

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

EVENT MARKETING

STRATEGY IN 2022

EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY IN 2022

The events industry today, compared to just a few years ago, is more data-driven, more community-oriented, and much more precise at accomplishing specific business goals.

But with this newly reformed events industry must come newly refined *event marketing strategies*. The most popular pre-pandemic event marketing techniques are far less effective today.

The following comprehensive event marketing guide explores the most impactful techniques for B2B and B2C, covering hybrid, virtual, and in-person events.

WHY EVENT MARKETING?

Whether it is a conference, *trade fair*, webinar or *workshop*, a well-run event does wonders for brand reputation. Events increase brand awareness and credibility while strengthening bonds between clients and partners.

They establish businesses as experts in their field, build invaluable business communities, provide unrivalled networking opportunities, generate new leads and sales, and convert customers. But to actualise those vast benefits, the event marketer must excel in their role.

EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY 101

Outside of Woodstock and the occasional out-of-control teenager's house party, events in the real world rarely "sell themselves". In reality, successful events take meticulous planning, strategizing, optimisation, refinement, and frankly, a little bit of luck.

Be suspicious of industry fads. You will find other event strategy guides promising that the future is in hybrid events, promoting big experiential showpieces, or advocating one-size-fits-all solutions to event marketing.

The truth is that format fads come and go, the industry is still in rapid flux, and there is no single master key that can unlock all the doors to event marketing success.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Thanks to new technologies and new data streams, hyper-specific business goals are more achievable than ever. That is great news for anyone looking to put together an event, because not only does it allow them to *measure success* more accurately, but it enables much more effective marketing strategy.

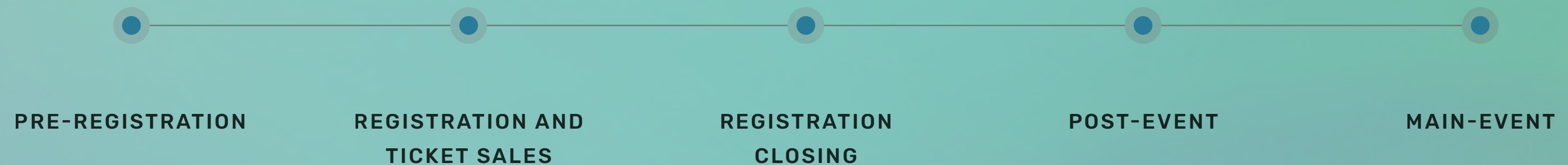
Both event managers and event marketers should *always* start with their ultimate business goals and work backwards.

A TIMELINE FOR

EVENT MARKETING

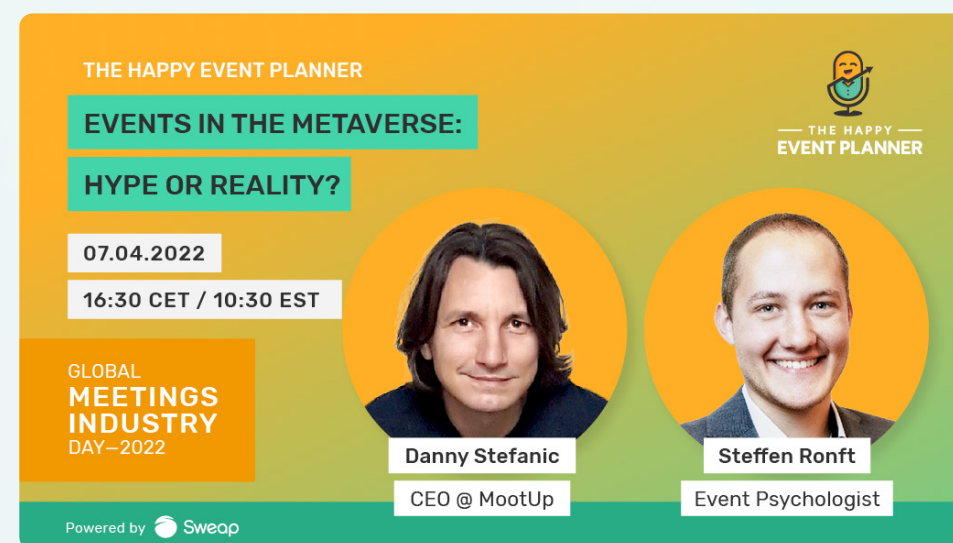
From pre-event registrations to the final call, *event marketing is time critical*.

Marketers' approach, channels, and tone should change considerably depending on which stage of the process they are at and how close the event is.



STAGE 1: PRE-REGISTRATION

Event awareness and hype building should begin long before money is being accepted for ticket sales. At this pre-launch stage, marketers should be concentrating on gauging interest, stimulating intrigue, generating buzz, and laying the foundations of community.



A well-designed email invitation with a catchy event title will create buzz, engage your target group and increase registrations.

The Happy Event Planner – Events in the Metaverse: Hype or Reality?

STAGE 2: REGISTRATION AND TICKET SALES

It is at this stage where all marketing channels should go into overdrive. Talk to the press, hire influencers, publish blogs, share press releases, pay for targeted ads – all of the marketing bread-and-butter that the marketing team should know and love.

STAGE 3: REGISTRATION CLOSING

Perhaps this would be more accurately referred to as stage 2.5, but we have given it a distinct category because it requires a distinct approach. In the final few days and weeks of maximising ticket sales and registrations, a shift in strategy is required. More on this later.

STAGE 4: THE MAIN EVENT

While a marketer's core responsibilities may be over and done with, they still have vital roles to play during the event itself. These responsibilities are both outward looking (ensuring plans go off without a hitch, facilitating press, etc.) and inward looking (gathering feedback from attendees, damage control, real time analyses, etc.).

STAGE 5: POST-EVENT

Just when you thought it was safe to put your feet up and relax! Marketers should play a key function in the post-event stage, including data analysis, sharing photo and video highlights, gathering more feedback, sending emails, and beginning to lay the foundations for next year.

10 TOP TIPS FOR

EVENT MARKETING

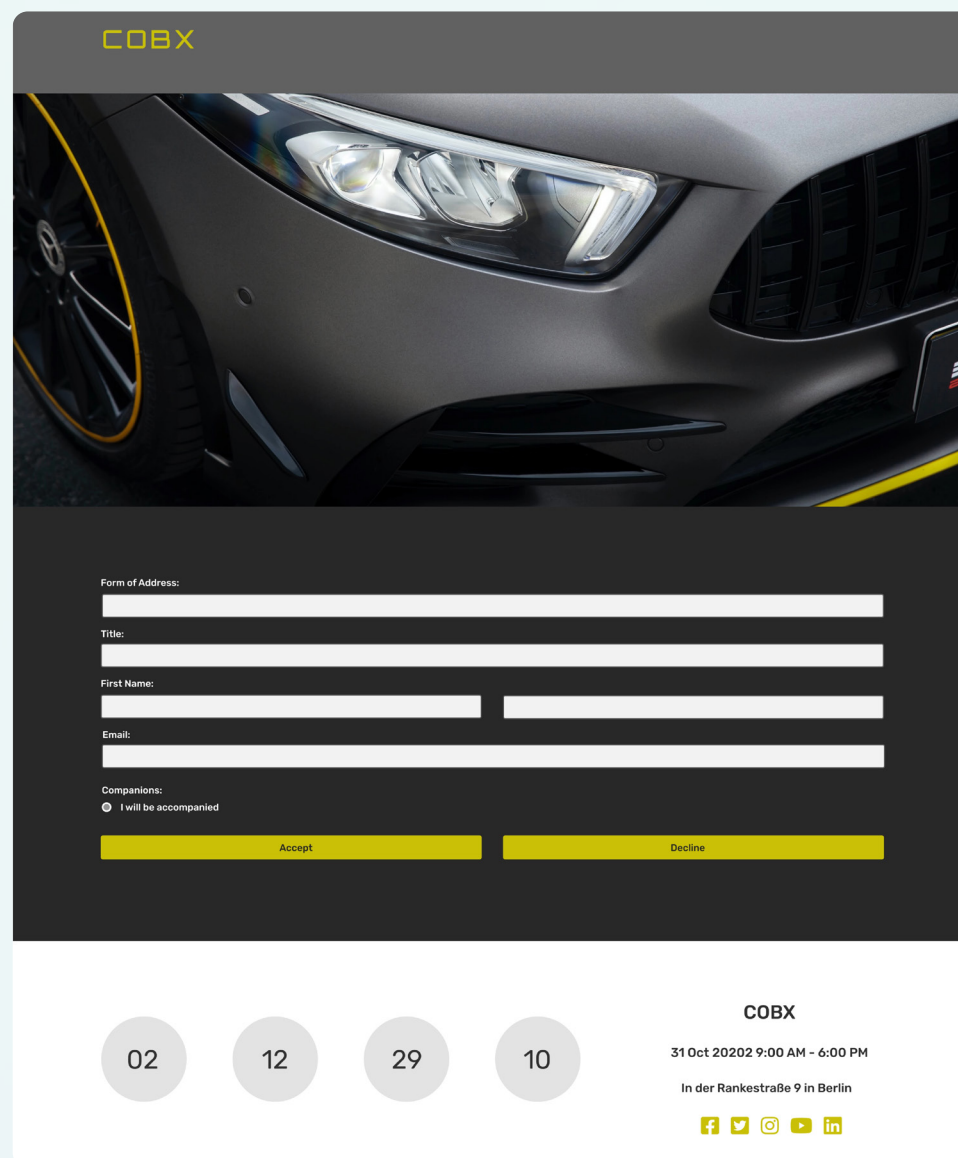
STRATEGY

As previously mentioned, there is no single one-size-fits-all event marketing solution. And further below, we will examine specific advice for the differing event formats. First though, these are 10 event marketing tactics that can be reliably applied across the board.

Combine the following event marketing strategies with your own industry knowledge, and you will be in good stead for most audiences, formats, and event objectives.

#1 START EARLY

Event awareness and hype building should begin long before money is being accepted for ticket sales. At this pre-launch stage, marketers should be concentrating on gauging interest, stimulating intrigue, generating buzz, and laying the foundations of community.



The registration page is the foundation for converting attendees.

#2 CONDUCT TARGET GROUP RESEARCH

Event marketing is all about reaching, understanding, and engaging your ideal audiences. Putting on an event of any significant size entails reaching out beyond your established network to bring in new clients, leads, and sales.

You might think that you know your target market, but how well do you know them? Successful event marketing requires an understanding of potential attendees' motivations, habits, goals, preferred platforms, and [budgets](#). Segment potential target audiences into subgroups and walk in the shoes of each. Take the time to truly learn what those subgroups are looking for, as well as what they are looking to avoid. In light of the pandemic, be sure to keep in mind guests' potential social anxieties and health concerns.

Your goal, for a corporate event, is not to cram as many attendees through the door as possible. It is about attracting the right people for your objectives. So, constantly remind yourself of the objectives of the event and how they tie into broader organisational objectives. Is the event's primary focus ticket sales, brand building, or leads? The more accurately you can target would-be attendees based on how they connect to these objectives, the more successful the event will be overall.

#3 AUTOMATE THE MUNDANE (EVENT SOFTWARE AND TOOLS)

A recent [comprehensive report](#) into event management revealed just how underused event automation software *still* is in 2022. While most in the industry

have at least some of their processes automated, there is still a breadth and depth of potential for automating more mundane, repetitive, trivial, and time-consuming tasks.

Not only does automation save time, money, and energy but there are many tasks that machine learning and automation software can simply perform better. What might take a team a day could take the right software a mere matter of moments. Though fear not, humans – those of us in the events industry are not obsolete just yet. What turns a good marketer into a great marketer is their ability to truly understand their clientele. And with automation tools handling the mundane aspects of event marketing, that frees up the team for all the tasks that benefit from a human touch.

#4 USE THE POWER OF EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing might seem old fashioned in today’s age of TikTok micro-influencers and hyper-targeted AR ads, but the old juggernaut has been evolving with the times. In event marketing, email is your best friend – it is a direct channel to customers who are able to respond at their own leisure.

Email marketing should cover the entirety of an event’s lifecycle. Carefully crafted periodic emails should start with early bird offers to those who have pre-registered and then continue through the lead up, execution, and follow-up of the event. There are plenty of updates worthy of an email: the announcement of a new speaker, deals and competitions, requests for feedback, new entertainment, weather warnings, competitions, and just about anything else.

SWEAP’S ACE TIP: Of course, there can be too much of a good thing. The best solution to getting that Goldilocks balance just right? Put the recipients in control. Let them choose which communications they want so you can continue to maximise CTR while simultaneously minimising unsubscribes.

Create Email Campaign

Email •
[dropdown]

Time of dispatch •
[calendar icon] [clock icon]

Description
[text area]

Recipients •

- ☐ All Guests
- ☐ Guests who are not yet invited
- ☐ Invited guests who have not replied
- ☐ Guests who accepted the invitation
- ☐ Guests who declined the invitation
- ☐ Guests who have checked in
- ☐ Guests who accepted but did not show up

Categories
Empty = all [dropdown]

Duplicate recipients solution
One guest [dropdown] [help icon]

☐ Ignore Unsubscribe [help icon]

Create Cancel

Automation: A easy-to-use email campaign builder saves you time and increased efficiency.

Email marketing is the perfect example of an area in which to adopt widespread automation; today there are incredible [email marketing tools](#) available that will save your team weeks of work. These tools use personalised email drip sequences, segmentation, and data analysis. There are no vanity metrics in email marketing, so remember to always keep an eye on optimisation potential.

#5 PUT DATA AT THE HEART OF EVENT STRATEGY

Unfortunately, not all areas of event marketing are free from vanity metrics, with social media being the worst offender. Your team should be data literate and having in-house data specialists will be of huge benefit. Though even without them, today's data tools make the analysis and optimisation of events more accessible than ever.

Actionable metrics tracking registrations, sales, leads, and revenue can all be handled through [bespoke tools](#). They can be applied to nearly all aspects of the process, allowing events to be tied to highly specific business goals. At its core, data analysis and optimisation are all about discovering what specifically works and what does not; events have long life cycles making them the ideal territory for the deployment of such tools.

#6 PUT COMMUNITY AT THE FOREFRONT

Closely tied to knowing your target groups is the idea of [event community](#). Establishing a community at Day Zero of event planning and asking them what they want will not only make your event more likely to be valuable for them, but it will invest them in the success of the event itself. Attendees will be much more likely to engage in and share an event if they feel they were a part of its success.

In the last couple of years of being separated from our support networks, a sense of community is more valued than ever. Constantly ask yourself, what is

in it for my guests? Do not think in terms of "What features will my event have?" but "What benefits will it provide to attendees?"

There are plenty of tricks and tips for stimulating and facilitating community.

Here are just a few:

- Encourage attendee-generated and attendee-shared content such as event videos, photos, social media posts, and testimonials.
- Centre your event around a specific hashtag that will unite disparate members of the community.
- Facilitate networking through social events, warmers, mixers, and even introduction systems for nervous solo attendees.
- Elicit feedback through surveys and other means to make attendee's opinions feel valued while simultaneously gathering vital data.
- Provide freebies, community discounts, exclusive content, and early access. Make attendees feel like they are part of a club. You can even put on smaller scale events to promote the main event.
- Create private groups across social media channels, professional networking platforms, and communication platforms. Use these groups to answer questions, ask for suggestions, and to keep your event at the forefront of guests' minds.

#7 GET CREATIVE (ENJOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT)

Event marketers have to wear many different hats to truly excel in their roles. What will be a relief to many is the chance to put their data analysis hats to one side and let their hair down with some fun and games.

Most events will deploy some sort of competition on the day, but there is no need to wait. Raffles, games, social media contests, caption competitions, giveaways, and photo contests are just a few ways to get people excited, engaged, and relaxed. They should be deployed before, during, and after an event – and the more fun and creative, the better.

SWEAP'S ACE TIP: Establish the winning criteria for social media competitions as the posts that garner the most [engagement](#). If you get even a few attendees caught up in the competitive element, then they will drive shares and likes and do a lot of your job for you.

Having big blockbuster shows or famous DJs has until recent years been a popular way of driving ticket sales. Be wary of how much of your resources are deployed towards making a corporate event an experiential splash – recent trends, especially in B2B, indicate that guests' priorities are currently much more focused on added business value.

#8 GET YOUR VOICE HEARD (AMPLIFY YOUR REACH)

Before reaching for the proverbial megaphone, double check that your messaging is perfect. Create a slick website without too much text and with a precise, highly visible USP. Ensure that user experience is [streamlined towards registration](#). And like all of your messaging, do all you can (closed captions, clear fonts, etc.) to make it accessible to those with disabilities.

Once all that is in place, it is time to amplify your reach. Though do not rush to reach for the same sales-heavy channels that have been saturated for years. In 2022, people want a more personal, human experience. Here are a few great ways to achieve that:

- Publish entertaining, informative, and conversational blogs that treat readers like people, not customers. Hire professional writers and content creators but have them work closely with your industry insiders so that they produce genuinely useful content that establishes you as a thought leader.
- Invite industry experts, partners, and even competitors to publish blogs on your site, potentially in exchange for blogs on theirs.
- Ensure all your content is search engine optimised (SEO) and tied to the internet habits discovered in your target group research.

- Fight monotony while extending reach by using different mediums and different channels. That includes interviews, podcasts, YouTube series, infographics, whitepapers, press releases, and even a gif or two.
- Deploy influencer marketing but rather than splashing out €3,000,000 on a tweet from Madonna on car manufacturing, instead enthuse some niche micro-influencers who are trusted experts in that field.
- These techniques are myriad, and so are their benefits. Most of them will not only increase reach and registrations, but generate buzz, engagement, brand credibility, and that vital sense of community.

#9 SPLASH SOME CASH (PAID PROMOTION)

A long event lifecycle allows you to test what is working and what is not before emptying the bank on paid promotion. Have a post that is organically performing well? That's the one you should seek to promote first.

Still, organic growth is usually too slow and requires a lot of energy. Time is money, and paid promotion, across its many modern forms, now tends to be targeted, fast, and effective. Social media ads, Google ads, influencer marketing, retargeted ads, and digital out-of-home advertising are just a few of the myriad options available in 2022. Knowing which combination to choose will be industry and target audience dependent. Be sure to evaluate each channel's performance regularly.

SWEAP'S ACE TIP: If you are utilising the services of influencers, look past their vanity metrics. Evaluate their current reach and engagement stats. Plus, take the time to explore their past campaigns for yourself before deciding if they are an appropriate and worthwhile choice.

#10 THE LAST CHANCE SALOON (LATE-STAGE REGISTRATIONS)

You have generated buzz, gotten the word out, and done everything you were supposed to do. The event is on soon, but you still have tickets to sell. No doubt you will have plenty of potential attendees who are interested but not committed. That means it's crunch-time.

It is part of human nature that a good deal of us are ditherers, delayers, and on-the-fencers. Converting interest into late-stage sales requires similar techniques (blogs, social media posts, email marketing campaigns) yet with a decidedly different tone. Any communications should emphasise the sense of "now or never" urgency. Use more direct CTAs and do not hesitate to deploy "social proof" by highlighting some of the other individual attendees or companies who have committed already.

Using your guest database and registration software, you should know who is close to committing. If you have their phone numbers, you can even give them a call. Never go so far that you seem desperate, but do not be afraid to give guests the dreaded FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

BONUS TIP: THE ART OF THE PRESS RELEASE

In event marketing, the power of the press release should never be underestimated. Be sure to share press releases with the media via established contacts, cold-emailing, and through dedicated portals used by journalists to find leads. The last of these make press releases searchable by industry and category. Even if a journalist does not write a dedicated article on your event, there is a great chance they will include it in their “Unmissable Events in the XYZ Industry” roundup piece.

Coverage by media outlets will not only lead to greater awareness and direct registrations, but their links will increase your SEO, potentially leading to a great many more indirect registrations. Formal press releases and coverage also add legitimacy that can help with the acquisition of sponsors and influencers.

The world in 2022 can never get enough content. There are always content writers, bloggers, and industry journalists looking for the next hot take. As a marketer, it is up to you to create a press release so irresistible that they won't be able to refuse writing about it. Here's how:

Include the most important details and a link to your event in the first paragraph. Journalists are almost as overworked as event marketers; the easier you make it for them to discover key details, the more likely they will be to cover the event.

If you are submitting press releases via email, **add a personalised introduction for each journalist and publication.**

It's 2022 not 2002; **always include the press release in the body of the email, not as an attachment.**

Don't make journalists search for their own event media, **include videos, images, and logos that they can download.**

Sell the benefits and significance of your event in a way that it seems like a “big deal” without getting to sales heavy. **Give the journalist some key figures and talking points, as well as a quote or two from a CxO.**

Get in the head of a journalist and think up a hook they could base their content on. Is your event the first of its kind? Is there something special about it? Will there be any celebrity guests or special performances? What makes your event more interesting than most?

Don't stop at one. Keep the press releases flowing when you have new updates. Release a minimum of one in each of the five stages mentioned in the introduction.

B2B vs. B2C

While historically disparate, B2B and B2C strategies are now more similar than ever. Advice for one is now largely applicable to the other. This is a result of pushback from people being treated as automatons or ATMs, when nearly **everyone prefers being communicated to as a valued individual.**



Of course, there should be a few differences in tone. B2B event marketing materials should present tangible business benefits. B2C event marketing should have a heightened focus on personal benefits and enjoyment.

EVENT MARKETING STRATEGIES

FOR DIFFERENT EVENT FORMATS

IN-PERSON EVENT MARKETING

Live events are [returning in a big way](#), the vast majority of event professionals plan to organise a live event soon and identify them as crucial to their overall marketing strategy.

Making a big splash with a showstopping headliner is now considered less worthwhile than providing attendees with a sense of community and added business value. Moreover, this “bigger is not always better” mentality can be applied to the events themselves – “micro events” can be cost-effective, easier to market, and just as impactful as a broadly targeted event.

VIRTUAL EVENT MARKETING

After multiple years of digital dominance during the pandemic, there is a sense of “Zoom fatigue” and frustration at the [virtual event format](#). People are yearning for more tangible connections. Of course, there remains a huge number of benefits to running virtual events. Yet for both event manager and event marketer it will take innovation to break the mould with an impactful event that leaves guests satisfied and impressed.

HYBRID EVENT MARKETING

Dozens, if not hundreds, of articles can be found singing the “best of both worlds” merits of the [hybrid event format](#). In reality, expecting two brilliant events for the price of one is completely unrealistic. In order to keep customers satisfied, event marketers must therefore tread the difficult tightrope of hyping their event while managing expectations. Use differing ticket pricing for each type of guest, make the format part of the attraction, create distinct web pages for each, and create unique content for each.

CLOSING

THOUGHTS

The pre-pandemic event marketing playbook, if not discarded completely, is in need of a major update. Refining your event marketing strategy in 2022 requires a return to the drawing board and truly coming to terms with the latest trends and technologies. Understanding and adapting to these new opportunities will have attendees flocking to your doors, virtual or otherwise.

Your event marketing strategy will highly benefit from a tool that offers you communication and promotion features, event registration pages and data insights. Take a look and find out how Sweap can help you.

EXCHANGE INSIGHTS

WITH WORLD-CLASS

#EVENTPROFS

Join our exclusive community for advanced event management so that you can gain the knowledge of major event teams.

Join Community



— THE HAPPY —
EVENT PLANNER



Sweap
Rankestraße 9
10789 Berlin

Tel +49 (0)30 99 404 52 77
E-Mail info@sweap.io
Support support@sweap.io

www.sweap.io

© Sweap 2022. All rights reserved.