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## Leading by design

An online  
challenge,  
conquered.

### Client

Across the Divide

### Designer

SpotlessMedia

### Project summary

It's been running charity and corporate challenges for ten years, but recently Across the Divide Expeditions faced its own challenge: how do you attract more online customers, cost-effectively?

The South West Design Programme has grown out of the Leading by Design programme. Building on the goodwill and reputation established under Leading by Design, we continue to work with funding provided by the South West Regional Development Agency, helping small and medium sized businesses in the South West realise their potential through high quality design advice.

## Client summary

Across the Divide Expeditions organises and manages challenges – treks, bike rides, community projects, dog sledding and white-water rafting – for charity fundraising, corporate team-building, or incentive travel.

The company uses destinations as far apart as the Great Wall of China and Torres de Paine National Park in Patagonia, and as close to home as Wiltshire, Cheshire and Ireland.

Across the Divide Expeditions is also the sister company of Expedition Medicine & Leadership, the leading provider of expedition medical training courses. These courses prepare medical professionals and expedition members for the rigours of leading and giving medical care in the remotest of areas and the toughest of conditions.

Both companies are headed by Mark & Karen Hannaford. Together, they have braved over 200 expeditions and visited every continent in the world.

## Designer summary

SpotlessMedia is a design agency based in Plymouth. Although it specialises in new media, and in particular web design, it handles print design and all types of multimedia work, including educational and informational CD-ROMs.

The company, founded in 1989 by Mark Dunk, was one of the first new media agencies around – it produced multimedia titles as early as 1995 and developed its first website in 1997.

Since then it has designed and created a huge number of sites, from simple home pages and mid-range brochure sites, to up-to-the-minute video streaming and e-commerce. It's also worked with many different companies.



## Design process

SpotlessMedia was originally appointed by Across the Divide in 2002, when it was briefed to completely redesign all aspects of the company's website, improve its navigation and functionality, and include the corporate colour scheme.

SpotlessMedia produced an attractive site with low-bandwidth animation, a cutting-edge menu system, and content-managed pages that allowed untrained staff to keep the site up-to-date with little effort.

However, the performance of the website became sluggish as the Access database filled-up. Across the Divide Expeditions wanted their site overhauled to help them deliver a more tightly focused and higher-value client base. Impressed with the way SpotlessMedia handled the first project, the company turned to them again.

SpotlessMedia was briefed to make the site fast, secure, and accessible, as well as ensuring that untrained staff could update at least 90% of it when they needed to.

For Across the Divide's new website, SpotlessMedia hand-coded a Content Management System, hooked-up to a state-of-the-art SQL Server database. This gives the website dynamic pages that adapt themselves to suit the way customers search for information – as well as allowing search engines to access the relevant content.

The site's new navigation tool consists of a main menu down the left-hand side and dynamic, contextual menus that rearrange themselves along the top of the page. And thanks to a quick search facility, users can reach the page they need within two clicks.

SpotlessMedia also created a more neutral colour scheme for the web design.

## Outcome

Websites are absolutely essential in the travel industry. And now, thanks to the input and expertise of SpotlessMedia, Across the Divide Expeditions has a premium site which not only looks stunning and builds company credibility, but also provides the very latest information on its charity challenges and adventure destinations. What's more, the site's sophisticated search tools mean it's much more user-friendly, so casual browsers and experienced travelers can quickly and easily find a life-changing adventure.

## Key learning points

Across the Divide Expeditions attracts a substantial amount of business and prides itself on offering its clients the very best. Ideally, it would like to encourage fewer, more high-value clients. To do this it used design expertise to improve the company's message and help strengthen, maintain and focus their leading position in their market place.



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If you would like more information on the South West Design Programme, please call

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