

POSTCARDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Excellence: A Normal Way of Life

by Robert Alan Black, Ph.D., CSP

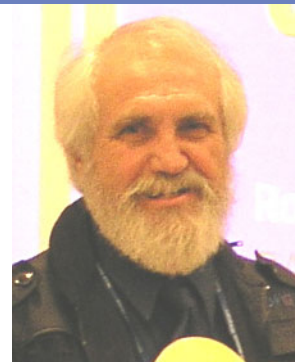
Doing more than expected or promised at higher levels of quality and quantity seems to be a good, basic definition of *excellence*! Since the mid-'80s, when Tom Peters and Bob Waterman's book *In Search of Excellence* was first released, the term *excellence* has been with us and too often turned into just another current buzzword.

Personally guiding someone through the streets of the Left Bank of Paris to make sure that they got to the post office. Personally picking up and dropping off a speaker at the airport in Singapore located many miles from their hotel. Personally spending your lunchtime to set up the equipment to make sure that an afternoon presentation web site presentation can be done. Personally guiding a speaker to temples, museums, castles, zoos, fine restaurants and paying the complete bill just to say *thank you* to a speaker. Each of these are international examples of *personal* excellence I have been very fortunate to experience

during the past couple of years.

Having dinner or lunch right at the edge or on a hill overlooking the Bosphorus Strait. Being placed in a hotel within two blocks of the Eiffel Tower. Totally reprinting on the spot handouts that did not print well from an Internet PDF file. Providing a personal tour guide or setting up two days of bus tours and a professional guide throughout Istanbul. Setting up tours of the discovery site of the skeleton of the oldest human being with one of the researchers and of a Nabelle village with a professor of architectural anthropology outside of Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa. Each of these are further international examples of *personal* excellence that clients have provided.

Redesigning, replanning, recreating and reprinting workshop or keynote handouts and the content of my presentations over



Above: University students in Teipei, Taiwan.

Left: Shopping for Christmas at Raffles Center in Singapore.

Below left: Silence Bay in Sestri Levante.

Below right: Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.



and over again to raise the quality and value of the sessions is how I provide excellence for my clients. Doing additional sessions when asked to fill in for a missing presenter, changing the time of a session to first thing in morning because I received a phone call from the meeting planner after midnight the night before, helping to reset the room back to suit the next speaker during lunch. These are small ways I strive to provide higher and higher levels of excellence for clients.

These are all examples of doing more—doing the unexpected, doing things better than ever done before—simply because that is what professionals do for each other and for their clients.

Testing a presentation days to weeks, even a second or third time the night or day before, whether a flip chart, chalkboard, 35mm slide, overhead or some form of computer projection over and over and deciding at the last minute to change it or scrap it because it does not match the level of excellence that the audience or client deserves, let alone desires. Walking around the entire space or room or auditorium to be sure that the total expe-

rience will be its best, no matter what seat or area people sit in. These, too, are examples of the NSA level of excellence.

I have been blessed the past few years to experience excellence in five-star-quality facilities in war-torn Sri Lanka, terrorist-attacked Istanbul, peaceful and modern Osaka, in completely modern, less-than-a-year-old university facilities outside Bangkok, Thailand, or in the wondrous mountains of Kufstein, Austria, to rugged retreat centers in the bush of South Africa or outback of Australia, or a centuries-old baroque villa hotel along the Mediterranean in Sestri Levante.

In each case, *excellence* was the starting point from which to do even better.

*Since earning his CSP, **Robert Alan Black** has spent much of the last two years traveling the world and speaking on his expertise, Creativity. While traveling internationally, Alan can be reached through his web site: www.cre8ng.com.*