Common GPOs in Active Directory: Practical Scenarios for a Lab Environment

I'll create a comprehensive list of common Group Policy Objects (GPOs) for a fictional company called "TrustCare Health Systems" with several departments. These scenarios will give you plenty to practice with in your Active Directory lab this weekend.

Company Background: TrustCare Health Systems

TechNova is a mid-sized technology firm with 500 employees across departments including Finance, HR, Marketing, IT, Development, Sales, Legal, and Executive leadership. They have a headquarters and two branch offices.

Common GPO Scenarios to Implement

1. **Password Policy** - Enforce organization-wide password complexity requirements (minimum 12 characters, complexity enabled, 90-day expiration)
2. **Account Lockout Policy** - Configure lockout after 5 failed attempts with a 30-minute lockout duration
3. **Login Hours Restriction** - Restrict standard user logins to business hours (7AM-7PM weekdays)
4. **Desktop Wallpaper Standardization** - Deploy company-branded wallpaper to all workstations
5. **Start Menu and Taskbar Configuration** - Customize the start menu with company-approved applications and disable certain taskbar features
6. **Software Installation** - Automate the deployment of standard applications (Office suite, PDF reader, etc.)
7. **Folder Redirection** - Redirect user Documents, Pictures, and Desktop folders to server locations for backup
8. **Drive Mapping** - Automatically map network drives based on department membership
9. **Printer Deployment** - Deploy printers to users based on location and department
10. **Windows Update Configuration** - Control when and how Windows updates are applied
11. **Application Restrictions** - Prevent specific applications from running (e.g., games, file sharing programs)
12. **USB Storage Restrictions** - Control access to USB storage devices (completely disabled for Finance department, read-only for others)
13. **Internet Explorer/Edge Settings** - Configure browser security settings, homepage, and trusted sites

14. **Wireless Network Policies** - Automatically connect to corporate Wi-Fi and manage wireless security settings
15. **VPN Connection Settings** - Automate VPN configuration for remote workers
16. **Power Management** - Implement energy-saving settings (screen timeout, sleep settings)
17. **Proxy Server Configuration** - Force web traffic through the corporate proxy with appropriate exceptions
18. **Remote Desktop Services** - Configure RDP settings for IT support staff
19. **Windows Firewall Rules** - Deploy standardized firewall configurations based on user roles
20. **Security Auditing Policy** - Configure detailed audit logs for security-related events
21. **Script Deployment** - Configure logon/logoff and startup/shutdown scripts
22. **User Rights Assignment** - Grant specific capabilities to certain groups (like allowing IT to manage printers)
23. **Local Administrator Rights** - Remove local admin rights for standard users while providing a mechanism for temporary elevation
24. **Data Execution Prevention** - Configure DEP settings to prevent certain types of malware attacks
25. **BitLocker Drive Encryption** - Enforce drive encryption for laptops and configure recovery options

Departmental GPO Examples

- **Finance Department GPOs**:
    - USB storage disabled
    - Screen timeout set to 5 minutes
    - Stricter password policy
    - Application restrictions for financial software
- **Development Department GPOs**:
    - Allow installation of development tools
    - Configure proxy exceptions for development servers
    - Extended login hours (24/7 access)
    - Less restrictive USB policies
- **Executive GPOs**:
    - Less restrictive application controls
    - Configure mobile device access
    - Special folder redirection for executive documents
    - Custom power settings for presentations
- **Marketing Department GPOs**:
    - Allow specific design applications
    - Configure larger temporary internet file storage
    - Special printer configurations for marketing materials

Would you like me to elaborate on any specific GPO implementation details for your lab practice?