

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
ESD.290

Assignment 1

These questions are intentionally vague. Life rarely throws out challenges which take the form of well-wrapped questions. The study of systems and management science should enable one to transform vague challenges into clear execution plans. I hope that by the end of this course, you will be able to answer questions like these very clearly. Right now, it doesn't hurt for you to struggle with them to get a taste for the challenges. I recommend not doing any research -- simply think about the problem. We will re-visit these questions at the end of the course.

You may submit this assignment in groups of 2.

Question 1:

Your company makes cereal. Your CEO has just been informed of a mandate from your most important retailer, CerealsRUs, which requires all cases to be tagged by Jan 2006. He asks you to formulate a plan for adoption. In about a page, describe what you would do (not the plan, but how you would go about it). You may want to consider:

1. When do you start tagging?
2. How do you pick tags?
3. How do you extract value for your company from this expensive investment?
4. How do you stage the investments?

Question 2:

At the same time, someone leaks the information to the press, and a small group of privacy activists starts picketing your offices. You need to put out a (one-page or less) press-statement explaining how and why you will handle privacy concerns. Write the statement.