 JOBS FROM US PLANNING TEAM

Nissan Motor is reducing its California-based advanced planning team from 19 positions to 9, possibly hobbling its ability to create models for the US. Nissan's cutback of the Los Angeles group, which conceives cars and trucks that may not reach dealers for more than a decade, makes developing new models more difficult, said industry analyst Ed Kim. The move follows Nissan's announcement in January that it will close a design studio at its Farmington Hills, Michigan, engineering center. The company said it would cut 20,000 jobs worldwide because of the sales slump, following plans to shed 110 US sales, marketing and design positions. Nissan's reduction at the advanced product planning group is part of the Tokyo-based automaker's global reorganization. The company is trimming some North American vehicle output to adjust to plunging US sales. Nissan this week also said it will shift production of some small cars to Mexico. Nissan's January US auto sales fell 30%, after an 11% decline in 2008.

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