

# [***CNN overhauls morning show lineup under new CEO amid sagging ratings***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8B-0JM1-JBSS-S03Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

February 5, 2024 Monday 3:14 PM GMT

Copyright 2024 Cable News Network All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 806 words

**Byline:** By Oliver Darcy, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

New York (CNN) &#8212; CNN announced Monday that it will overhaul its entire slate of morning programming, charting a new course under new chief executive Mark Thompson as the cable news network works to improve its lackluster ratings.

The network said that it will revamp its flagship morning offering, "CNN This Morning," currently hosted by Poppy Harlow and Phil Mattingly. The show, which launched in 2022 by former network chief Chris Licht, never gained traction in the ratings.

"CNN This Morning," which has aired from 6 am to 9 am ET, will move to a new home in Washington, DC, where it will be anchored by Kasie Hunt from 5 am to 7 am. Prior to joining CNN in 2021, Hunt anchored mornings on MSNBC and played a key role on "Morning Joe," the network's ***politics***-focused rival program that has long been a force in morning ratings.

CNN said that it is in talks with Harlow and Mattingly concerning new roles at the network. Thompson also said in a note to staffers that the changes "mean that we will no longer produce morning programming in New York and will be disbanding the team that currently produces 'CNN This Morning' in that city."

A CNN spokesperson declined to say how many roles will be impacted as part of the changes, which are set to take effect later this month. But a person familiar with the matter said it will impact dozens of people.

"What we are announcing today is a change in strategic direction and not a reflection on the talent, expertise and dedication of the New York based editorial production and operations teams who've worked on our morning output - they're among the best in the business," Thompson wrote in his memo to staffers. "We will be strongly encouraging them to apply for the many new open roles that we are making available this week in Atlanta and Washington, DC, along with a number of other open roles in New York in other programming blocks."

As a result of the changes, "CNN News Central" will start two hours earlier, airing from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. That move in turn makes way for an additional two fresh hours of programming.

Filling those new hours will be a show anchored by Jim Acosta at 10 am and a program anchored by Pamela Brown at 11 am Since Brown is on maternity leave, Wolf Blitzer will anchor in the interim.

The changes announced Monday mark a dramatic overhauling of CNN's morning offerings implemented by Licht less than two years ago. The former CNN chief, considered a morning show wunderkind for his previous efforts at MSNBC and CBS, made it his first programming priority to launch "CNN This Morning."

But the show immediately struggled, with the original trio of anchors - Harlow, Kaitlan Collins and Don Lemon - noticeably lacking on-air chemistry and reports of infighting making their way into the press.

Less than a year later, CNN dismissed Lemon and moved Collins to prime time, leaving Harlow as the sole original anchor of the show. Mattingly, formerly the network's chief White House correspondent, later began his role as co-anchor last year.

In the wake of the exit of longtime chief Jeff Zucker, who led the network to ratings heights during the tumultuous Trump White House years but resigned in early 2022 after failing to disclose a romantic relationship with a longtime lieutenant, CNN's viewership has slipped considerably.

Cable news ratings across the board have shrunk in recent years. With Trump out of office, audiences are no longer consuming as much cable news. And millions of people continue each year to cancel their cable subscriptions in favor of streaming options.

But much of CNN's audience loss was also the result of programming choices implemented by Licht, whose short tenure at CNN was stained by a number of severe missteps. Time slots altered under Licht in prime time, mornings and weekends saw larger audience losses than those that were left unchanged.

David Zaslav, chief executive of CNN's parent company Warner Bros. Discovery, dismissed Licht last summer after a turbulent 13-month period. In the wake of his departure, CNN's leadership has made a number of moves to recalibrate the network's programming in hopes of reclaiming its audience.

The network revamped its prime time lineup last fall, but the new slate has also had trouble resonating with audiences. Thompson, [*in an interview*](https://www.wsj.com/business/media/new-cnn-boss-shakes-up-news-operations-explores-digital-subscription-model-db12e796) with The Wall Street Journal last month, was asked about CNN's poor performance in the ratings.

"There are some viewers out there who simply don't want to hear the other side, don't want to hear it, and feel much more comfortable in an environment where typically they're hearing people whose opinions are very close to their own," Thompson said.

This story has been updated with additional context.

By Oliver Darcy, CNN

TM & © 2024 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

**End of Document**