The Leadership Challenge™

EPIC Software Corporation uses only the finest Leadership Development techniques. Based on years of empirical research, The Leadership Challenge™ provides our clients with everything from foundational leadership skills through exemplary practices of the finest leaders. The assessments used provide both a mirror to reflect a leader's fundamental leadership style and an understanding of how well they perform as a leader in the eyes of their people.

The Leadership Challenge™ originated from a Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner research project. Jim and Barry wanted to know what people did when they were at their "personal best" in leading others. Their then radical assumption was that, by asking ordinary people to describe extraordinary experiences, they'd find patterns of success. And they did.

The "personal best" leadership experience survey consisted of open-ended questions requiring a few hours of reflection and expression. Jim and Barry initially collected more than 1,300 long and short surveys and conducted in-depth interviews. Since then, they've collected more than 70,000 cases.

In analyzing thousands of case studies, Jim and Barry uncovered The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership™ the common practices associated with personal bests. These Five Practices™ form the basis of The Leadership Challenge™ Workshop offered by EPIC Software. The experience begins with feedback from the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which has been called the "most reliable and valid instrument for leadership development" by the Center for Creative Leadership. The LPI is an empirical assessment tool, which has been used with over 250,000 leaders and more than a million of their constituents. More than 120 scientific studies have consistently confirmed the reliability and validity of the LPI and the Kouzes-Posner leadership framework.

The research is clear and the results are dramatic. Leaders who engage in The Five Practices™ get desirable results. They are more effective as leaders, more credible, more motivating, and they attain teamwork, esprit de corps, commitment, productivity, and lower turnover.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Beyond the horizon of time is a changed world, very different from today's world. Some people see beyond that horizon and into the future. They believe that dreams can become reality. They open our eyes and lift our spirits. They build trust and strengthen our relationships. They stand firm against the winds of resistance and give us the courage to continue the quest. We call these people leaders.
In their study, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner set out to discover what it took to become one of these leaders. They wanted to know the common practices of ordinary men and women when they were at their leadership best—when they were able to take people to places they'd never been before. Their analysis of thousands of cases and surveys revealed The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership:

**Model the Way**
Leaders establish principles concerning the way people (constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers alike) should be treated and the way goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. Because the prospect of complex change can overwhelm people and stifle action, they set interim goals so that people can achieve small wins as they work toward larger objectives. They unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory.

**Inspire a Shared Vision**
Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future.

**Challenge the Process**
Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. And because leaders know that risk taking involves mistakes and failures, they accept the inevitable disappointments as learning opportunities.

**Enable Others to Act**
Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

**Encourage the Heart**
Accomplishing extraordinary things in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make people feel like heroes.

“Reducing the threat to business continuity by developing tomorrow’s leaders today.”