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As one of Australia's leading automation, power, and telecommunications technology providers, CSE Global listens to its customers and offers innovative solutions for modern businesses.

Images by David Phillips, Protography

Boasting a network of over 30 offices in 20 countries, CSE has an extensive global presence. With offices in all capital cities and a number of major regional hubs across Australia and New Zealand, CSE utilises this global reach and knowledge to better serve customers.

As CEO of CSE Australia and New Zealand, Roy Rowe has effectively transformed the company since he joined the technology giant over two years ago. Roy spoke to *The CEO Magazine* about how he integrated CSE's businesses and implemented a productive, blame-free culture.

The CEO Magazine: How have your experiences across your career shaped your management style?

Roy: I have only worked for a few companies, but I have been fortunate enough to gain experience in numerous countries across a diverse range of cultures and industries. From that, I have developed quite a bit of flexibility in my work style. No matter what country I have worked in, there are two constants. The first is delivering to your customers what you said you were going to deliver at the agreed price and date, and the second is being honest with your people, telling them what is expected, and providing positive feedback when they are doing a good job, which results in employee satisfaction.

The style I have developed revolves around being flexible because it is never a one-size-fits-all approach. I make a point of always doing what I say I will do as well as being open and honest with people.

What do you think are the vital qualities in any successful leader?

You have to let your people know what is expected of them, what the short- and long-term objectives are for the organisation, how we're going to get there—the actions—and what their part is in that journey.

If you leave people alone and they've got the support systems, the encouragement, and the review processes around them, then most people get on with it and do the job. They don't need to be spoon-fed and they don't need to be told or reminded every single day about their role and responsibilities.

As long as they can see that everyone is doing their part and they can see that I am doing my part, then it generally runs to plan.

How have you transformed CSE over the past two years?

When I first started here, we had a number of very good companies, but they were all operating in distinct silos from each other. There was no communication across business units; each unit had its budget and targets and they

would work towards that, but there was no collaboration across the business units.

The business units weren't aware of the skills, products, services, customers, or vendors that were available in the other units, so they were like independent companies. The only thing they had in common was the CSE logo.

Over the past two years, I've been actively bringing those business units together. I have put a team together that includes senior management from each of the business units. We talk regularly, and everybody discusses the issues and the opportunities in their organisation.

We share opportunities and skilled people across the business units; we're acting as one team now. We still have distinct profit and loss centres, but people now share a lot of information, resources, vendors, and—importantly—customer knowledge.

Besides that integration, what do you think have been your greatest achievements as CEO of CSE?

Before I joined the company in early 2011, CSE didn't have a lot of success operating in the oil and gas industry in Australia. Today, 30 per cent of our business is in oil and gas. We reached that mark by having the business units work together and focus on what we as one CSE can do for our customers, >





and that's been exceptional. We've brought a lot more products and systems related to automation and power efficiency processes into our portfolio for our customers.

We have developed supply relationships with a number of very good vendors in China, where they manufacture the products and we provide the engineering, integration, and after-sales support for our customers in Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, around 10 per cent of our business is now in the rail industry, which was one of the clear targets I set for the organisation when I started.

We also have the financial goal to grow the company to \$250 million in the next few years.

The most satisfying thing is that the businesses are now all working together as one CSE, which is great—we've got a lot more to offer our customers. We've also got more to offer our

people in terms of career potential across the group.

You mentioned that your goal is to increase turnover in the next few years to the target of \$250 million. How will you achieve this?

We will keep growing in oil and gas, rail, and mining while we continue to support our customers in the power utility markets. We're looking at increasing our offering to customers with an increased scope of engineering services and more maintenance and service support. We'll need to find companies to acquire and bring into the CSE group to do that, so it's going to be a blend of organic and acquisitional growth.

It's not an over-complicated plan by any means; it is in place with well-defined measurable actions, and we know exactly where we're going. I am very proud of our growth so far and highly confident

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of our growth plans succeeding over the coming years.

You also mentioned that you have a great culture within CSE. How did you implement and shape this?

As mentioned previously, when I started in 2011, we had four great companies all operating as silos doing their own thing with no interaction. The first thing I did when we put all the business units together with the CSE corporate team on top was decide what sort of culture we needed and what kind of organisation we wanted to be for our people and our customers.

It takes a long time to build a corporate culture in any organisation. CSE Australia-New Zealand has really only been in place for just over two years, so our culture is still developing. I think it takes a good five to seven years to get a good, solid culture in



an organisation. You can talk about the culture you want and what things you're going to do to get it, but it takes time to embed culture throughout the company.

How will you embed CSE's culture over the next few years?

We have a blame-free culture here; we make mistakes and we learn from them so they hopefully don't happen again. We have successes, and everybody in CSE is a part of that success. We are one team. That is the culture I am striving for, and it will be embedded by simply doing it. When our people see it happening, then it simply becomes a natural way of operating.

Generally, people say that 'customer is king', but to me, our people come first. If your people aren't happy, then your customers are never going to be happy. We do have a very good culture here. Our people come first, we listen to them, and we do our best to look after them. If you look after your people, they're happy to come to work; and when they understand where the company is headed and their part in helping us get there, that will naturally flow on to the customers and they too will be satisfied dealing with CSE.

Does this culture extend into your supply relationships and strategic partnerships?

Absolutely. Our business would fail if we didn't maintain our relationships with our key vendors. They're as important as our customers are. If we don't have them, then our company doesn't

work because we can't continue to provide the best products and services to our customers. We've got to focus on them.

We have continual communications with our vendors, and we're always looking for ways to improve their business through ours. We will continue to grow our supplier base because we're not a manufacturer; we're an engineering, procurement, and integration organisation.

There are fantastic manufacturing companies out there supplying products. We've got to continue to grow the list of value-add products that we provide to our customers. We have a well-defined, niche base of products, but it does need to continue to grow as our customers' needs do.

How do you meet these evolving customer needs?

It's quite simple: we ask them. We continue to talk to them. The customers know what they want; we can't second-guess them, so the best thing to do is to simply ask your customers, "Where in your business are you experiencing pain and what can we do to help?"

The other approach is to use our extensive global knowledge and be proactive in sharing that knowledge with our customers. The industries we deal with in Australia are the same or very similar to those we operate in globally, so we take those experiences from other parts of the world and offer them to our customers here.

It's great that you can draw on that global reach, isn't it?

It's a real advantage. For projects in the mining and oil and gas industries, there is a well-known shortage of available resources here in Australia, so to be able to draw on the global CSE resource pool when we need to is a distinct advantage for us. We have a very large engineering centre in Singapore that supports us, and to be able to tap into that in times of short supply here in Australia and New Zealand definitely assists our customers achieve their deadlines.

We'll always try to provide everything we can from our local operations, but sometimes it's just not possible to meet our customers' delivery needs, so we tap into the global pool when necessary, which is both time- and cost-effective for all parties involved.

What are your goals for the future of CSE?

As I said earlier, we have the financial goal to grow the company to \$250 million in the next few years. That's the target out there in front of the management team, and everyone understands the steps we have to take to get there.

I want CSE to be a place where everybody is happy to come to work. I want our customers to be very comfortable working with us knowing that they can trust us when we say we can deliver a high level of quality and service on time. It's not overcomplicated. We have the number to hit; we must keep our people happy to make sure we get there; we have to continue our solid relationships with our suppliers; and we will listen to our customers and exceed their expectations. ●

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