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**Securities & Exchange Commission**

Secretariat Building, PICC Complex  
Roxas Blvd, Metro Manila

**Philippine Stock Exchange**

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**Attention: Hon. Vicente Graciano P. Felizmenio, Jr.**  
Director, Market and Securities Regulation Department  
Securities & Exchange Commission

**Ms. Janet Encarnacion**  
Head - Disclosure Department  
Philippine Stock Exchange

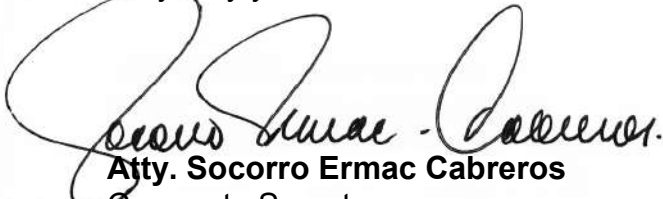
**Atty. Marie Rose M. Magallen-Lirio**  
Head - Issuer Compliance and Disclosure Department (ICDD)

**Sir and Mesdames:**

We would like to submit the attached Press Release entitled “**Ensuring employee engagement amid the pandemic**”.

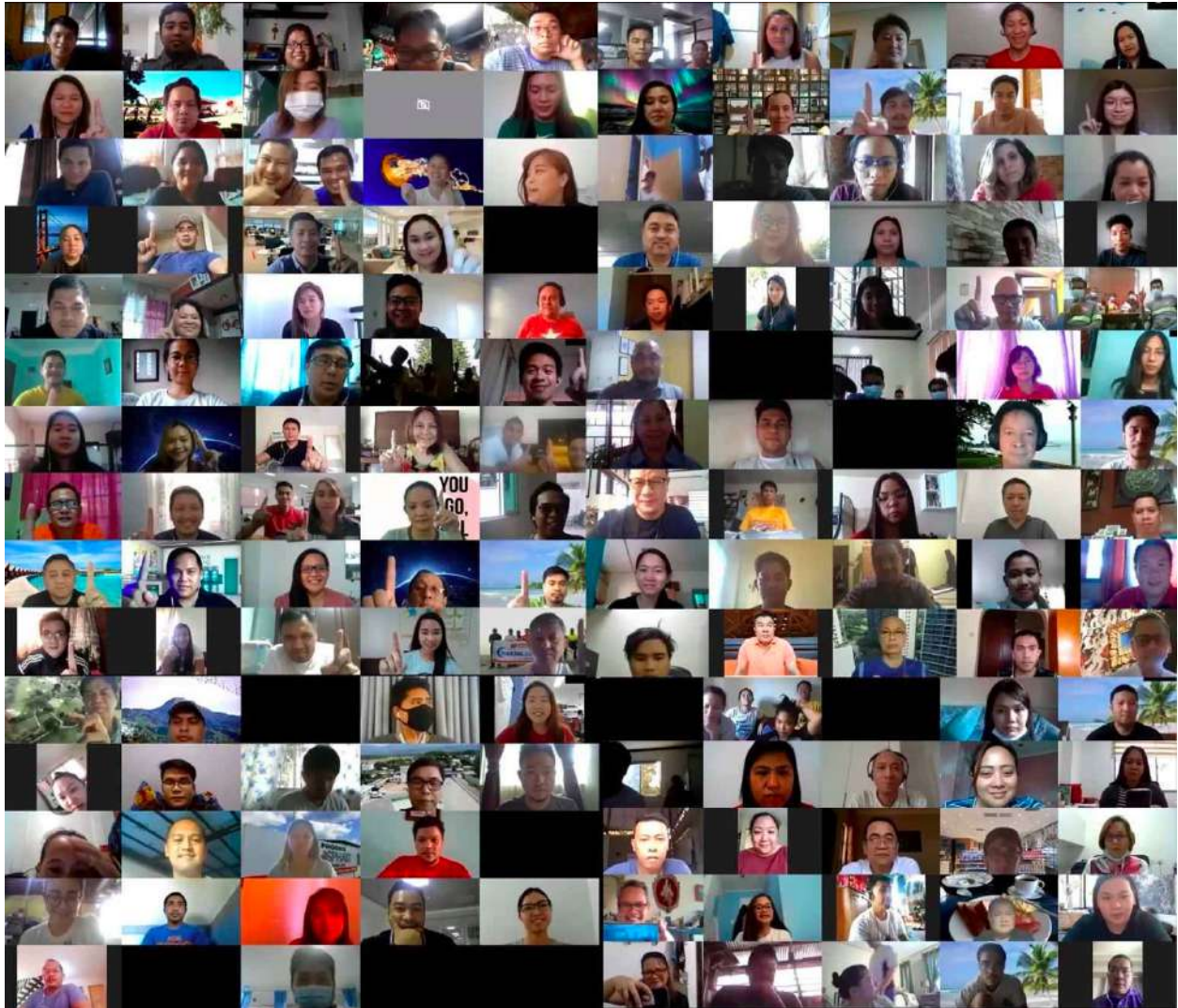
Thank you and warm regards.

Very truly yours,



**Atty. Socorro Ermac Cabreros**  
Corporate Secretary

## Ensuring employee engagement amid the pandemic



Adapting to new workplace environments last year, Phoenix conducted online town hall sessions among its employees and business partners.

Disruptions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic have challenged businesses in remotely managing employee experience. With a surge in work-from-home setups, it led companies to implement new policies and programs to ensure that employees were not only safe at home, but productive and well-supported. In the case of leading independent and third largest oil player Phoenix Petroleum, it was proper foresight and collaboration among the company's teams and units that allowed them to leverage on employee engagement amid the challenging situation.

As a big business in the energy and fuel industry, Phoenix was initially hit hard when lockdowns were imposed at the start of 2020 and companies were forced to operate at less than minimum capacity. A shift to a remote work setup for its thousands of employees nationwide was the immediate step they had to contend with, according to Phoenix Vice President for Human Resources Celeste Marie Ong.

“Safety was our utmost priority. We were closely monitoring the spread of the virus since it made the news, and with the assessment of our safety department, and judgment of the management, we announced alternative work arrangements, including the work-from-home set-up, days before the government implemented quarantine restrictions,” she said.

The arrangement saw as much as 70 percent of Phoenix employees working from home. Meanwhile, only employees with critical operational roles were allowed to work onsite under an alternating schedule and by regulation of company supervisors. However, this was only the beginning of a major workplace shift, according to Ong. The next, bigger challenge was making sure that Phoenix employees had the necessary support to perform their tasks efficiently.

“At Phoenix, employee engagement is a key metric that powers our organizational culture and helps drive company performance,” explained Ong. “So early on, HR managers were already in discussion with business unit heads to survey employee needs and get feedback on what we can do to help. It was then communicated that most employees had connectivity problems and health and financial concerns.”

With these matters being aired out, Phoenix provided support mechanisms such as releasing a portion of their 13<sup>th</sup> month salary and Christmas bonus in advance, and allotting allowance for Internet connectivity. As for employees reporting onsite, transportation and protective gear were also offered.

“We also hold regular online ‘Kumustuhan’ sessions per business unit to check on the mental wellbeing of employees. This is under the newly launched Partner Kita program, which also aims to remind our employees of our values. An app-based daily health check is also done to monitor employees’ health,” added Ong. “We do our best to continually and transparently communicate stability and security, which we hope has kept a lot of emotional stressors at bay. We even give our employees access to professional mental counselling to promote overall well being.”

As for building company morale and camaraderie, the HR team would conduct one-on-one check-ups with employees through chat every quarter. Meanwhile, other employee engagement activities such as the annual sports fest and Christmas party were translated into online events, which, she said, brought out the creativity of employees.

These programs are still being sustained up to date, which Ong highlighted as important contributors to Phoenix’s continued organizational and business excellence. In addition to Phoenix’s positive business performance at the end of 2020, Phoenix also reported positive results on its annual employee engagement survey, including earning high assessment marks on its business response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 ‘How R U?’ (HRU) Phoenix People Engagement survey disclosed an average score of 4.47 for employee engagement across a 5-point scale. Despite earlier concerns of disruptions on workforce engagement, the reports saw a score improvement of 0.34 compared to the previous year’s survey.

Furthermore, the survey also saw an overwhelmingly positive response to the additional criteria of Business Response to the Global Pandemic. “The overall message from employees is that ‘Phoenix takes my needs and ways into account when implementing new practices’ and that they feel confident in the company’s business strategy towards the pandemic,” explained Ong.

“It was a challenging year as the pandemic abruptly changed how we operate and manage company and business activities,” said Ong. “While we had to adapt quickly to new workplace environments and make new operational changes, the results show that it was a good year in terms of being able to maximize support for our employees and assist them to continue doing the great work that makes Phoenix a great company.”

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