

Celebrate the Morgan: How Do You Measure Success?

The work has been done; the fun has been had; now, how do you know whether or not your "Celebrate the Morgan" event was successful?

The most obvious answers to that question are: Did anyone come and did they have a good time? Seriously, that's really what it's all about: getting people to see and experience Morgans and the lifestyle that goes with owning a Morgan, or two, or ten.

After considering the obvious, look a little deeper. What goals did you set when you planned your event? Did you write them down and did you achieve them? Did the media cover your event? If so, that's a huge plus, but it's not the sole definition of success. Did you gather names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for your mailing list? Were you able to educate those not familiar with Morgans as to what the breed is all about? Do more people in your local area know about you now than before your event?

The answers to these questions are measurements of how successful your event was to your marketing campaign. Now that "Celebrate the Morgan 2005" is over, what you do now counts just as much as what you did before the event. Keep that momentum going. Hopefully you collected e-mail or postal addresses. Use them to stay in touch with everyone you met.

This is a good time to start an electronic newsletter. Include digital photographs from the event and describe what went on at your event. Make the newsletter come alive. A word of caution, however, be sure not to send too many photographs, as there are still lots of people with dial-up Internet service and photos take a long time to download.

Make sure your name, farm name, phone number, and e-mail address are visible in the newsletter. Include an open invitation to call to arrange a time for another visit.

Draft and send a media release describing the success of your event. Include one or two great digital photographs (in the highest resolution possible), and names of local people who attended. One caveat: be sure to get permission, in writing, before sending the news media photographs or names of anyone other than yourself.

This also is the time to review your event in writing. Be completely honest with yourself: what worked and what didn't? What would you do differently next time? What other things could you do? The best time to make a new plan is when everything is still fresh in your mind.

If things didn't go the way you hoped, do some serious soul-searching to determine why. Did you publicize the event enough and early enough so people had time to plan? Did you describe the event so people really understood what would be happening and viewed it as something not to be missed? Was your event something not to be missed or was it "ho hum"? Would it have been better to plan something in concert with others? Think long and hard about what didn't work and what you need to do to turn things around next year. Sometimes our best intentions just don't end up the way we hoped. There's no reason to be discouraged, learn from this and move forward.

How about the media? What media coverage did you get? What had you done to court the media? What would you do the same next year and what would you do differently? Stay in touch with all the media contacts you made. Send them regular updates about Morgan events (yours and those in your area) and continue to invite them and their families to visit you and your Morgans.

It's not too early to begin planning for next year. Find out what others did, talk to them, and learn how things went. Adopt all the good ideas and expand upon them. Keep up

with what other breeds are doing as well. Often you'll find activities and events you can copy. Remember, imitation is the most sincere compliment.

As you see, there are several ways to measure the success of Celebrate the Morgan. The most significant of which is did you meet pre-established goals? Did people have a good time, learn about Morgans and the Morgan lifestyle, and do you have the potential of new prospects?

Hopefully your answer to all these questions is, "yes." If not, don't despair, begin thinking about how to make it better next year. If everything worked out just the way you hoped, congratulations! Keep up the good work!

Celebrate the Morgan Event Questionnaire

Here are questions to ask yourself to measure the success of your Celebrate the Morgan event:

1. Did you establish realistic goals before planning your Celebrate the Morgan event?
2. Did you commit those goals to writing?
3. Did people attend the event?
4. Did they have a good time?
5. Were you able to introduce the breed and Morgan lifestyle to people who haven't experienced it in the past?
6. Did other Morgan owners attend the event and learn more about the Morgans and services you have to offer?
7. Was there media coverage? If so, what worked? If not, why?
8. Have you developed media contacts that will be helpful in other events and endeavors?
9. Did you add names, addresses, e-mail, and phone numbers to your contact list?
10. Do you now have a mailing list, or a larger mailing list, for your newsletter and marketing collateral?

11. Have you written a review of your event? Have you honestly and realistically evaluated the positives and the negatives?
12. Have you made detailed notes as to what you need to change for next year?
13. Have you talked to others or read about other Celebrate the Morgan events to get new ideas?
14. Does it make sense to partner with others for next year's event?
15. Did you and everyone else involved in your event have a good time or were some people more stressed than others? If so, why? What do you need to do to change that?
16. Was your timeline accurate? Did you have adequate time to plan and execute things in the best possible way?
17. What new people, groups, or media do you want to target for 2006? What will be of most interest to them?
18. Did you sell anything?
19. Has the phone rung?
20. What suggestions do you have as to how AMHA can support you even more in 2006?