Every product has a life cycle, including a Single Use Camera. The life cycle of a mass manufactured product must go through several processes, including a design, manufacturing, and assembly process. To understand the stages of this product’s lifecycle, it is crucial to analyze individual components of the system.

The Single Use Camera has several functional components that allow the product to work properly. Primary functions are executed through the lens, shutter mechanism, film, viewfinder, film transport and counter mechanism, electronic flash, energy cell, and the outer and internal housing frame. These components are arranged in a particular order inside the housing frame.

In addition to the unique arrangement of these mechanisms, specific materials were used to produce the camera in the most efficient manner. The housing, lens, shutter mechanism, film, viewfinder, film transport, and counter mechanism are all made from plastic. However, the energy cell is made from different metals and alloys to store and release electricity for use in the circuit. Some inner mechanisms including screws and springs are made from metal. These materials used in the product allow all components of the camera to be reused and/or recycled. Furthermore, the packaging was designed with an aluminum lining to protect the film from x-rays.

Many of the plastic components in the camera can be easily reused once the film is taken out and processed. The film is the main part that cannot be recycled and must be disposed of after processing. once disassembled, the camera can be taken to a production facility to be put back together with new film. After many trips through this cycle, some parts begin to wear out, especially the electrical circuit and the battery. The other component that must be recycled is the packaging, which contains the aluminum lining for film protection and the cardboard to surround the camera during transport to reduce damage to the structure. A possible improvement in the design could be using a memory card instead of film. Although the film is recyclable, a memory card is reusable over and over again. This is a more efficient and a more environmentally friendly way of saving pictures!
Film transport and counter mechanism

All parts

Housing

Energy Cell
Electronic Flash

View Finder

Film

Shutter Mechanism

Lens