Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology

Software Project Management

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Assignment 02

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Contents

1. Company Background 3

2. Interviewee details (name, designation, company, LinkedIn profile) 4

3. Interview notes 4

3.1 Responsibilities 4

3.2 Challenges 5

3.3 Best Practices 5

3.4 Tools 5

4. Agile Practices in the Company 6

5.Application of IFS Practices to Our Project 6

6. Key Learnings from the Interview 7

7. Interview Evidence 8

8. Diagrams (Agile workflow at IFS) 8

Industry Visit & Interview Report

1. Company Background

Industrial and Financial Systems (IFS) is a world-leading provider of enterprise and industrial Artificial Intelligence (AI) software solutions, headquartered in Linköping, Sweden. Since its founding in 1983 by five university friends, the company has been driven by the values of agility, customer-centricity, and trust. The founders' early commitment to customer service was evident in their willingness to pitch a tent outside their first client's site to ensure availability and support 24/7. This dedication to customer success has remained a defining feature of IFS's culture and operations for more than four decades.

Today, IFS employs over 7,000 people and operates in more than 80 countries, serving thousands of customers across industries such as aerospace and defence, manufacturing, energy and utilities, telecommunications, construction, and service management. The company's solutions are designed to support businesses that manufacture goods, manage complex assets, and deliver service-focused operations.

At the heart of IFS's offerings is IFS Cloud, a fully composable, AI-powered enterprise platform. It provides comprehensive capabilities across Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Enterprise Asset Management (EAM), Supply Chain Management (SCM), Information Technology Service Management (ITSM), and Field Service Management (FSM). The platform leverages Industrial AI—branded as IFS.ai—to deliver real-time analytics, machine learning, and data-driven decision-making tools that help organizations improve productivity, efficiency, and sustainability.

IFS is especially recognized for its leadership in Field Service Management (FSM) and Enterprise Asset Management (EAM), consistently ranked among the top solution providers by global industry analysts. Through a strong focus on innovation and adaptability, IFS empowers its customers to respond to market changes quickly and to excel at what the company calls their "Moment of Service"—the point at which a business delivers value to its customers.

Beyond its global headquarters, IFS has established major development centers worldwide, including one of its largest research and development hubs in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This reflects the company's investment in building a diverse, global talent base that supports continuous innovation.

In summary, IFS has grown from a small entrepreneurial venture into a global technology leader by combining cutting-edge AI-driven solutions with a deep commitment to customer value. Its vision of unlocking the transformative power of Industrial AI positions IFS at the forefront of digital transformation for industries that power, serve, and protect our planet.

2. Interviewee details (name, designation, company, LinkedIn profile)

Name	Designation	Company	LinkedIn Profile
Mrs. Subhashini Sooriarachchi	Scrum Master	IFS Sri Lanka	https://www.linkedin.com/in/subhashini-sooriarachchi-1b16a4113/?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=android_app
Mr. Akin karavita	Product Owner	IFS Sri Lanka	https://www.linkedin.com/in/akin-karavita-149746244/
Mr. Ilman Iqbal	Developer	IFS Sri Lanka	https://www.linkedin.com/in/ilman-iqbal-096308172/?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=android_app
Mr. Damith Tharuka	Developer	IFS Sri Lanka	- https://www.linkedin.com/in/damith-tharuka/?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=android_app

3. Interview notes

3.1 Responsibilities

The professionals at IFS highlighted their day-to-day responsibilities, which reflect the company's focus on developing, maintaining, and delivering enterprise software solutions powered by Industrial AI. Their key responsibilities include:

- **Software Development & Maintenance**: Designing, coding, testing, and deploying features within IFS Cloud and related products.
- **Customer-Centric Delivery**: Collaborating with global clients to tailor solutions according to industry-specific requirements such as ERP, EAM, and FSM.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration**: Working with product managers, QA teams, UX designers, and solution architects across global locations.
- **Continuous Learning**: Keeping up to date with emerging technologies such as AI/ML, cloud computing, and containerized deployments.
- **Support & Service Excellence**: Ensuring smooth client onboarding and ongoing technical support, aligning with IFS's philosophy of delivering value at the "Moment of Service™."

3.2 Challenges

Working in a large-scale, global technology company presents unique challenges, which were openly discussed in the interview:

- **Integration Complexity:** Managing integration across diverse business modules (ERP, SCM, FSM) and ensuring scalability.
- **Global Collaboration:** Coordinating with teams across multiple time zones, cultures, and working styles.
- **Rapid Technological Change:** Adapting quickly to new tools, frameworks, and AI-driven innovations while maintaining stability of existing systems.
- **Customer Expectations:** Balancing between standardized solutions and highly customized client demands.
- **Quality Assurance:** Maintaining high product quality and system reliability in enterprise-scale deployments.

3.3 Best Practices

The IFS professionals emphasized several practices that help them deliver reliable and innovative solutions:

- **Agile and Scrum Methodologies:** Following iterative development cycles with regular sprint reviews, retrospectives, and stand-ups.
- **Code Quality & Standards:** Enforcing strict code review processes, automated testing, and adherence to international coding standards.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Encouraging peer-to-peer learning sessions, mentorship programs, and technical workshops.
- **Customer-Centric Mindset:** Prioritizing customer needs and feedback as a driving factor in product evolution.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Designing solutions that help clients improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

3.4 Tools

These tools ensure seamless collaboration and help maintain consistent product quality across IFS's global teams.

Category	Tools	Purpose
Collaboration	Microsoft Teams, Jira, Confluence	Team coordination, sprint tracking, documentation
Development	IntelliJ IDEA, Visual Studio, GitHub/GitLab	Coding, version control, CI/CD

Cloud & AI	IFS Cloud, Docker, Kubernetes, IFS.ai	Cloud deployment and Industrial AI integration
Testing	Selenium, JUnit, Postman	Automation and regression testing
Analytics	Power BI, Grafana	Data visualization and performance monitoring

4. Agile Practices in the Company

The interview revealed a mature Agile culture at IFS. The organization adopts Scrum-based iterative workflows with clearly defined roles:

- All the members clearly described their roles aligning with Scrum responsibilities.
- The Product Backlog, Sprint Planning, and Daily Stand-ups are practiced regularly.
- Emphasis is placed on transparency, collaboration, feedback, and continuous improvement.
- The organization values team communication, cross-functional collaboration, and adaptive planning — all key Agile values.
- Handling conflicts, encouraging open discussion, and maintaining healthy team dynamics show a strong Agile mindset.

The company demonstrates a well-structured Agile environment, following Scrum framework principles effectively through role clarity, iterative planning, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous communication.

5.Application of IFS Practices to Our Project

Insights from the IFS interview directly informed our team's own Scrum project. We adapted several of their effective practices:

- **Daily Stand-ups:** Inspired by IFS's communication structure, our team began holding short online stand-ups to synchronize progress.
- **Backlog Prioritization:** We applied the Product Owner's method of aligning backlog items with user value.
- **Code Review Culture:** Following IFS's peer review standard, we implemented a two-step review process before merging code.
- **Sprint Retrospectives:** After each sprint, our team reflected on performance and defined actionable improvements.

6. Key Learnings from the Interview

1. Importance of Clear and Prioritized Product Backlog

- **Key Learning:**
  From the Product Owner's interview, we learned that maintaining a clear, prioritized, and continuously refined product backlog is crucial to ensure that the team always works on the highest-value features.
  Applicability:
  In our project, we applied this by regularly updating our product backlog in Trello/Jira before every sprint planning meeting. We used the MoSCoW prioritization method (Must have, should have, Could have, Won't have) to help the Product Owner decide feature order.

2. Effective Sprint Planning and Realistic Commitments

- **Key Learning:**
  The Scrum Master emphasized the importance of setting realistic sprint goals and estimating tasks collaboratively using story points or planning poker. This helps prevent overcommitment and burnout.
  Applicability:
  Our team used planning poker for task estimation and limited our sprint scope to tasks achievable within two weeks. This improved our sprint predictability and reduced unfinished backlog items.

3. Daily Scrum as a Communication and Synchronization Tool

- **Key Learning:**
  The development team members explained how daily stand-ups status updates are not just but a key opportunity to identify blockers early and maintain transparency.
  Applicability:
  We implemented 15-minute daily stand-up meetings where each member shared their progress, next steps, and blockers. This practice helped us quickly address issues (e.g., API integration bugs) without delaying sprint progress.

4. Regular Sprint Reviews and Stakeholder Feedback

- **Key Learning:**
  The Product Owner mentioned that continuous stakeholder involvement during sprint reviews helps align the team's output with customer expectations.
  Applicability:
  At the end of each sprint, we conducted sprint reviews with our lecturer (acting as stakeholder) and gathered feedback to refine our user interface and improve certain functionalities.

5. Reflection through Sprint Retrospectives

- **Key Learning:**
  The Scrum Master highlighted that retrospectives are essential for team improvement — identifying what went well, what didn't, and what could be improved next.
  Applicability:
  We implemented retrospective meetings at the end of every sprint. One key improvement we made after Sprint 2 was to assign clearer task ownership in Trello, which improved accountability in later sprints.

7. Interview Evidence

One Drive Link: https://mysliit-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/it22098078_my_sliit_lk/Ekcp9O8FN2NLn0AI197XBgABrtzxvOnpXJ6BCak1JUNghw?e=0ufosf

8. Diagrams (Agile workflow at IFS)