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Q: What is the software lifecycle?
A: In the software lifecycle there are 4 phases that are derived from the old System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) and they are as follow; Planning, Implementation, Maintenance, and the Removal process. The planning phase is defined by all planning activities including the analysis of the software to be installed, verification of its compatibility, supported methods of installations, and the identification of any risks associated with the software and the desired deployment method. The Implementation phase is used to prepare for deployment such as; creating a shared access location for files and creating or using the appropriate package files. After all these steps have been completed the actually deployment takes place. The maintenance phase includes the elements that are required to keep the software running smoothly. And the Removal phase is when the old software is outdated and then deemed fit to be replaced. Starting the cycle all over again.

Q: Can we use repackaged software?
A: Yes, because not all software on the market provides . msi support, which is what Windows installer uses. In order to use this software we would have to repackage the files. In order to repackage software we would need to follow a couple of steps. First off we would need to take a snapshot of a clean computer before the software is installed. Then once the software is installed we would need to take a snapshot of the computer after the software is installed. The repackaged application takes into account the changes to the registry, system settings, and file system caused by the installation.

Q: If we cannot repackage software how would you distribute it?
A: When Repackaging is not an option we would consider using a . zap file. A . zap file is a non-widows installer package that can be created in a text editor. A . zap file looks and functions very similar to an . ini file although it has its disadvantages. These files can be published but not assigned. Deployments require user intervention instead of being fully unattended. Local administrator permissions might be required to perform the installation. And they do not support custom installations or automatic repair.

Q: Which packaging files would we use with the Windows Installer service?
A: We would use a . msi file for standard software installation, . mst files for customized software installations, and . msp files for patching . msi files at the time of deployment. All of the pertinent files must reside in the same file system directory.

Q: How are you going to assign certain applications to a user or computer?
A: We would review the applications and determine what groups and/ or computers would need access to these files or documents and go from there. Q: How would you distribute this software?
A: We would use a group policy linked to that user or computer. Once the user logs on the new software would be displayed in the start menu. Once the user goes to use the application for the first time it will start the downloading

Q: Would this software automatically download or would the user have to download it?
A: That would be determined by what type of file the software is run off of.
Q: Would we use assignment or publishing applications?
A: I think that we should use both. We should use assignment for specific applications that we want every user in the company using such as Microsoft excel, and we can use publishing applications for users that want to be able to customize applications that help them do their job better, like what internet interface they want to use.

Q: How would you customize the software installation packages?
A: In the properties window for each Windows Installer Package, some additional settings cab be associated with the package such as modification or transform (. mst) and upgrade settings.
Q: How would we configure the software restriction policies?
A: The Software Restriction policies node is found in the PoliciesWindows settingsSecurity settings node of the user configuration of the computer configuration node of a group policy. When you create a new software restriction policy folder two sub folders are automatically created, security levels and additional rules. The security levels folder allows you to define the default behavior from which all rules will be created. The criteria for each executable program are defined in the additional rules folder

Dear Business Manager,
After reviewing your e-mail I feel very confident that all of your requirements can be met. First off I would start by taking a snapshot of a clean computer before and after the installation process. Next use . mst process to modify the . msi package to be able to use the windows installer. From there automate the deployment of the application. Set software installation properties to assign, then create the new software installation package, and this will give you your silent installation. Next I would assign all the users in the engineering department into one category and restrict them from the scope.