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Schwab Paralympian Pushes Beyond 'Perceived Limitations'

By Tony Volpentest, Charles Schwab & Co, Inc.

I WAS BORN without hands or feet, but my dream was to walk, run and be the fastest in the world. My dream was to make a difference, become a voice, and challenge the stereotypes people have of others with disabilities. I am a firm believer that “if you can dream it, you can achieve it,” so I started running track at age 15. Even though I came in last at every race, running was a way to make friends. During my junior year, I was introduced to my “flex feet,” carbon-graphite feet which are bolted to prosthetics. By my senior year in high school, I was consistently coming in second- and third-place, running times close to Paralympic world records. I knew that if I concentrated and visualized myself running, I could break those world records.

As a four-time Paralympic Gold Medalist and five-time World Champion sprinter, I can say the most important lesson I learned on the track was the concept of pushing myself beyond my own perceived limitations. My competition was always just as passionate about winning as I, so when I was beaten in a race I would just bounce back by training with more focus and intensity. Athletics has taught me how to overcome adversity and take risks; it has also taught me how to not take things personally. I translated these values into my career with Charles Schwab. I came to work for Schwab because of its outstanding

reputation for customer support. I am a member of the Advisor Services Production Support Group. I apply those learned values from athletics to promote my ideas and help create a more functional environment, which I believe has made me a more productive team player and leader.

I've had the honor of being the recipient of several awards, including the International Olympic Committee Presidents Disabled Athletes Award. My greatest honors came this year: I was nominated to be inducted into the Olympic Hall of Fame, Class of 2012; I was a Team USA Athlete Ambassador and helped prepare the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic teams before their departure for London; and I was able to share my story more broadly through my memoir, *Fastest Man in the World: The Tony Volpentest Story*. As I look back, none of those honors would have been possible had I not pushed myself beyond my own limitations. **PDJ**



Chris Hamilton Photography

Failure is Never an Option for Strasburger & Price Partner

By Earsa R. Jackson, Partner, Head of Franchise & Distribution Team, Strasburger & Price, LLP

I am a big proponent of sports. Basketball and track taught me some valuable lessons which have translated well into my professional career. First and foremost, I developed the attitude that failure is not an option. The true champion always goes the extra mile to outwork the opponent. Performance doesn't just happen once you hit the court or the field, it begins when there is no crowd cheering you on, just guts and determination to train quietly so you can compete

at the top of your game.

I learned to never be comfortable. To be the best, you have to continually work to stay at the top. One must make a lifetime commitment to excellence to be successful.

Sports taught me teamwork. That skill has carried over nicely into my profession as I frequently must put teams together for client projects. Each client, like each game or competition, is different and requires special attention and preparation. No two clients are the same and

should never be treated as “routine.”

Sports taught me how to deal with adversity and challenges. Will you rise to the occasion or sit paralyzed thinking about the obstacle? The true champion needs no outside applause or cheer but is always able to dig a little deeper to overcome the challenge.

Every day in my profession, I am presented with my clients' problems and challenges. I must find ways to help them overcome obstacles. I must

design a game plan uniquely suited for the particular challenge.

I have to understand the client's end game before I can develop the best plan for my client.

I owe much of my professional success to sports. I attack each problem with the attitude that failure is not an option. Because of this attitude, I deliver superior outcomes for my clients. **PDJ**

