

“DOWN SIZE” – THE WORK STUDY CONSULTANT

There is a story of a company chairman who was given a ticket for a performance of Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony. He couldn’t go, and passed on the invitation to the company’s work-study consultant. The next morning the chairman asked him how he enjoyed it, and instead of a few plausible observations was handed a memorandum, which read:

- a) For considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do. The number should be reduced, and their work spread over the whole orchestra, thus eliminating peaks of inactivity.
- b) All twelve violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication, and the staff of this section should be drastically cut. If a large volume of sound is really required, this could be obtained through an electronic amplifier.
- c) Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demi-semiquavers. This seems an excessive refinement, and it is recommended that all notes should be rounded up to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done it should be possible to use trainees and low-grade operators.
- d) No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passages that have already been handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced from two hours to twenty minutes.

If only Schubert had consulted a work-study expert, he would probably have been able to finish his symphony after all!

Did You Know?

Dr Mahendra Perera is available for keynote speeches, workshops and presentations on a range of topics from adult ADHD to workplace stress. Visit the Speaking and Events page or use the Contact form at mahendraperera.com to learn more.