

Business

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Senior managers at Shell today started a two-day conference where they will be told of large potential staff cuts.

The summit in [Berlin](#) comes a day after the oil giant's head of gas, Linda Cook, left Shell after being passed over for the chief executive's role.

That job is being taken up by Peter Voser, the company's finance director, on 1 July. Shell insiders' website [Royaldutchshellplc.com](#) reported that Voser will tell his top 100 managers that Cook's old division will be merged with exploration and production in a move aimed at dramatic staff cuts. It is believed this was Voser's platform on which he made his pitch to the board for the chief executive's job.

Although oil prices have increased hugely in the past few months, at \$61.59 a barrel today, it is still way down on the \$147 at which it peaked last year, meaning Shell has to cut costs in order to retain its profitability.

Meanwhile, staff flocked to [Royaldutchshell.com](#) to attack the group's management.

One entry read: "Amongst those to be culled are (I suspect) many who are not only competent but who also realised that Shell historically was a bit different from the rest of the American oil major groups. No more. Sadly Shell is now the worst of the oil majors by far in almost every respect. And for those of us who in our small ways helped build a company that we were proud of its not just regrettable but a scandal."

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