

# Klean Katch Finds A New Purpose Among Dark Days of COVID-19

**PAYCHEX**  
Business  
Series

Coronavirus



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Klean Katch

## Full transcript

**Gene Marks:**

Hi everyone and welcome back to the Paychex Business Series podcast. My name is Gene Marks. I'm a certified public accountant and regular business columnist for a bunch of publications that you probably know, like *The Guardian*, *The Hill*, *Forbes*, and *Entrepreneur*. But more importantly, I'm a small business owner. My 10-person company provides financial and technology management services, and I'm always in need of expert advice, which includes real-life advice from real-life business owners like myself on how they're handling the challenges of running their small businesses. And that's what this podcast is all about. So today I'm speaking to Tim Lyon from Klean Katch. Thank you so much, Tim, for joining me. First of all, tell us a little bit about Klean Katch. What do you guys do?

**Tim Lyon:**

So Klean Katch is a medical device company my wife and I started. It's all about creating a better healthcare experience for women. My wife had a kidney stone a couple of years ago, and we invented three devices that help a woman, when she's at the doctor's office, have a little better experience. And so it was starting to go really well, and then the virus hit.

**Gene Marks:**

Oh, sorry to hear that. Well, first of all, so the company itself, how long ago did you start it up?

**Tim Lyon:**

We actually started in May of 2017, but we really launched in February of 2019, when we launched into the market.

**Gene Marks:**

Got it. And what did you do in a previous life?

**Tim Lyon:**

Oh, wow. I was a banker. Unfortunately, I know that's a really bad word right now.

**Gene Marks:**

Right now, that is. People aren't so happy.

**Tim Lyon:**

I was a banker, but it was with a community bank, so that's a little bit better.

**Gene Marks:**

Ah, better.

**Tim Lyon:**

That was a family business. And then I got into the media business, publishing magazines and mobile apps and websites before I just happened to fall into inventing a couple of medical devices that we actually got patents on.

**Gene Marks:**

That's amazing. How did you know how to do that? I mean, your background is finance. Are you a science guy?

**Tim Lyon:**

I am not a science guy at all. Just necessity—so many things come out of necessity. My wife had, like I mentioned, a kidney stone. And they ask you to catch a kidney stone so they can test it. And there's nothing on the market for women. It's crazy, but it really bothered me. And so I invented two devices to help women catch kidney stones. And out of that came our third product, Klean Katch, that we launched. And every time a woman sees our product, they go, "Oh my gosh, why didn't I think of this? Or where has this been?" Healthcare is dominated by men, so they don't really think about the experience women have when they have to go to a doctor's office.

**Gene Marks:**

Yeah. That's really an interesting point. My wife also, she's had a couple of episodes with kidney stones as well. It ain't fun at all.

**Tim Lyon:**

No, not at all.

**Gene Marks:**

And you're right. The doctors, same advice. They wanted her to catch the kidney stone, and ... I wish I knew about you beforehand. So it's Klean Katch with a K: K-L-E-A-N K-A-T-C-H. And I guess you sell your devices online.

**Tim Lyon:**

We actually don't. We don't sell them online. It's really a business-to-business product. We sell to healthcares, hospitals, doctors' offices, places like that.

**Gene Marks:**

Got it. And is it just you and your wife, or do you have any other people working in the company?

**Tim Lyon:**

It is just my wife and I right now. Yes.

**Gene Marks:**

Got it.

**Tim Lyon:**

We have independent salespeople that represent us out in the marketplace, but actual in the company, it's just my wife and I.

**Gene Marks:**

And where are the devices made?

**Tim Lyon:**

In the USA, in the only place they will ever be made.

**Gene Marks:**

Ah, it's funny. Because I was expecting you to say China, which is going to lead me into like, "Oh-oh."

**Tim Lyon:**

No.

**Gene Marks:**

But all right. That's really good to hear.

**Tim Lyon:**

We have people come to us all the time: "Hey, I can save you a 5 cents or 10 cents." And we tell them all: "We'll eat that. We're not going outside. And we're especially not going to China." And that was a decision way before this virus came about. But we very proudly put on our products that they are made in the USA.

**Gene Marks:**

Good for you. Good for you. So, Tim, so the virus comes about, it hits, obviously, in the beginning to the middle of March. Where are you guys based? Where do you live?

**Tim Lyon:**

We're in Utah.

**Gene Marks:**

You're in Utah. Okay. So not in a hot zone, but still affected. How did that impact you?

**Tim Lyon:**

Well, greatly. So all of our salespeople and myself and the other people that represent us around the country, they deal with supply chain. So supply chain in healthcare immediately pivoted, really in February, to PPEs. And basically we got emails, phone calls telling us, "Don't come in. We don't want to see you. We don't want to talk to you. We're busy with other things. Plus we don't want anybody walking in potentially with the virus." So about the middle of February, our business came to a screeching halt.

**Gene Marks:**

And what did you do?

**Tim Lyon:**

Cried. No, we started to work on marketing stuff. So I had always heard that people who come out of a crisis ready to go are the people that succeed. So we started working internally on marketing material. We're revamping some of our stuff. We started to work on ... Right now we just have one of our three products on the market.

We've started to really work hard on the second product to get that ready for the market. But we just try to do stuff internally because really nobody in our industry will take appointments right now. So that's kind of what we did. And then I got really actively involved in this whole stimulus process and learning more. I saw you on Fox News, and I thought it was amazing that your message on Fox News was, "If you have a question, send me a Twitter ... " tweet, I guess that's what they call them, "and I will answer it." And I thought, "Holy cow, who would do that?"

**Gene Marks:**

I've been busy. I've been busy answering questions.

**Tim Lyon:**

Oh my gosh, I can imagine. I follow it every day. But I got involved in that, and that's kind of helped get me through the day.

**Gene Marks:**

All right. Well, I'm glad to hear that. So I have two questions, in the eight minutes that we have, that I want to address with you, just very quickly. Did you get any Federal stimulus? Have you applied?

**Tim Lyon:**

I have not gotten a dime. So I applied for both loans. I applied for the PPP, because when the PPP first came out, you were allowed to use your 1099s to calculate your payroll. Then on April 6th, the SBA changed the rules and said you were not allowed to do that. So my PPP loan came to a screeching halt. On April 1st, I applied for the EIDL, and I have not heard a word since. It's now April 20th, of course.

**Gene Marks:**

Yeah. They've been very, very significantly backlogged. And it's another topic maybe, Tim, for another podcast we can do. So okay, you're running this business out of your home. You're in Utah. Your whole business depends on the healthcare industry. Suddenly just everything stops. Right? I mean the healthcare industry, they pivot. Their focus is on something else right now, justifiably so.

**Tim Lyon:**

Sure. Absolutely.

**Gene Marks:**

And you're there without any revenue stream coming in. So how does that impact you? What sort of psychological effects does that have on you, Tim? You must've been through some dark days.

**Tim Lyon:**

Well, I had a really, really dark day. I think it was April 7th. I didn't want to get out of bed. I thought, "Man, I'm 60 years old and what am I going to do?" I planned on hopefully building this business, selling it, and retiring. And it was a dark, dark day. And I had a couple of friends help pick me up. So I actually got onto LinkedIn, which I'm fairly active on. And I started kind of a movement type of thing that I called "Stay In, But Reach Out." And what I tell people to do, or I ask people to do, is every day call three to five of your friends or family that you haven't talked to in awhile and just ask them, "How are you doing? And do you need anything?"

**Tim Lyon:**

And I will tell you, the response I got from my friends was amazing, but how it helped me was even better. It gave me kind of a purpose during the day. And I would make a list every night of who I was calling the next day, and I would get on there and I'd call them and they'd go, "Wow, thanks for calling. I really appreciate that." Because it is really hard to do the same thing every day and that same thing be nothing.

**Gene Marks:**

Right.

**Tim Lyon:**

And when your business depends on appointments and phone conversations, it's very difficult. So I've had some dark days. Especially, my dark days were really tied around first when the business came to a halt. But I was okay with that. It's when I thought that for the first time in my life, I was going to get help from my government. Because like I mentioned, I'm 60 years old. I've never asked for a dime from my government. Never, ever in my life. But I thought, "Okay, they're going to do something to help me." And then when they changed the rules, and now it's like, "Well, wait a minute. You're not going to get anything." It's like, wow. And then you hear Ruth Chris gets \$20 million and Harvard got \$9 million. What would that \$9 million do for companies like myself? I just wanted \$10,000.

**Gene Marks:**

Yeah. I hear you, I hear you. It's frustrating, I know. And a lot of business owners feel the same way and have been frustrated by this. And without going into too much detail, you and I can talk separately about this, because you still have an opportunity to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program. Independent contractors and sole proprietors like yourself can do that now. So it's something to consider, as well as applying for unemployment. But again, you and I can talk about that separately, and I would like to help you with that. But more importantly, it's a really tough thing psychologically to deal with. And you said that you call your friends, you've called family members, you make it a point to reach out every day. How, why have you found that to be so helpful?

**Tim Lyon:**

Because we're all isolated. So everyone's stuck in their home, and it's not natural. So what's really interesting is my wife and I both work from home anyway, but because we're kind of told to stay home, it feels very different. And like I said, with my age and some underlying health issues, I'm a little concerned about catching the virus.

**Gene Marks:**

Sure.

**Tim Lyon:**

So you hunker down. And you can only go and stand in your backyard for so long before it's like, "Okay, well this is no fun anymore." So it's just a way of ... I wanted to check on my friends. "Do you need anything? Can I help you?" My wife and I, we got lucky enough where one of the times when we went to Costco, we got enough toilet paper and paper towels that we put together a little care package of toilet, paper, paper towels, water, and a loaf of bread. And we gave it to all our neighbors. And it was just kind of making fun of the virus at the time. It's like, "Hey, we're all stuck in. Here's something for you." But mentally, it was really good for us. And our neighbors loved it. And so I'm trying to do stuff like that because ...

**Tim Lyon:**

And you can't imagine. I had a friend of mine who's a single guy, lives by himself in California. He's about my age. His business has been completely shut down, and he was kind of going through the same thing I did. I called and told him about the EIDL, which he had not heard about. I helped him fill out the application online. And then he tells me, "Hey Tim, I got to go." And I said, "Why?" He goes "Because I'm going to start crying." He goes, "You didn't need to call me and help me. But now I might get some money. And you helped me through a dark day, and I'll call you back when I'm feeling a little bit better." And that just made me feel really good. So every day, because I think I'm helping my friends and family, it in turn makes my day a little less dark.

**Gene Marks:**

Tim, the point that you make on this conversation is, it's so important. I mean, in the end, we're just people, and we like to talk to other people. I work from home a lot as well. And I obviously have been ... you're stuck at home, you go on the internet and you feel like the world is blowing up. And you're just in a vacuum. And even getting out to walk around your neighborhood, socially distanced and all that, certainly opens your eyes to saying, "Hey, the world is still out here and things aren't blowing up." But more importantly, like you just said, talking to other people and making it a point to do that. And also just the feeling that you get from helping other people is just such a psychological boost.

**Tim Lyon:**

It's really what's kept me going every day, to be honest with you. Like I said, I make my list at night. I get up and I make a point of calling my ... I do five people. Five might be a lot for somebody, but I do five people every day. And it's just been great.

**Gene Marks:**

Well, Tim, I have to say that was just great advice. And I appreciate you sharing that with us. It's a recommendation I think all of us should be considering during this pandemic, and I appreciate it.

**Gene Marks:**

This was Tim Lyon of Klean Katch with a K, K-L-E-A-N K-A-T-C-H, a small business owner based in Utah, sharing with us some really great advice for how to keep mentally sane while the coronavirus is going on. And Tim, thank you so much.

For more information about what we discussed today and other coronavirus questions and topics, please visit the Paychex COVID-19 Help Center. The address is [paychex.com/coronavirus-resources](https://paychex.com/coronavirus-resources). Thanks everyone for listening. Tim, thank you for your insights. I want to wish you well. You will get through this, and we will see you happily on the other side, I know it. But just stay strong and keep doing what you're doing. Thank you.