

CASE STUDY

Clearwater International Team Event - One Business

September 2021



1331
EVENTS

Clearwater International ups its game to engage employees at its Ibiza team event

Corporate finance firm Clearwater International advises clients around the globe about mergers and acquisitions. It is growing rapidly, expanding by 25% since 2019.

Its annual team event is always an important date in the calendar. In 2021 it was even more important. After more than a year of COVID-enforced restriction of face-to-face meetings, many of the team had only ever met each other in digital spaces.

Emma Hughes, Clearwater's Head of Marketing, engaged 1331 Events to help her deliver what she hoped would be the best event yet, to be held over three days in September 2021 in Ibiza.

It needed to go like clockwork and, as their new Head of Marketing, Emma wished to show that the brand was in safe hands. The Clearwater International Team Event – One Business, Ibiza 2021 would also be the first opportunity for new CEO Julian Brown to bring his global team together in one place and present his vision for the business.

Olivia Labrey and Amy Calvert from 1331 Events took on the brief for a complex multi-day international event that would bring together 230 people, from 17 offices and nine different countries – and they set out to help Emma make it unforgettable.

The brief had two levels. Emma explained “Our team works incredibly hard. Corporate finance is a tough industry. People work long hours, as they must, to be there when the client needs them. The first part of our brief to Amy and Olivia was that this event was to say ‘thank you’, to make sure our staff had an amazing time, and didn't have to worry about

anything at all.”

The second priority was to ensure that the business achieved its objectives of engaging and motivating their international team. “This is a unique opportunity each year for our team to form connections with each other. People need to be able to reach out not just in their own countries but to other offices to find investors and buyers for a client business, and to learn from each other. Internal relationships are very important. Building bonds has real business impact in our company.”





Complex feat of organisation

Emma could see that she had made a smart choice from early in the process. “They gave me huge confidence in the venue recommendations – because usually you never know what it will be like until you get there. When team 1331 did their site visit, they not only filmed it all, but even took pictures of the meals they ate. It was a fantastic job, and I now have absolute faith in the venues they pick.”

While PAs around the company fixed hundreds of flights to Ibiza from nine other countries, 1331 Events connected the travel to every other aspect of the event. It was a huge logistical challenge. With just a small team of two supporting her, Emma had recognised that the increased size of event would make it hard to manage without expert help. “When the marketing team organised this previously, there were fewer people.”

Handing off the end-to-end event organisation meant that Emma and Julian could work with 1331 Events on decisions such as the final venue selections, menus and wine selections, and team organisation – which were quite time-consuming enough. She recalled “Knowing it was in good hands meant that I could relax. We had spent hours working with Liv and Amy in the run-up, but once on site it was all hands off. Whatever question was asked, they always had the answer.”

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Every little detail matters

Part of the job of any events agency is to handle all the details and logistics – but 1331 Events delivered more. Emma reflected that “They did many things I didn’t even know about, including tiny little details like putting our room key cards in a branded envelope. They clearly have a great eye for detail – such as knowing how to dress a venue, and the impact that creates. They organised entertainment at every dinner, which people really didn’t expect. It took everybody by surprise.”

Emma related how the team coped even when those detailed plans went awry. “I can only imagine what organising this would have been like without 1331 – it saved us a huge amount of time. We had to move the date several times due to COVID, and each time they helped renegotiate contracts with hotels and restaurants.”

They continued to adapt to circumstances throughout the event, she continued “While we were there, not only were all the clubs closed but the government suddenly changed its COVID curfew policy, and we had two activities cancelled thanks to wind. Olivia and Amy just arranged alternatives – they always think of a solution and are flexible.”

Corporate gifts are a popular part of any event, but they must be of good quality and have some style – which is not always the case. Emma had no qualms. She recalled, “As a client it’s wonderful to know that Amy and Olivia have quality in mind. When they send me options for drink bottles or other giveaways, I can have absolute confidence it will be the best available. I won’t get a list of generic branded merchandise. They thought of everything, including sourcing directly from Ibiza, Spain, or the EU so we had no post-Brexit tax issues, and everything arrived on time.”

Event costs must be managed carefully and continuously. Emma said she wasn’t worried about the costs getting out of control. “Amy and Olivia were completely on top of budgets – that is hugely important for any business. I’ve worked with events agencies in the past where that wasn’t true, but 1331 Events gave me complete confidence that everything was being handled.”



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Emma Hughes, Head of Marketing, Clearwater International

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Engaging the team

With engagement as an important part of the brief, 1331 Events placed this at the heart of their event strategy. Previous events had featured team activities, but 1331 proposed something more comprehensive: the Clearwater Olympics. Emma told us that “Team activities in the past have split people into teams during the event. This time, Amy and Olivia proposed splitting them into teams beforehand, and creating a competition that would run before and through the event. It worked brilliantly – it formed new bonds even before the team got there.”

Ensuring that every individual felt included and equal was part of the plan. The Clearwater Olympics was designed not only to engage and enthuse attendees to work together across geographies, but to mix individuals of all levels. Emma observed that “There was something for everybody throughout and everybody mixed and talked to each other during team activities and during dinners. It made everybody feel included.”

1331 Events also created an app for the Ibiza team event. This new approach went down well. “The leader board on the app got everyone excited – this team loves a competition! They had opportunities to win points before the event with things like naming their team and then choosing and assigning team members to five activities. 1331 pitched these at just the right level, including everything from beach sports to wine tasting – then teams earned points from doing them and answering questions about them.”





Planning for the next adventure in Montreux 2022

Event success was evident even before the team left Ibiza after their three days of bonding. Emma told us “The overwhelming feedback straight away was that this was by far the highest quality event any had been to before.” Post-event feedback survey results only confirmed this.

Reflecting on the 2021 event, Emma said “I was absolutely overjoyed by how it ended up, and the positive feedback we got from across the business. It was the best first representation for Julian that we could have had. The quality of service that we deliver for our clients, 1331 Events delivered for us.”

Plans are underway for the next team event, to be held in Montreux in the autumn. It will be larger than ever, since Clearwater’s team has now grown to around 300 people. Emma has challenged 1331 Events to make the next adventure even better. She concluded “We have contracted Amy and Olivia to do even more next year, and I know I can be more hands off. They ran our event with such style and grace, always in control and calm even when things don’t go quite to plan. We trust them so much now. I feel much calmer going into planning the event this year because they have everything handled.”

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Contact

e: info@1331events.com

t: +44 (0)7930 377 128

w: www.1331events.com