

## Salesman Swept Out Door

Victor Kiam (1926 – 2001) was an American entrepreneur and the owner of the New England Patriots professional football team from 1988 to 1991. After attending Yale and Harvard Business School, Kiam became part of the Lever Brothers and Playtex company.

He first made his fortune as president and CEO of Remington Products, which he famously purchased after his wife bought him his first electric shaver.

Early in his career as a master salesman for Playtex, Kiam was selling girdles and bras in Mississippi.

One day, when he arrived at a small shop, he found the owner sweeping the floor. Kiam introduced himself, extended his hand, and paused. He was met with silence. Undaunted, he opened his sample case and began to make his pitch.

Suddenly, the store owner flew into a rage and he began sweeping Kiam out of his store. Within moments, Kiam found himself flat on his back, dust swirling around him.

Rather than fight back, Kiam was determined to find out why this man was so upset with him. He talked with other sales representatives and eventually got to the root of the problem. His predecessor had done *too good* a job, causing this man to become so overstocked with merchandise that too much of the man's capital was tied up in inventory.

Kiam immediately arranged for one of his larger accounts to purchase the man's excess inventory at cost.

Kiam not only received a very warm greeting the next time he showed up with his sample case, but he had made a friend.

One of the best ways to build any relationship is to help another person solve his or her problem.

*Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts (Proverbs 24:3-4).*

– Beecher Hunter

