

PERSEVERANCE: BUSINESS LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BLACKHAWKS



Like many Chicagoans, I am a die-hard Blackhawks fan. Their recent loss in the Stanley Cup Playoffs was both shocking and unexpected, and it's only a minor exaggeration to say that the next few days felt like a mourning period.

The Blackhawks' loss may have been tough, but it doesn't define them. I, for one, have a renewed appreciation for this amazing franchise and I believe the rest of Chicago does too. As I walk downtown I can't help but notice the sea of Blackhawks jerseys and hoodies, worn in support and admiration of a team that has given us three Stanley Cups in the past seven years.

One of the great things about our city has always been its perseverance. Its loyalty. Its determination to rise above and come back stronger. As people, we reflect on past stumbles, learn from them, and apply them in all aspects of our lives.

Not surprisingly, these values carry over into how we do business. What the Blackhawks stand for and their approach to leadership inspire and guide me in building stronger client relationships, fine-tuning leadership skills, and growing CTS Financial Group.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW LESSONS I'VE LEARNED FROM THE BLACKHAWKS OVER THE YEARS THAT I USE IN BUSINESS EVERYDAY:

- **Amazing things can be accomplished through teamwork.** When individuals come together to form a powerful team, they are capable of extraordinary feats – including bringing the Stanley Cup to Chicago for the first time in close to 50 years. At CTS, we are a diverse group of individuals with many unique skills, working together on personal finance and wealth management, with the single-minded goal of helping you reach your unique financial goals.
- **Leadership comes in unexpected shapes and sizes.** Jonathan Toews was just 20 when he was appointed team captain, and he has adeptly lead the Blackhawks with mental fortitude, versatility of skill and attitude, and his “can do” spirit. As a leader, you can't underestimate anyone's capabilities based on age or skill. It's important to keep your eyes and ears open to the potential of your team.
- **Strong leaders inspire others to be the best people that they can be.** Like Toews, our CTS leaders, Todd Much and Chuck Marien, lead by example. My brother, Chris, and I follow their inspiration and their methodology with our own teams, fostering an incredible work culture and environment dedicated to personalized client service.
- **We are all players and coaches.** There is no such thing as saying “that's not my job.” Not on a hockey team and certainly not in the service business. At CTS, even the directors take part in the day-to-day tasks that could be handled by others – to continue to share knowledge, build trust, and keep our fingers on the pulse of client relationships.
- **There is no substitute for a strong work ethic.** There are no short cuts. There are no overnight sensations. Work hard. Keep your head in the game and serve as a positive role model for others. At CTS, we firmly believe that trust is earned and that integrity is non-negotiable.

LAST AND CERTAINLY NOT LEAST, it's important to remember that as a leader or a member of a firm, you're not just part of a team. The Blackhawks never forget who they represent, and their service to the city is met with unwavering loyalty. In business, you have a responsibility beyond just the firm to the community you serve. At CTS, we are proud to live and work in Chicago and be a part of this extraordinary city. The Blackhawks have reminded us that in sports, in business, and in life, the race isn't a sprint – it's a marathon. The key is to enjoy the journey and learn a few lessons along the way.

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