

31 steps to metrication

Pat Naughtin 2005

Everything you say, everything you do, and everything you write or say about metrication or the metric system has an effect on the world.

Whenever you learn more about metrication for yourself, to teach a friend, or to educate children you will have a profound effect that rapidly flows to all those around you and then to all parts of the world. Each drop raises the level.

And all of this is achieved simply through your leadership on the metrication issue. As Albert Schweitzer put it:

'... example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.'

The items in this list are not really in any order. Don't think of this list as something to read to find its internal logic — there isn't any — in fact I've deliberately made it so you have something different each day. Think of this as a reminder to do something metric, no matter how small, today.

Look at the calendar, find today's date, go to that number, and just do it.

- 1 Start a conversation in the lunchroom and listen carefully to someone else's thoughts on the metric system. Be conscious that you are listening. Many (most?) of us who know a little about the metric system are a bit inclined to talk about it at length. Avoid this. Your job is to listen and to learn how another person is approaching metrication.
- 2 Share one of your favorite simple metric calculations with a colleague at work. Write a short article on this for an in-house or trade journal.
- 3 Look for an opportunity to show that metric is simpler than the current methods you are using.
- 4 Discuss a metric issue with a friend who favors the metric system. Listen carefully to find out what their priorities are and how these align with your own. Discuss how you might plan a joint metrication campaign.
- 5 Confront whatever fears you and your work colleagues might have about the metric system and the metrication process. Listen carefully to the thoughts of others (and of yourself) to find out if anyone is afraid of how they will handle the change. Read 'Metrication emotions' from <http://www.metricationmatters.com/articles.html>

- 6 Congratulate someone at your work on their correct use of metric units OR congratulate any politician who is positive about the metric system or who, at least, uses metric units correctly.
- 7 Write a SMART metric goal. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timed.
- 8 Use the internet to find a pro-metric article. You might start with, '10 ways to promote metrication' at <http://www.metricationmatters.com/articles.html>
- 9 Find a new friend who is supportive of the metric system and the metrication process.
- 10 Look for a jargon word at your work and think about how to replace it with the proper metric unit. Be aware that jargon always confuses people so discourage it wherever you can. Examples are barrels, calories, and shoe and clothing size numbers.
- 11 Encourage the choice of metric units that will remove decimal and vulgar fractions. Avoid the prefixes hecto, deca, deci, and centi.
- 12 Find something at your workplace that can be simplified by using metric units. Discuss this with your supervisor, describing the savings that might be achieved with a simple change.
- 13 Begin a discussion in the lunchroom with a question such as, 'What is the best way to help older people with their inevitable change to metric?'; 'How long do you think it will take the USA to change to metric?'; 'How much does non-metrication cost?'
- 14 Find a good metrication trainer or a metrication consultant. Have this information available for an appropriate opportunity at your work.
- 15 Identify the people who are, and who will be, most helpful in a metrication transition. Also identify those who will be of least help. Devise ways to encourage the former and to discourage the latter.
- 16 Learn something new about the metric system today. A good start is to read 'The International System of Units (SI)' at <http://www.bipm.fr/en/si/> and open any page at random. Better still, download your own free copy from <http://www.bipm.fr/en/publications/brochure/>, bind it, and keep it on your desk. Don't forget to add the 'Supplement 2000'.

- 17 Obtain a metric-only tool for your workplace, office, laboratory, or classroom. A metric tape or ruler with millimetres only is a good start, as is a thermometer that only has degrees Celsius.
- 18 Devise a metric 'Rule of thumb' or adapt a 'Rule of Thumb' that used old pre-metric measures.
- 19 Discuss questions such as: 'The difficulties of metrication change' and 'What are possible complications of metrication?' with people who are negative about the metric system. Don't forget, your job is to listen and to learn how other people are approaching metrication.
- 20 Think about the changes you will need to make in your lifestyle as you change to the metric system. Download 'Don't use metric!' by scrolling down the page at <http://www.metricationmatters.com/articles.html>. You will be surprised how few things you will need to change. Leave a copy of 'Don't use metric!' at work.
- 21 Think about the questions: 'Will I lose control of my job, or of my group when we change to metric — or will I be well prepared to be a metric leader as the change takes place?'; 'With metric training, will I be able to keep up with the others?'; 'Will anyone find out about the stuff that I don't know (that I might have been covering up for years)?' or 'Will I be a metrication leader?'
- 22 Listen for someone to say 'When we used the old system . . . ' and then refute the idea that the old collection (mish-mash) of measures was ever a system.
- 23 Ask at a store, 'What's that in metric (kilograms, millilitres, millimetres)?'
- 24 Find good metric websites where you can download materials to help you with your metrication program and share these with others. You might like to start at: http://www.metricationmatters.com/metric_links.html
- 25 Look around your workplace to see in what ways your workplace will change as a result of metrication. Prepare yourself to respond to questions on these issues.
- 26 Listen to your bosses' views on the metric system and the metrication process. Listen carefully to determine their thoughts and fears.

Try to find your bosses' agendas. Some (many) bosses are trying to wait out the metrication change (until they retire) rather than seeking an opportunity of making this major cost-cutting change before they leave.

- 27 Download 'Approaches to metrication' from <http://www.metricationmatters.com/articles.html> and consider how you will plan and apply your own metrication program. Look for other guides on other web sites that you find on the internet. Start searching at: http://www.metricationmatters.com/metric_links.html
- 28 Write a letter to an editor who has made a basic error in applying metric units. Politely point out the error and show how this can be corrected in future editions. Persist with this, as your goal is to have correct metric use incorporated into the editor's 'Style manual'. You might find that '39 steps to better metric editing' can be useful for this. You can get this from <http://www.metricationmatters.com/articles.html>
- 29 Write to someone in the media (newspaper, radio, or television) and congratulate them on their use of metric units. Find an article that is positive about the metric system and about the metrication process, write a congratulatory letter to the author, and send a copy of your letter to their editor and to their publisher.
- 30 Take into account how others will accept you as you learn about the metric system. Think about ways to take them with you as you progress — don't leave them behind.
- 31 Review the achievements you have made over the last month. Congratulate yourself for your successes (and learn from your mistakes) then plan for better results next month.

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