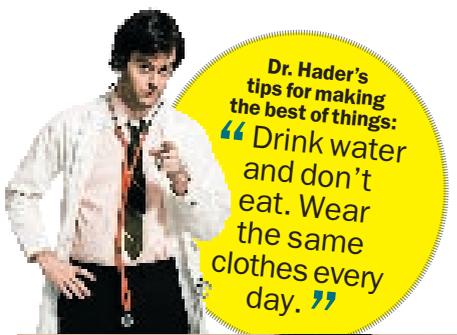


# Why couldn't I just...?

How to exploit this crummy economy. By **Cristina Velocci**



**Dr. Hader's tips for making the best of things:**  
 “Drink water and don't eat. Wear the same clothes every day.”



**Home shopping networker**

**THE DIYer:** Laura Cardillo, jewelry designer

**THE CAUSE:** Cardillo has been creating high-end baubles for three decades. But when sales started waning two years ago, she began disentangling herself from the usual industry channels to go her own way and save money. First, she pulled out of the group showroom she'd been a part of, which took a 15 percent commission; then she stopped buying into trade shows, where a booth can cost \$10,000. “Now I basically try to lure clients to my apartment with tea, cocktails and garden parties,” she laughs.

**THE EFFECT:** She's not kidding: Cardillo now works out of her midtown home. Using her contacts and experience, she invites buyers to her duplex garden apartment when they're in town for trade shows—without having to shell out exorbitant fees like her competitors do. “The people who buy my jewelry would rather deal with me than with a showroom,” she says. “With me, they're coming to visit an artist. And business is fine. Not thriving, but fine.”

**HOW TO DO IT:** Don't pay other people when you can avoid it: “I try to make everything myself,” says Cardillo of cutting out pricey middlemen. For the things she can't make, Cardillo barter—or tries to. She put an ad on Craigslist hoping to teach Italian in exchange for a website. “I found a bunch of people who would make me a site—students who need it for their portfolios—but nobody is interested in Italian!”—KL

**...rent out an empty storefront for a week to show my art?**

You might be able to. “Walk the streets of the neighborhood you want to be in and make the call,” suggests Robert Frischman, president of JDF Realty, Inc. “One out of every ten landlords may be interested.” Typically, local landlords are more willing to cut a deal than the corporate behemoths (shocker!). Look for ground-floor retail spaces (easier move-in, maximum visibility) and expect to pay up front, plus the cost of an insurance rider. The shortest leases usually last two to three months, but Dumbo's **Two Trees Management Co.** (718-222-2500, [twotreesny.com](http://twotreesny.com)) will rent out a space for as little as \$500, for as short as a day. “Our motivator is that whatever goes into that space will bring foot traffic,” says director of leasing Caroline Pardo. In fact, these days it's not unheard of for management companies to actually seek out temporary tenants. When the Moti Hasson Gallery vacated its prime Chelsea space, the building's management company offered photographer Matt Wilson the gallery for a month. “It seemed like the perfect opportunity to put on a show,” he says. Wilson hired an out-of-work gallerist, Serra Sabuncuoglu, and had a solo exhibition, “This Place Called Home,” through mid-March.



Wilson and Sabuncuoglu in their free Chelsea space

**...name my price by haggling at a restaurant?** Fat chance. Even though eateries have been practically giving away food (in fact, eighty one's chef-owner Ed Brown did for 150 guests last month, to promote a new economical menu), survey says: It's their deal or no deal. “To get anybody's attention right now you have to do something out of the box,” says Brown, “but having customers in a fine-dining atmosphere start haggling is nothing short of ridiculous. It's not good for business or the

experience.” You can, however, pay what you wish at vegetarian eatery **Tierra Sana** (100-17 Queens Blvd between 67th Ave and 67th Rd, Forest Hills, Queens; 718-830-0544)—but only on Tuesdays. “Every day is a different incentive; we just wanted to get more business on our slowest day with this one,” says manager Luisa Caicedo. It worked: Tuesday's traffic has doubled, and nearly everyone pays within a \$5 to \$10 range of the final bill.

**...barter services with laid-off folks who have plenty of skills but nowhere to use them?**

Bartering is nothing new, but it has been gaining more traction as an acceptable practice. Take **U-Exchange**, a free swap site that has seen its membership nearly double over the past year. The barter sections of **Craigslist** and **Backpage.com** are also popular forums, where New Yorkers have turned to trade haircuts for personal-training sessions, but their efforts aren't necessarily fruitful. Harlemit actor and videographer Corene Stewart has had success

swapping her film services for headshots, just not online. “You have to know what service you want, who you want to work with and then approach them with your offer,” she says. “It's important to know your service value so you break even.” And so you can report it to the IRS—unfortunately, even a barter exchange is taxable “revenue.”

**...hit up going-out-of-business sales and resell the items?**

You can, and give yourself a pat on the back for practicing capitalism at its finest. “It's without question legal and ethical,” says Robert Frank, visiting professor of business ethics at NYU Stern. “The store has an interest in liquidating the stock quickly, so they set a low price to move the merchandise.



They're hoping you'll buy it. They're not worried about what you'll then do with it.” Even the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs will give you a nod on this one: So long as the goods haven't already been used (in which case you'll need a Secondhand Dealer general license from the DCA), you're in the clear, both in terms of the law and your conscience.