

# The man from Orp

By Allan Gorman

One of the best marketing people I ever met was a bum!

It's Saturday afternoon in late summer and I'm standing on the subway platform in lower Manhattan waiting for a train to take me over the bridge into Brooklyn to visit my mother-in-law.

The station is fairly busy for a Saturday and many of the waiting passengers are grouped into those little strategic bunches that savvy subway riders make, so that when the train comes, they can rush in to get a good seat. I'm at the head of one of these little bunches.

The train pulls into the station and we sidestep a little so that the doors open right in front of me. I let a few departing passengers squeeze past and spy over their heads... Shangri-La!... the perfect seat. You know the one I mean, the one at the end of the bench where you're not sandwiched between an 800-pound gorilla and a lady wearing an entire bottle of *Silent Nights* perfume.

I make a beeline for my seat. Success! I pat myself on my back for my good fortune.

But perhaps a bit too soon.

Because, just before the doors are about to close, into the car jumps... a remarkable young man in his mid 20's.

He's all in gold!

Gold gauzy shirt. Gold jeans. Gold crew socks. Gold tennis sneakers.

His face is painted gold and so is his hair.

And he's wearing a little gold thing-a-ma-jingie around his neck that has red and green flashing lights.

In one hand is a beat up old saxophone that used to be gold, and in the other hand is...

Uh, oh... a paper cup.

The man in gold positions himself at the end of the car looking down toward the front.

I feel the little hairs at the back of my neck stand on end as I'm about to get hit up by a street beggar. And I'm trapped. I can see my own distress reflected on some of the faces of my fellow passengers too.

I look up at the advertisements, determined to read every word – maybe if I ignore him, he won't notice me.

The young man is composed and silent until the train pulls out of the tunnel into the daylight. I guess he was waiting for the echo of the tunnel to disappear.

And then he speaks up.

*“Greetings earthlings!*

*I am from the Planet Orp*

*On Orp we communicate like this.”*

He then plays just a god-awful sax riff – probably the worst noise I've ever heard. It lasted for perhaps two minutes. It was so bad it was laughable. And I can tell he was doing this on purpose, because he was smiling and snickering under his breath.

Finally, he stops playing and continues...

*“As I said, I am from the Planet Orp and unfortunately, my space ship has crash landed. It is at the George Jetson Spaceship Repair Shop in Brooklyn, and I'm told it needs a very rare... and very expensive... part.*

*Being an alien, I cannot get a green card, so I can't get a job. I can't even get something off the books. Nobody wants to hire a gold man – racial discrimination.*

*I'm homesick – I haven't seen my mommy and daddy in thirteen light years.*

*And I'm very hungry. The food on your planet stinks!*

*Do you think you could you please... please... help me out with a generous donation so I can my ship out of the repair shop and get back home?”*

Well. This was not at all what I expected. I thought I was going to get panhandled! But instead, I got one of the most entertaining and memorable performances in my life.

I tell the story because I wanted to find an example of how marketing works and how powerful it can be when done right.

So what is it that the Orp man did? And what made him so effective that, when it came to my turn to donate, I'd peel off three dollar bills and put it in his cup?

I thought about what it was.

And what it came down to was... delight!...Delight (with a capital D). He *delighted* me. With a remarkable experience that transcended what I expected and redefined my idea of what a street beggar is.

So much so that he turned me into a raving and loyal fan, who, even after twenty five years can relate this story to you like it was yesterday. And would gladly be willing to pay extra to see him again. And now that I've told you the story, so, do I think, would you.

So could delight be the secret to marketing success? And that's what I think it is.

So how about you? Does the performance you give delight and thrill your audiences? Does it transform and redefine people's ideas of what's possible? Does it provide... delight?

I charge you with developing a performance that's so unique and remarkable people will remember you and be willing to pay extra to see you again. I charge you to, like the Man from Orp to find a way to create the experience of "*Brand Delight*."

And begin your exciting journey toward realizing market leadership.

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Allan Gorman is owner of Brandspa, LLC - a Montclair, NJ based branding and creative consultancy Download a copy of Allan's informative and helpful report: "*Ten Marketing Secrets for Building a Sexier Brand*" from <http://www.brandspa.net> or send an e-mail to [agorman@brandspa.net](mailto:agorman@brandspa.net)

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