



The Future of Work

As managing director of Tata Global Beverages, Sean Hallahan has focused on growing the company's brands, including new acquisition Map Coffee, in the Australian, New Zealand, and Indonesian markets.

Images by Joseph Feil

Tata has a history of more than 100 years and the ownership of a number of well-known brands such as Tetley Tea. Managing Director Sean Hallahan has been tasked with growing the company's market share in Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia while staying true to the company's values. *The CEO Magazine* spoke to Sean about his objectives for the company and what he's learned in the past 12 months.

***The CEO Magazine:* What are your roles and responsibilities in the day-to-day operations of Tata Global Beverages?**

Sean: My role is managing director of Tata Global Beverages Australia, New Zealand, and Indonesia [TGBA]. Our key brands are Tetley Tea and Map Coffee. I have full P&L responsibility for our operations as an autonomous business unit and as a division of

the global Tata company. My direct reports include our heads of sales, marketing, supply chain, and finance. Tata brings a disruptive emerging market mindset to Australia, and I love leading such a growth-focused organisation.

What has been your professional background prior to coming to Tata, and what do you enjoy about working for the company?

I originally began as a sales representative fresh from university and ended up as both a sales director and marketing director at two different tier-one FMCG companies. I have also founded and managed two of my own small entrepreneurial businesses. Here at Tata, I have found the perfect mix for me personally. Tata provides a huge amount of financial muscle and security while encouraging and enabling its business leaders to work very autonomously. It is an intoxicating blend and a vision of what the future of work could look

like. At Tata, we are really challenging the boundaries of collaboration and where the concept of an employee or a customer begins and ends.

What are your business values, and how have you met those business values in the past 12 months?

Five fundamental principles guide everything that we do at Tata.

Disruptive: The Tata business generally and TGBA in particular is not interested in maintaining the status quo. We have an emerging market mindset, a challenger mindset. We understand that the status quo favours the market leader and, if we want to succeed, we cannot play by their rules.

Co-creation: We believe in co-creating a new future with our partners and our customers. We challenge them and ourselves to rethink markets and then to ›



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
For more info visit
theceomagazine.com



“Despite all of our organisational challenges, we managed to grow our revenue by a healthy 11 per cent in a very competitive market.”

- Sean Hallahan

collaborate in the products and services that we design together.

Adaptive: We understand that the world is moving through an era of hugely disruptive change. Entire industries and companies are being radically challenged. In order to survive and thrive, our team needs to be highly creative and adaptive. We challenge ourselves to adapt quickly in our means, yet remain determined and focused on our final outcomes.

Ethical: When everything is in flux, it can be easy to lose sight of purpose, the ‘why’ of our business. That is where the founding principles of Tata are so important in guiding our decisions. We aim to become the most admired natural beverage company in the world in service of our consumers and the global community.

Sustainable: We recognise the tension that exists between being a consumer goods company which provides employment for many and the impact that we have on the world in which we operate. We certainly don’t have all the answers, but we have implemented many initiatives that attempt to redress the balance. Operating from these values does demand brave thinking and a level of transparency and trust that is uncommon. And of course we don’t always get it right; however, when we do, we have found that the rewards are tremendous.

What were your key objectives for the past 12 months, and how have you been able to achieve them?

In tea, our objective was to grow share in every segment for the third year in a row, which we successfully achieved. We also reduced our operating costs and therefore grew profitability, also

for the third year running. We purchased the Map Coffee business in May 2014 and have spent the past 12 months successfully integrating our two businesses. We relocated all Victorian employees to a new HQ in Richmond. We consolidated both supply chains into one to streamline our customer service. We relaunched the Map brand after a comprehensive research, insight, and repositioning process.

Despite all of our organisational challenges, we managed to grow our revenue by a healthy 11 per cent in a very competitive market. These impressive results were primarily attributable to two things—the collaborative and adaptive culture that we have built among our people and our creativity and innovation, whether it’s in new products that we have brought to market, new services that we have designed with our customers, or new partnerships that we have entered into.

What difficulties were you able to overcome to achieve these objectives, and what lessons were learned?

We purchased Map at a time of great upheaval in the market. The business had been in a lengthy sale process for two years, which had resulted in a lack of investment and a drop in morale within the team. We had to quickly deal with a host of challenges as we transformed the company into an innovative and fast-paced business backed by the global financial scale of Tata. For instance, we had to immediately negotiate a better way with overseas partners such as Caffitaly in Italy, who controlled the IP on our capsule system. We had to source and deliver innovative capsule machines from China on a very tight time scale. We also had to re-energise our distributor relationships in New Zealand and Indonesia and develop a winning go-to-market range and strategy. We had to convince major retailers of our business transformation and plans for the Map brand, resulting in increased distribution and sales presence. We also had to immediately begin to realise the synergies between our two operations by adding scale and revenue to both tea and coffee.

Part of that challenge is the sheer global scale that we now need to operate on. From our local team, we manage relationships in India, Italy, Romania, Sri Lanka, China, New Zealand, and Indonesia—all of which are crucial to our success. It is staggering to think of the complexity and interconnectedness that we have to deal with. Doing that well while adapting quickly to market changes, I believe, is one of the hardest challenges to face any business. We bought Map to grow it into a major coffee business throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and we are still only one year in on that growth strategy. We will double the size of our business by 2020, a big challenge for any existing company. It is a testament to our people and our disruptive mindset that we are not resting on our laurels but continuing to challenge and drive for growth.

“We will double the size of our business by 2020, a big challenge for any existing company. It is a testament to our people and our disruptive mindset that we are not resting on our laurels but continuing to challenge and drive for growth.”

- Sean Hallahan



How would you describe your leadership style?

I have learned many leadership lessons throughout my career and continue to learn them to this day. We live in such a complex and changing world that we need to think in terms of systems and whole system change. At the level of the organisation, this involves a completely different leadership style from what has served capitalism so well to date. Rather than the traditional ‘leader as hero’, the new paradigm requires ‘leader as host’. By that, I mean the job of the leader is not to determine some final vision of the future or end state to aim for. It’s impossible—the world is changing too fast for anyone to predict how it will play out. Instead, the job of the leader is to encourage the collective genius of the team to emerge so that the team and the company can adapt to the new conditions and thrive. That’s hard work. It involves a lot of self-awareness, humility, vulnerability, and a host of other behaviours that are at odds with the historical notions of what a leader should be.

I would call it self-actualisation through work, which is probably a grandiose way of describing leadership as self-improvement. I also find it’s impossible to separate such leadership work from your life, not that you would want to. It demands that you show up as who you are, an authentic you—warts and all, so to speak—



and work with and on your team to deliver the best outcomes that you possibly can.

What I can say is that operating from this space of ‘safe uncertainty’ is a tremendously creative and innovative place to be. When we are performing well from that area, there is an energy and flow that permeates the whole company. We think new thoughts, create new brands, products, and services, and collaborate with our customers in ways that previously were unheard of. It’s an exciting and energising place to be. •

Coffee Supply Partners

~ Experienced ~ Passionate ~ Professional

- In-full and on-time supply
- National door-to-door supply
- World’s best practice manufacturing
- Fully certified SQF and HACCP systems
- Multiple pack format options
- Specialists in contract/OEM production



AESP
Coffee Roasters

24 and 25 Parkhurst Drive, Knoxfield VIC 3180 • **03 9800 0088** • service@aesp.com.au • www.aesp.com.au