



PRESS RELEASE

SOCAR Trading Sees Positive Trends in Working Practices During Covid-19 Lockdown

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Better Communications and Increased Transparency Benefit Staff At Home

GENEVA, October 12, 2020 (Newswire.com) - [SOCAR Trading](#)'s Head of Group HR - Chris Gribben - told the Energy Trading Week 2020 virtual conference last week that lockdown practices enforced by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to some surprising but positive developments in the workplace.

With office staff around the world forced to work from home, companies have relied even more on technology to maintain operations. And this has led to greater transparency and information flows.

As Mr. Gribben explained during a panel discussion of Lessons Learnt from the Covid-19 Crisis, "We've seen two positive behavioural changes. Firstly, lockdown has forced better communications on a daily basis, as technology has enabled larger meetings of captivated audiences to learn quickly what is happening in the business. Furthermore, barriers have been broken down. Whereas before junior staff might have been afraid of approaching a busy senior manager, now they can send a quick message and the manager can respond at a more efficient time."

Like many companies, SOCAR Trading has seen positive behavioural change over the last eight months as managers have become more aware of the challenges that some staff face, such as anxiety, isolation, and depression.

Mr. Gribben continued, "It's ok to be not ok. There is now greater empathy and tolerance amongst company leaders of the mental stresses of working from home, particularly for employees with kids, and heightened awareness of the need for work-life balance."

Whether these positive changes will be permanent remains to be seen. Elements out of companies' control – such as long-term office leases or transport infrastructure – mean that long-term changes will be marginal for some companies.

SOCAR Trading's priorities continue to be supporting employees' physical and emotional well-being, whether working from home or in the office, while navigating its business successfully through the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the company's business activity has been conducted remotely over the past few months as offices have been closed around the world according to various restrictions and lockdowns imposed by local authorities in the



markets in which SOCAR Trading operates. As restrictions are lifted to varying degrees, the company has started to re-open its offices while maintaining a safe workplace for staff.

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