

The Service Standard Revolution *By Durban Morrow*

The familiar and besieging rallying cry for the Trade Commissioner Service is constantly to do more with less. As a result, the focus these days is on quality and on service standards. Service standards provide a practical way to manage performance in an era of fiscal restraint and help shape the expectations Canadians have about government services. The effective implementation of service standards allow the Trade Commissioner Service to focus on quality and not quantity. At the very least, if the TCS is not able to do more with less, service standards can help it do better with less.

Experience suggests that services can be improved and delivered at reduced cost by: refocusing services on clients; finding out what clients consider to be critical aspects of government services and service delivery; giving managers the flexibility needed to respond to client needs; developing proper incentives to promote innovation; and, monitoring and analyzing performance against realistic goals and standards.

As an integral part of good management, service standards promote partnership in quality client service.

They provide the means by which service performance and costs use valid and reliable measures. As well, service standards help provide meaningful information relevant to the content, value and method of delivery of services established to meet clients' needs, and use performance and client satisfaction information to guide operational decisions to continually improve the service standards and actual performance.

Upcoming issues of the *Trade Post* will feature special articles about the introduction and implementation of service standards in the TCS. The first article will discuss measuring client satisfaction. Your input for the quality articles is welcome. Enclosed as a separate attachment this month is an article entitled "Five Imperatives For Improving Service Quality" by Berry, Zeithaml, and Parasuraman from the Canadian Centre for Management Development. Be sure to read the pullout and circulate it.

Durban Morrow is with Trade Development Operations (TOO). We consider him a guru on service standards. For further information, please call him at 996-2584.

Heralding TCS Unsung Heroes

This article appears in the premier issue of the newsletter, *Dispatch*, produced by the Rocky Mountaineer Railtours, operated by the Great Canadian RailTour Company Ltd. The Director of Media and Public Relations tells us that they could only refer to a few specific individuals due to space restrictions - Editor

The Rocky Mountaineer has enjoyed the support and assistance of a great many organizations and individuals from beyond the ranks of the company. We think it important that we periodically acknowledge these "unheralded" partners and thank the people in Canada's Embassies and Consulates.

One of our major problems, five years ago, was that the travel world had been left with the

impression that rail travel in Canada had come to an end. Inaccurate stories, such as the PBS airing of "The Last Train to Medicine Hat," set the tone and caused tremendous uncertainty in the marketplace. Our new company did not have the required presence in the industry to directly combat the misinformation. Nor did we have the financial resources to mount and sustain the massive media campaign that would have been necessary to correct the situation.

We turned to Canada's representatives abroad and were rewarded with immediate and impressive results. This highly skilled group of professionals has the unique challenge of developing business leads, creating opportunities, facilitating promotions and

transactions around the world for Canadian businesses. And, if our experience is representative of their productivity, they provide a tremendous resource. These public servants are true unsung heroes.

The officers provided expert knowledge of and advice on key markets in the U.S., Europe and Asia. The vital marketing advice they shared came complete with sales contacts. The often unsolicited role they played at consumer and travel trade shows, in media relations and in travel agent relations, directly contributed to re-establishing Canada's place in the rail tour business.

These dedicated public servants came to the assistance of the Rocky Mountaineer and Canada's tourism industry during a time of

Continued on page 10