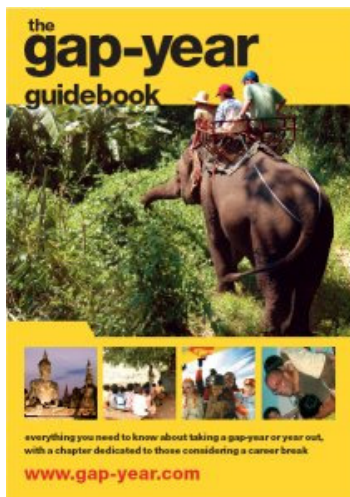




multimedia reputations.com

Case Study: Gap-year guidebook and www. gap-year.com

In 2004, after the publishers of this book and website, John Catt Educational Ltd, Suffolk, acquired this title they asked Alison Withers at multimedia reputations to take a look at it with a view to re-branding and bringing both book and website up to date.



“The gap-year guidebook has a good future ahead of it and much of this is down to your skill and determination in making the guide a leading book of its kind”

(Jonathan Evans, MD John Catt Educational, 2010)

Results:

The book is now in its 18th edition and has become the leader in its field. The publishers and editors are regularly asked to contribute comments to media articles and the book is a chosen title in the UCAS (University Clearing) list.

Publication is now at the end of November each year to better reflect the decision making and planning process most people take.

Gap-year is now a partner in the UK Foreign Office Know Before You Go initiative, and the website was chosen in the top 10 gap year advice and guidance websites by NatGeo TV – a venture under the umbrella of the National Geographic.

This year (2010) has seen the launch of the first competition for travellers' stories and photographs with a steady stream of entries submitted from all over the world.

How we did it

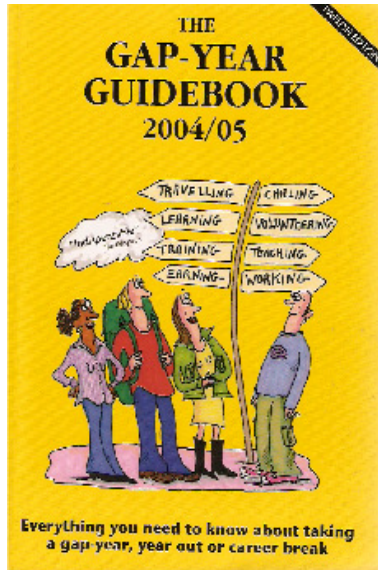
Year 1

Working jointly with an in-house editor, we agreed that a comprehensive redesign was needed but that changes would be introduced gradually to retain the then current market share. Publication date for the next edition was to be brought forward to January from March to better reflect the time when readers' decisions were being made about taking a **gap-** with a view to gradually bringing publication forward to

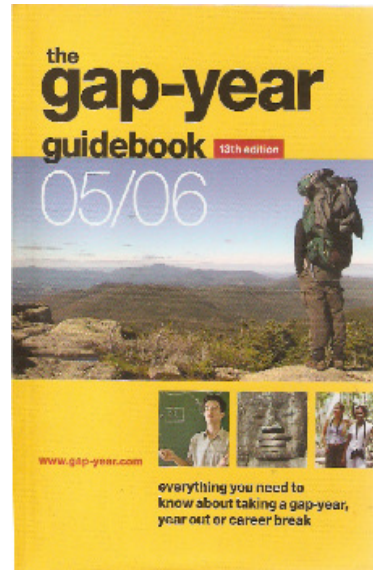
pre-Christmas. The word “gap” would henceforth appear on all communications and literature as **gap-** to distinguish the brand from a competitor with a very similar name.

Book Design: A complete book cover redesign, modernising with photographs but keeping the brand's distinctive yellow colour theme.

Full colour was introduced for the 38 pages before Chapter 1, including a new offer of premium full-colour ads. Spot colour was included throughout the rest and page edge colour tabs added to help readers navigate.



Pre re-launch cover



Post re-launch cover

Book Content: Comprehensively edited to ensure that all the information links were up to date at the time of publication.

A new section was added to the introduction to reflect a developing new trend reported by gap travel providers that people taking a career break now accounted for 50%-plus of their customers.

Stories from people who had experienced a **gap-** were felt to be crucial to lively and informative content and given more prominence on colour-tinted backgrounds throughout the book.

The website comprehensively redesigned to match the new book's new look, content rewritten and re-launched to coincide with publication of the book's 13th edition in 2005. It was agreed to trial a monthly e-newsletter and that additional articles were to be added monthly in the website's news and info section and included a monthly blog with pictures from a career-break traveller while he was travelling.

Continuous improvement

With the design elements established the next steps were to look at the book content in more detail.

In **Year 2** as a result of bringing forward the publication date it was decided to change the edition year from the academic year to the calendar year.

Richard Oliver, CEO of the gap providers' voluntary industry regulator Year Out Group, was invited to contribute a preface.

New designs were created for each chapter introductory page and chapter order was completely reorganised. The general advice and guidance section, **Tips for**

Travellers, on preparing for a year out became **Chapter 1** because it was felt that it was more logical position ahead of the chapters on more specific activities and types of **gap-** travel.

A new Chapter 2 was introduced containing additional information on preparation for older travellers with more commitments and overheads, plus career issues, to consider.

A new end chapter on reacclimatising after travel was introduced. Contact organisation and advertising listings (also divided into chapters) had previously followed the full set of advisory chapters. It was decided it would be more logical and efficient to add the relevant listings at the end of each related guidance chapter.

All content was revised as it is each year, to reflect industry changes, link updates and topical issues affecting travel.

Companies were successfully invited to sponsor a chapter.

Year 3 saw the book go full-colour with page navigation edges coloured to match the chapter colour. Use of photographs was given more prominence throughout the design.

Traveller case studies now also became a full page with pictures and words from contributing travellers at the start of each chapter.

A world map was introduced at the start of the book showing the locations of all the contributions from travellers.

Short basic guides to the major faiths travellers were likely to encounter were added to the in-country section of Chapter 1 to help people understand cultural norms.

Subsequent years have seen further refinements, for example, the **post-travel advice** chapter was incorporated into **Chapter 1, Tips for Travellers**, which now comprehensively covers advice for before, during and after a year out travelling. New chapters were introduced on **insurance, finance** and **accommodation**. This helped to reduce the length of Chapter 1 and better organise the information.