

Your Turn

So You Want to Lead an Orchestra!

Peter Drucker calls orchestras an example of an organization design that will become increasingly popular in the 21st century, in that they employ skilled and talented people, joined together as a team to create products and services. Drucker may hear what he wants to hear. Others say orchestras are autocratic. The conductor dictates what is played and how it is played. Rather than basking in the glow of orchestral teamwork, jokes like the following are common among orchestra members: *Q. Why do so many people take an instant dislike to the viola? A. It saves time.*

Job descriptions for orchestras look simple: Play the music. (*Q. How is lightning like a keyboardist's fingers? A. Neither strikes the same place twice.*) Violins play violin parts; trumpets play trumpet parts. Yet one study reported that job satisfaction for orchestra members ranks below that of prison guards. However, orchestra members were more satisfied than operating room nurses and hockey players.

Exhibit 1 shows the pay structure for a regional chamber orchestra. (*Q. How can you make a clarinet sound like a French horn? A. Play all the wrong notes.*) The pay covers six full orchestra concerts, one Caroling by Candlelight event, three Sunday Chamber Series concerts, several Arts in Education elementary school concerts, two engagements for a flute quartet, and one Ring in the Holidays brass event as well as the regularly scheduled rehearsals. (*Q. How can you tell when a trombonist is playing out of tune? A. When the slide is moving.*) The figures do not include the 27-cents-per-mile travel pay provided to out-of-town musicians.

1. Describe the orchestra's pay structure in terms of levels, differentials, and job- or person-based approach.
2. Discuss what factors may explain the structure. Why does violinist I receive more than the oboist and trombonist? Why does the principal trumpet player earn more than the principal cellist and clarinetist but less than the principal viola and flute players? What explains these differences? Does the relative supply versus the demand for violinists compare to the supply versus the demand for trombonists? Is it that violins play more notes?
3. How well do equity and tournament models apply?

EXHIBIT 1 Orchestra Compensation Schedule

Instrument	Fee	Instrument	Fee
Violin, Concertmaster	\$6,970	Violin I	\$2,483
Principal Bass and Conductor	5,070	Violin I	2,483
Principal Viola	5,036	Violin I	2,483
Principal Flute	4,337	Violin II	2,483
Principal Trumpet	4,233	Violin II	2,483
Principal Cello	4,181	Viola	2,483
Principal Clarinet	4,146	Violin II	1,975
Trumpet	3,638	Viola	2,212
Principal Oboe	3,615	Oboe	2,206
Principal Violin II	3,488	Trombone	2,137
Principal Horn	3,390	Viola	2,033
Keyboard I	3,361	Violin II/Viola	1,784
Cello	3,228	Cello	1,634
Principal Percussion	3,049	Clarinet	1,548
Violin I	2,899	Horn	1,548
Cello	2,882	Flute	1,455
Principal Bassoon	2,824	Keyboard II	1,392
Violin I	2,685	Bassoon	1,265
		Violin II	1,178