

Illustrative Case Study: How a Technology Company Could Turn Unused Capacity Into Trade Credit

Vertical: Technology / SaaS / Digital Services

Status: Illustrative example, not a completed Barterfy trade

THE SITUATION

Technology businesses carry a different kind of idle capacity than a hotel or restaurant, but it is idle capacity all the same: unused subscription seats on an annual license, unbilled hours from a services team between projects, ad inventory on an owned platform that goes unsold, or a software feature set that could be offered to a new customer segment at near-zero marginal cost. None of that shows up as unsold "rooms," but it behaves the same way financially: capacity that has already been paid for and produces nothing if it goes unused.

HOW THE TRADE WOULD WORK

A technology company lists that unused capacity, whether it is software seats, implementation hours, or advertising placements, into the trade exchange. Other member businesses, such as a law firm needing a new client portal, a hotel needing a booking integration, or an accounting firm needing bookkeeping software, acquire that capacity using trade credit instead of cash. In return, the technology company spends the trade credit it earns on services it already buys in cash: office space, printing, travel, marketing, or professional services from other exchange members.

THE LIKELY OUTCOME

The technology company converts capacity with a near-zero marginal cost into real purchasing power, without discounting its cash-paying customer base and without giving away margin on its core product. The businesses buying its services through the exchange get technology they need without a cash outlay, which often makes them more willing to try a new vendor than they would be if a full cash commitment were required.

WHAT TIE MEMBERS CAN TAKE AWAY

If a technology business is not sure it has "idle capacity" to trade, the better question is what it has already built that costs little to extend to one more customer. Unused license seats, spare implementation capacity, and ad inventory all qualify, and all convert into purchasing power the same way a hotel room does.

This example is illustrative, describing how the model would apply to a technology business, rather than a documented completed trade. It is offered as a starting framework for TiE technology members considering the exchange.

