

Start ‘Seeing Red Cars’ and focusing on what you *DO* want

To get more of what you want you have to focus on what you want. It sounds simple, but it’s not.

For 17 years I’ve worked with people and teams in transition, dealing with dynamic change. I always start out by asking them how the change looks from their perspective, and then I ask what they want. Invariably, they tell me what they *don’t* want and what they hope to avoid. It happened with such frequency I began noticing the pattern. After explaining to hundreds of people over the years that you get more of *whatever* you focus on, whether positive or negative, I longed for a memorable way to illustrate the point.

A few years ago our company, On Impact Productions, realized that visual images and storytelling could make the difference. Seeing Red Cars is a 10-minute film based on the metaphor of a red car. Here’s the premise: You go out and buy a red car and as you’re driving it home you notice something. Everywhere you look you see red cars – there’s one, there’s another one, there’s another ... it’s almost like the only color car on the road is red! Why is that? You’re focusing on red cars, and therefore you see them in every direction.

The same concept applies to you. At work and in your daily life you get more of whatever you focus on. The problem is, focusing on the negative is an unconscious, natural reaction. In order to focus on the positive, you need to *intentionally* focus your conscious thoughts and actions on your desires and use frequent reminders to keep them there. Your ultimate success relies on your ability to manage each moment—the small things you encounter throughout every day that add up to accomplishing what you want. Things like a positive outcome for the next meeting and a desired result from a conversation or email. All these small wins add up to big victories!

Over the past several years the film Seeing Red Cars has helped hundreds of organizations impact change or implement important initiatives. In 2011 a companion book was published to help people take a deeper dive into the “how-to’s” of a positive-outcomes mindset: *Seeing Red Cars—Driving Yourself, Your Team and Your Organization to a Positive Future*. The film and book are perfectly timed for what is going on in the marketplace today. If there ever was a time when people were focused on what they do not want to have happen, this is it.

We are constantly amazed at the multitude of ways that leaders, trainers, coaches and human resource professionals have used the Seeing Red Cars film and book to launch and sustain important change initiatives or enhance existing programs. We have received calls from India, the Baltic states, Taipei, The Netherlands, Dubai—plus many North American businesses and organizations that have used Seeing Red Cars when they need more than understanding from their people—they need meaningful engagement and behavior change. Here are two examples:

- A division manager called a meeting announcing her decision to close an entire branch. She showed the film Seeing Red Cars and then separated the staff into small groups. Each group leader recorded the “I Wants” of the group. The information was then shared with the larger group. The “I Want” statements set the tone and revealed the range of emotions being felt by the attendees. There was a visible change in body language as the audience relaxed. In the days following the meeting the leader received an outpouring of emails thanking her for her leadership through the difficulty of closing the branch. Today the company uses the book to

delve deeper and assist their people in defining their go-forward direction, thus turning the Seeing Red Cars insight into actions and the outcomes needed to be successful.

- A school district superintendent showed the film Seeing Red Cars at the kickoff meeting when all principals, teachers and administrative staff were present. One principal got very excited and built a full-year program. He divided the Seeing Red Cars digital activities and supplementary materials into 40 weeks and used them as regular reminders of the top three “I Want” goals that each of his staff members had written at the beginning of the school year. He had a local bakery prepare red Cadillac car cookies to hand out on the first day, and everyone rallied around the goals with high energy and upbeat attitudes that carried throughout the entire school year. Today, the district uses the Seeing Red Cars Toolkit from the book to guide its actions and monthly one-on-ones.

People have used the film at the beginning, middle or end of important kickoff meetings to get the audience in the right frame of mind, focusing on their desired outcomes, and beginning to work together. To keep the messages alive, they use a combination of the book and accompanying support materials over a period of time, such as once a week. All package contents are customizable for any organization, such as: “Seeing Red Cars for Safety” or “Seeing Red Cars for Customer Service Excellence.”

It’s time to influence positive change. Incorporate Seeing Red Cars whenever you need to create an environment of positive change for an audience or team that needs to get clear about goals or expectations. Amazing things can happen when people focus with intention on their “I Wants” and then connect with the organization’s larger priorities.