

# Access to Excellence

Newsletter Winter 2005/06

Photo: International Conference Centre Tehran



**T**his newsletter is sent to you with warmest wishes for good health and success in 2006 for you and your families. I hope that the surprises the year brings will all be good ones.

The New Year is a time when we perhaps review the past and look forward

to the future. Of course as advocates of change it is something that we should not reserve only for particular times, as the following reminds us.

Steve Unwin

*"This is the beginning of a new day. You have been given this day to use as you will. You can*

*waste it or use it for good. What you do today is important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever; in its place is something that you have left behind...let it be something good."*  
Author Unknown



## Celebrating 50 Years of Quality in Europe

Exploring New Roads to Transformation.

Antwerp Belgium 28 – 31 May 2006.

In May 2006 the European Organisation for Quality will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the wonderful city of Antwerp Belgium at a conference with a difference.

Instead of the usual mix of plenary presentation and breakout sessions, this conference is designed to be engaging, interactive and offer plenty of surprises.

Following the opening ceremony held in a church, delegates can pursue one of seven separate themes.

The choices are varied, and challenging providing something for everyone. For example you can team-work as part of the crew of a racing yacht.

Learn all about vision by exploring the world of surrealist artists. Stretch your understanding of quality and risk by building the fireworks for the closing ceremony. Understand leadership on the battlefields of Waterloo. Uncover the importance of connections for business success or our health related organisations that have achieved transformation.

I am delighted to be invited to give one of the opening presentations and will also lead the seventh theme, 'The Art of Questioning'.

For two days we will explore the immense power of questions when used not to catalogue what we already know,

but to stretch our imagination to discover what we can become.

We will explore a variety of locations around Antwerp as we learn to see in new ways and a professional magician will help us see that things aren't always what they seem.

The conference promises an exciting challenge for all involved, providing a unique opportunity both to learn and make lasting friendships.

Find more details at [www.eoq50years.org](http://www.eoq50years.org)

*The power to question is the basis of all human progress."*

**Indira Gandhi (Indian Politician and Prime**



## Here's to the Crazy Ones.

One of my favourite quotations is attributed to Albert Einstein.

*'A question that sometimes drives me hazy: am I or are the others crazy.'*

If you're create change, sometimes you will be in a minority of one. Its comforting to know that even Einstein worried what that might mean.

When we focus only on what we know we leave little room for craziness. Change becomes incremental and we become complacent. We strive just to 'get better' and words like 'superb' 'magnificent' and 'incredible' are quietly lost from our vocabularies.

When we mistake quality for safe and predictable, I believe we do a great disservice to our organisations, and to ourselves.

In 1999 Apple computers ran a TV advertising campaign asking us to 'Think Different' using these words.

*Here's to the crazy ones.*

*The misfits.  
The rebels.  
The troublemakers.  
The round pegs in the square holes.  
The ones who see things differently.*

*They're not fond of rules.  
And they have no respect for the status quo.*

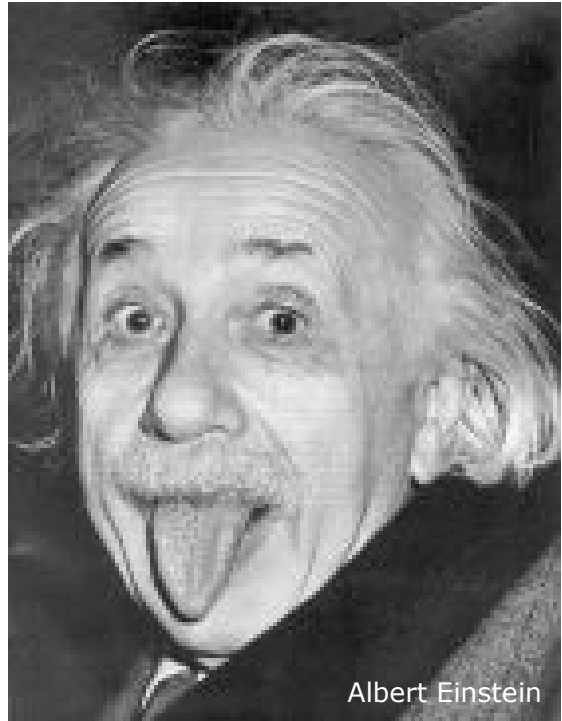
*You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things.*

*They push the human race forward.*

*(Maybe they have to be crazy.  
How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written?)*

*And while some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.*

*Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world... are the ones who do.*



Albert Einstein

If you think crazy isn't for your organisation, remember Tom Peters said

*'The effective organisation looks more like the carnival of Rio than the pyramids along the Nile.'*

So what risks have you taken today to make your organisation more like a carnival?'

If you have a story then I'd love to hear from you.

Go on, be a little crazy.

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*It seems to me that people have vast potential.*

*Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most people don't. They sit in front of the TV and treat life as if it goes on for ever.*

**Philip Adams**

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Enjoy the Apple TV advert at <http://nwvillage.com/TheBasement/articles/thinkdifferent.html>

## Publications

I am delighted that Volume 16 Number 8-9 of the Total Quality Management journal contains the paper 'Business, Science, Art and the Mindset for Excellence. This paper

was presented at the World Quality Congress in Abu Dhabi and outlines the impact that our understanding of change has on our ability to achieve it.

In addition work

continues on the preparation of books which further develop these ideas and help develop a new change paradigm. The next newsletter will include an update on this work.

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*The function of art is to renew our perception. What we are familiar with we cease to see. The writer shakes up the familiar scene, and, as if by magic, we see a new meaning in it.*

**Anais Nin**

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## Book Reviews - Experimental Travel

The list of book reviews continues to grow on the web site. One of the latest is The Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel, a book which may help you see in new ways.

Experimental Travel, in a nutshell is a playful way of travelling, where the journey's methodology is clear, but the destination is unknown.

This somewhat unusual style of travel, perfectly mirrors the nature of change. We can't know where change leads but can influence how we approach it.

The body of the book comprises 40 playful ways of travelling. Each approach is outlined and reports given of the experience of travellers who have pursued the

experiment.

The experiments range in complexity, some very simple, but each invites you to see your world from new perspectives.

For example idea 18 'Expedition to K2' invites you not to climb the Himalayan peak, but to see a new aspect of your home town by visiting and exploring map grid square K2. Idea 39 'Twelve Travel' invites you to travel noting the number 12. For example travel 12 stops on bus number 12. Idea 15 simply invites you to walk a dog to see what it sees.

It's a very simple, but very powerful idea. Not convinced? Try it now! Spend the next ten minutes walking around the room you are



currently in, looking for every green object. I guarantee you'll find far more than you expected and will also discover something new.

This is a great book that can make real journeys much more interesting, and may transform your change journey.

More book reviews at

[www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk](http://www.accesstoexcellence.co.uk)

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*Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to continually be part of unanimity.*

**Christopher Morley**

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*One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.*

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.**

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## 6th ICQM Conference Tehran

Last July it was my great pleasure to speak at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Quality Managers in Tehran Iran.

For some of you Iran may not seem the most likely venue for such an event. When the invitation arrived I knew little of what to expect. Nor, for that matter, did friends and family who like me wondered what I'd find. Indeed the question was the reason for going. I was not to

be disappointed.

The two-day conference, the largest I have attended, is held twice in order to accommodate its 5000 delegates. Over thirty overseas speakers from fifteen countries joined those from Iran. In addition to plenary sessions delegates could choose six of thirty parallel presentations.

Delegate feedback was collected using an innovative computer scanning system with

analysis available almost immediately following each session.

I presented a paper called 'Change-ability' its central theme that change occurs through what you are, not what you do; what you are being, not doing. The paper was very well received and I was delighted to obtain the highest rating of any overseas speaker.

The atmosphere at the conference was very lively, with delegates



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*The good traveller has no fixed plans and is not intent on arriving.*  
**Lao Tzu 570-490 BC**

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keen to question and learn; an energy absent from many conferences.

I was keen to learn all I could and was fortunate to briefly visit the cities of Esfahan and Shiraz. These visits provided a valuable insight into the Iranian culture and its people. Everywhere I went I saw echoes in the culture of the same message of the importance of being, rather than doing.

I experienced many fascinating learning points and have space here to mention only two. In Shiraz, the city of poets, we were able to visit the tombs of two of the most famous, Sa'di and Hafez. It is said that if you make a wish at the tomb of Hafez and then read from a randomly selected page of his work, you will receive guidance.



We made our wishes and our guide then read from a page we selected. The verse revealed to us that the achievement of our wishes would be determined not by what we did, but by what we are. I loved it, and the fact that a young boy of around 15 standing nearby mouthed silently along to the words as our guide spoke them.

At the Carpet Museum in Tehran I saw the carpet maker at work and was

mesmerised by the challenge of creating carpets with patterns of incredible complexity, by adding a single thread at a time. This was a challenge that for the huge carpets that adorned the former palaces would not simply take man-hours of effort, but literally man-lives.

As I watched the carpet maker at work, what he was doing was clear, but I know the real magic of his work was in what he was being.

There were many other sights, and the web site features a slightly longer article on the conference.

Many thanks to Hesam Aref Kashfi and all involved in the conference, and to everyone I met whilst in Iran, for making it such a wonderful experience.



Handmade Carpet Making

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*"To travel, to experience and learn - that is to live."*  
**Sherpa Tenzing Norgay**

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#### Interesting Links

7th ICQM Conference  
[www.qm-conference.com](http://www.qm-conference.com)  
Persepolis  
[www.persepolis3d.com](http://www.persepolis3d.com)  
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts  
[www.tehranmoca.com](http://www.tehranmoca.com)

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*Access to Excellence was created in 2001 by Steve Unwin to further thinking, development and use of organisational improvement ideas. In addition to publications and presentations we work with public and private sector organisations to create real understanding of change and through this sustainable improvement. Please feel free to contact us to discuss any aspect of change, whether your requirements, ideas or issues, or just to keep in touch. Many thanks for taking the time to read the newsletter and I wish you every success on your change journey.*

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*Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.*  
**William James**

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