

# How to Know **When** and **What** to Barter

Guinness Book of World Records calls her the world's fastest female talker. Perhaps they should also add a category for world's best barterer, because there probably isn't anyone better than Fran Capo. The motivational speaker and six-time author found herself in a pinch years ago trying to pay her \$1,000 monthly rent and \$1,000 monthly nursery school tuition for her son. Her dad, who had recently moved in with her, was out of work and couldn't provide any supplemental income either.

Then an idea struck. "My dad was a construction manager and a great handy man," she recalls. "So I offered a deal with the nursery school. They needed some work done around the school, so I asked if my dad could work for them for free in exchange for a free tuition. They accepted."

To this day, Capo still barter. A few months ago, while making the television talk show rounds, she wanted to hire a personal trainer to help her get fit. Through contacts, she learned of a personal trainer who wanted to get into voiceovers. Among her many talents, Capo excels in voiceovers, so they decided to swap services. He would work out with her, and she would teach him the art of voiceovers. Capo is proof that because you're short on cash doesn't mean that you have to go without it.

According to Jack Schacht, president of the National Trade Association, more people are turning to bartering. Bartering involves businesses or individuals swapping a good or service for another. A lawyer, for example, may swap a few hours of legal assistance for a stay at an out-of-town hotel.

"Bartering is a great substitute for money," says Capo. "Money is only the paper that allows you to buy the services or items you need. If you can do it in trade you get the same thing. Each person has an expertise or service to offer, find a match and you both are happy."

"Bartering is a very savvy way of doing business," agrees Debbie Lombardi, president of Barter Business Unlimited. According to Lombardi over 470,000 companies actively participate in bartering for a total of over \$12 billion in annual

sales in the United States. Bartering continues to carve out an important place in the U.S. and world economy," she adds.

As a result, professional barter exchanges are cropping up everywhere. A business lists a good or service for trade through the professional barter exchange. In return, the business receives a trade credit based on the dollar value of the good or service offered. The business will then use its trade credits to "purchase" goods or services offered by other members. ♦

## What is her passion?

- Writing a poem in the voice of Athena
- Embarking on an arduous covered wagon journey over the Oregon Trail
- Engineering and building a suspension bridge with a project team
- Studying a pond ecosystem on campus
- Racing across the number line, combining fractions, decimals, and percents

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