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5k, and 10k distances. Virtually all American scientists use metric units for measurements.

We use calories to measure our food intake because a milliliter of water takes up one cubic centimeter of space and requires exactly one calorie of energy to increase its temperature by one degree centigrade.

Staying in our old-fashioned measurement system inhibits our young people from engaging in scientific discovery. Since we can't readily understand what a big deal it is that the Voyager spacecraft move at 16 km per second, the match never touches the fuse of our imagination. There is no curiosity. No engagement. No advancement.

Fasteners provide one of the most dramatic examples. Engineers, and users of engineering products, have long been plagued by a plethora of fastener types and sizes. By using the ISO metric range of fasteners, instead of the many incompatible traditional types, there are great cost benefits to be gained. But individual companies can do better than that. Few of them need the whole range and by subjecting their requirements to the closest scrutiny many can reduce the variety of their needs even further

without any loss in design freedom or in production standards, and with great gains in efficiency.

Marconi Instruments has done it by cutting their screw inventory from 1,250 items to 91. The Ford Motor Company has done it and have reported to the Metrication Board that the benefits are even greater than they had estimated.

"I believe that in achieving desirable results the role of the production engineer is crucial and cannot be overestimated," says P.J.L. Homan, director of the metrification board at St. Regis lumber mill in Missoula, Montana. Metric Today's November-December 2013 issue noted that, "with the rapid growth of China as an emerging world power, it's not surprising that their import of materials and products helps spur the metrication of exporting countries.

In the case of lumber exported to China, the St. Regis lumber mill in Missoula, Montana benefitted from their ability to saw rough-dimensioned lumber to Asian metric specifications. The 50 × 100 mm boards they produce are destined to be concrete form supports in China. Other boards with dimensions of 50 × 150 mm will be further cut into smaller-dimensioned lumber in China for furniture parts, molding

and other components.

Prior to this opportunity, Tricon Lumber, which owns the St. Regis mill, exported wood to Japan in the 1990s, when there was a high demand for wood exports from North America. The increased business due to metric wood exports has allowed Tricon to invest in a new saw line. While both the old and new saw lines can cut metric dimensions, the newer line yields more boards with less waste out of each tree.

Already firms in engineering and other industries report improved export sales because products made to metric standard really are more competitive in world markets. Many firms that have completed the change have gained a substantial bonus. Planning and implementing the metric change focuses attention on the whole manufacturing chain.

Designers think their designs afresh, production engineers re-examine the production processes, purchasing officers reconsider supplies. Metrication provides a unique opportunity which no management can afford to neglect to overhaul the whole organization and even in the most efficient firms to achieve worthwhile standardization and rationalization.

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