



"The first rule of CrossFit," as the wisecrack goes, "is always talk about CrossFit."

This aphorism was born from the stereotype that those that engage with the sport develop a devoted, almost cult-like appreciation for the high-intensity, constantly varied functional movements.

TOTO, WE'RE NO LONGER IN KANSAS

Having never visited a CrossFit gym, this author found herself walking through the open garage of a large, manufacturing-looking building with a CrossFit sign.

From a visual standpoint, I was taken aback by how bare-bones the operation was. The walls were stripped, a stark contrast to gyms I'm familiar with, which seem to have mirrors or televisions on every vertical square inch.

In place of standard commercial gym equipment like treadmills, stationary bikes, and ellipticals were medicine balls, pushing sleds, weighted vests, boxes, kettlebells, and ropes hanging from the ceiling.

But, Toto, how I knew we weren't in Kansas anymore was when I witnessed the gym interactions. The uniform we've all worn in a standard gym setting is "head down, earphones in, ignore the room." The main level of socializing is when you accidentally meet eyes with a stranger in one of the wall mirrors.

But here, a ripple of community flowed in the air as various body types and ages high-fived, congratulated, and challenged each other.

At that moment, I understood how someone could turn this into a life-long passion, which is precisely what our interview subject, Victory Grips CEO Victor Pellegrino, has done.

CONSTANT EVOLUTION

Victor Pellegrino is much like a CrossFit gym: approachable, free from unnecessary flair, with an innate desire to help.

While he did mention in our initial interview that he has a background in gymnastics, he failed to include what Google research did.

Vic traveled the world as a stuntman and entertainer for a decade, went to graduate school at the Savannah College of Art and Design, and worked as a research analyst and then strength and conditioning coach-- all before founding Victory Grips. Vic did do competitive gymnastics. He's also a former US Marine.



He's channeled his varied and unique background into his business model: constant evolution.

ZERO EXCESS

Victory Grips are as stripped down as the CrossFit gym walls, containing zero excess to ensure wrist and finger movements are unhindered and athlete performance is enhanced.

Trelleborg joined Vic on his journey as a partner that would help him continually evolve the grip material based on field data and feedback, all while keeping the



TRELLEBORG COATED MATERIAL IN FUNCTIONAL FITNESS GRIPS

manufacturing in the United States.

Trelleborg New Product Development Engineer and fitness enthusiast Keaton Poole met Vic in 2016 at a Regional CrossFit Game Competition before working for Trelleborg. He immediately connected with Vic's passion and energy. He introduced Vic to a Trelleborg employee that encouraged him to give Trelleborg a call if he ever wanted to play around with the product material.

"Trelleborg values the partnership with Victory Grips, says Poole, "and has enjoyed working with Vic to develop one of Victory Grips' most successful product lines, Tactical. Tactical was almost branded as Gecko because it is substantially grippier than competing products. This grip is a Chlorosulphonated Polyethylene Rubber (CSM) on Kevlar®, providing superior strength while significantly reducing slippage. We look forward to future next-generation developments in this outstanding product line."



Collaboration and teamwork between Victory Grips and Trelleborg have led to the best material and substrate combination. Victory Grips offers an extensive line-up of designs with different grip styles and materials that include a matrix of considerations, including thickness, breathability, launderability, and abrasion resistance. Needs change based on user rep scheme volume, general comfort preferences, the bar type, and environmental conditions.



ACCELERATING TIME TO MARKET

The Trelleborg location Vic primarily works with is in Rutherfordton, North Carolina (USA). This facility has strategically invested in advanced design, prototyping, and production technologies, an invaluable service to customers like Victory Grips. The prototype labs significantly reduce the time and cost of creating functional coated fabric samples highly correlated to large-scale production equipment.

"I'm a firm believer that any one person is only as good as the people they surround themselves with, and I am very thankful for partnerships that share my growth mindset," says Victor Pellegrino. "The Trelleborg team continues to embrace the Victory Grips vision and has been fundamental in Victory Grips' cutting-edge products and phenomenal reputation in our market segment. The team we've built brings a unique combination of creativity, empathy, and technical expertise to the table, allowing us to continuously innovate and push industry standards to the next level."