The Metric Month: Path to Saving Money and Increasing Productivity

It is likely that the Julian calendar will be with us for many, many decades. It is recognized and used throughout the world. School children in most countries learn early on that the year is composed of twelve months, ungainly in the fact that some have 30 days while others have 31 (and let's not forget poor February's duplicity). The mere fact that you were born on March 17 gives no hint as to which day of the week that may have been, but with the advent of computer calendars, this is not a big issue.

These facts notwithstanding, an interesting thought experiment might be to see if a more organized calendar could be devised, one in which all months had the same number of days and one that might take advantage of the unique characteristics of the metric system. Furthermore, could such a simplified calendar actually reduce the cost of doing business and improve productivity? To answer these questions, let's first examine the constraints by which any Earth-based calendar must be bound.

In the first place, the year must contain 365 days with a leap day added every four years (except for every fourth century). Now 365 is an odd number divisible only by itself, 1, 5 and 73, numbers which don't lend themselves to consistent and simple organization (which is why our current calendar is such a mess). But if we begin our quest by removing 5 days (we'll deal with them later) and concentrate on a 360-day basis for the new calendar, we will have a much easier time of it.

There are several ways that a 360-day year can be parsed into months, weeks and days. If we assume at the start that a week consisting of less than 5 days is impractical, the following table illustrates the versatility of the number 360.

Months per Year	Weeks per Month	Days per Week
12	5	6
12	6	5
10	3	12
10	4	9
10	6	6
9	4	10
9	5	8
9	8	5
8	3	15
8	5	9
8	9	5

This analysis yields an unexpected surprise. A year composed of 9 months, each having four weeks, would give us a ten-day week. Now the advantage of a ten-day week lies in the fact that any given date will provide exact knowledge of the day of the week on which that date occurs. For example, the 2nd, 12th, 22nd and 32nd days of every month would all fall on the second day of the week. Similarly, the 10th, 20th, 30th and 40th day of the month will always fall on the tenth day of the week. With this information in hand, let us determine what a 9-month calendar might look like.

Since nine months of four 10-day weeks would fill a 360-day year, the calendars for all nine months would look identical (see below). All months would have exactly four weeks, and each week would be completely filled with ten days. For now, let's give them the following temporary names: Oneday, Twoday, Threeday, Fourday, Fiveday, Sixday, Sevenday, Eightday, Nineday and Tenday. (Think of the fun exercise of coming up with new names for the days of the week!)

Thus if the first day of the week were to be called "Oneday", then the first day of every month would fall on Oneday, as would the 11th, 21st, and 31st . Gone would be the difficulty of trying to determine what day of the week the 17th falls on. The 17th ALWAYS falls on the seventh day of the week, "Sevenday", as does the 7th, 27th, and 37th, no matter what month you might be considering. This illustrates one of the advantages of the Metric Month calendar.

That much was easy. Now let's deal with the five days we left out in order to work with the versatile number 360, while not forgetting that we also have a leap year day to stick in every four years. With nine months in the year, there are five odd numbered

months and four even numbered months. The trick to handling the five extra days is to place them after each odd-numbered month. So, assuming that the nine months keep the same names as the first nine months in the current calendar (January through September), there would be an extra day between January and February, March and April, May and June, July and August, and between September (the ninth and last month) and January. To keep these extra days from playing havoc with our 40-day months, they will be considered natural holidays, and given the number 41 for computational purposes. The leap-day every four years would be treated the same way, tacked onto the end of the second month as February 41.

The following calendar would thus be correct for every month throughout the year, with holidays, or “Freedays” appearing only after January, February (in leap years), March, May, July and September. Thus there are only five (or six) Freedays in an entire year, and all numbered 41.

Oneday	Twoday	Threeday	Fourday	Fiveday	Sixday	Sevenday	Eightday	Nineday	Tenday	Freeday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41

Note also that one Freeday, September 41 comes exactly between the old and new years, corresponding perfectly to New Year's Day without technically being a part of either September or January. These holidays could be called "January Freeday", "March Freeday", etc., thus clearly identifying to which holiday to one might be referring.

"But wait," you say. "Workers aren't about to go for an eight-day work week!" This is true if each week had only two days off, as with our current seven-day calendar. But with the new calendar, the common work week, every week, would have three days off. Surprisingly, with 36 weeks per year, and 3 days off per week, as well as five holidays (the Freedays), workers will have 113 days off, which compares quite favorably with our current calendar with 104 week-end days and 10 holidays, or 114 days off. To make up for the extra day of leave, under the decimal calendar workers could be given an additional day off of their choosing (perhaps for a birthday or anniversary).

So how does this re-organization of the calendar result in increased productivity? The answer relies on that third day off each week. If the regular weekly days off are the first and last days of each week (as they are now), and a day in the middle of the week, workers will have four days at work, a day off, and three days at work each week. The long five-day slog we currently deal with would be a thing of the past. With the ten-day week divided into two shorter work periods, it's easy to predict that productivity and job satisfaction would go up and job stress would be reduced. Also, employers with several employees (such as retail stores and restaurants) could schedule some employees to take Fiveday off, and others to take Sixday off, thus keeping the business open throughout the week.

Of course, other holidays, political and religious, could be added throughout the calendar at whim, just as they are today. However, inserting additional holidays in the Metric Month system would decrease the number of workdays in the year below the currently accepted number, which might not set well with most employers. A better approach would be to use the built-in Freedays to deal with secular and religious holidays, or, for religious holidays that come on a specific date, perhaps employees observing those days would then be required to work on the subsequent Freeday.

As for vacations, the typical two-week vacation now implies ten working days and three weekends off, a total of sixteen days. In the Metric Month system, this would

correspond to a full week (ten days, Oneday through Tenday) plus Oneday of the next week, a four-day work segment in the following week, and the mid-week-off day (Sixday). So a full sixteen day vacation is easily accommodated in the new calendar.

O.K. So maybe productivity would be increased with the Metric Month calendar. But how could this change possibly help the bottom line? The answer here is very simple and straight forward. Instead of four 3-month quarterly reports every year, there would only be three reports (call them “ternary reports”). Accounting costs would be reduced by 25%. A new term, “Terner”, would be coined to represent a three-month period. With 25% fewer reports to create each year, business would see a definite improvement in both productivity and profits. Furthermore, under the current calendar, many economic reports suffer because different quarters have different numbers of days, especially with that renegade month of February. This complicates the efforts to compare one quarter with another. The metric calendar removes this problem entirely. Every Ternary has exactly 120 days and 84 work days.

Finally, adopting and adapting to a new calendar system raises the possibility of inventing some creative names for the days of the week and for the nine new months of the year. Wouldn’t it be nice to have months that are named after scientists or great artists rather than ancient emperors and ruthless dictators? The same can be said for days of the week that are named after ancient gods now nearly forgotten. A world-wide contest could be initiated to come up with names and to promote the spread and acceptance of the Metric Month Calendar.