

Fire & Security Services Insights



Secure customer sites and assets,
safeguard people, and optimize efficiencies
for a profitable business



Introduction

This paper examines the time-sensitive and technical nature of fire and security services, including the importance of technology in helping you deliver on your commitments while effecting meaningful efficiencies for a profitable business model.

Most businesses employ fire and security service providers (FSSPs) to safeguard people and property. Typically, these services are delivered by companies specializing in facilities management, following a natural progression from installing alarms, sensors, cameras, and sprinklers to monitoring and responding when these systems generate an alert.



The relationship between service provider and customer is negotiated and bound contractually—typically via a subscription model—with detailed scopes of work and response times clearly defined within service level agreements (SLAs).

As an FSSP, you must respond immediately to alerts, alarms, and service requests. With customers spread across large geographical areas, you must precisely manage your workforce, balancing emergency calls with the regular maintenance of hardware and other equipment.

The Service Model

Most FSSPs deliver services within a built environment, any human-made environment that provides a setting for human activity (buildings, homes, construction sites, etc.). Your clients rely on your organization to ensure their built environments (and the property within) are kept secure and safe for employees and customers, often a prerequisite to satisfy insurance and third-party liability requirements.

It's common for FSSPs to have an existing relationship with their customers, given many of these organizations carried out the installation of the fire and security infrastructure. Along with monitoring and responding to incidents, FSSPs also perform regular inspections as fire and safety regulators mandate, ensuring all equipment is operational and functioning.

The industry is service-intensive and notoriously competitive, with extremely thin profit margins. Operational efficiencies often differentiate between a negative and a positive balance sheet.

Given the urgency of most incidents, it's not uncommon to see contracts with defined (and extremely tight) response times and other service-level commitments, putting your operation under significant pressure to attend to and resolve issues quickly.

Industry Trends

IFS works with FSSPs globally. These relationships show a growing reliance on workforce planning and scheduling to optimize efficiencies and profitability. We also see an increased focus on managing parts and tools and the ongoing adoption of remote monitoring practices and technologies such as IoT.

According to the [Microsoft IoT Signals report](#), 90% of organizations surveyed stated that IoT was critical to their success.

These trends tie back to the challenges most service organizations face today; a [lack of skilled workers](#) forcing companies to compensate by increasing workforce efficiency and better parts management to offset the inconsistencies within the global supply chain.



Technology-enabled Practices

Although the FSSP industry is unique, you face similar opportunities and challenges as most other service industries.

Infrastructure and workflows must be continually examined and adjusted to leverage cost- and time efficiencies. Are you optimizing your workforce? Do you have enough people with the necessary qualifications and skills? Is your parts inventory adequate? Are you basing your actions and decisions on real-time information? Is the business profitable?

IFS Service Management supports you every step of the way, no matter the size or complexity of a job—from a straightforward maintenance call to an emergency response for an alert or alarm. The technology provides an incredibly agile rules engine and decision matrix to automate manual processes and workflows.

Your Workforce

FSSPs rely on a workforce that is technically astute and able to learn quickly. Individuals must clear criminal and security checks before they are hired, followed by training on hardware, software, and security protocols. A typical workforce comprises administrators, technicians, and guards/response teams.

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Working with IFS will enable us to drive efficiencies across all areas of field service management. Since implementing the software we have had a 12% improvement in jobs per day per engineer, significantly cutting costs and overall driving time. That’s all leading, in turn, to more satisfied and loyal customers and happier employees.”

Adam Barrett, Fire and Security Operations Director at Mitie



The industry is going through major transformation and now more than ever having a robust technology infrastructure is key to delivering effective and consistent service. Mitie shares their real-world transformation case study with Field Service News.



Administrators manage backend systems and oversee 24/7 monitoring of customer systems. Technicians focus on installing, repairing, and maintaining systems and equipment, while security workers carry out onsite coverage and emergency responses.

It's not uncommon for workers to require additional clearances to access businesses with higher-than-normal security thresholds—for example, financial and healthcare institutions.

Depending upon the qualifications, turnover occurs regularly. Sourcing new hires is difficult, especially amid a global skills shortage, so optimizing the productivity of the workers you already have is paramount to the success of the business. Here's how IFS helps:

Administration

Using the comprehensive IFS Service Management platform, your workers avoid repetitive and time-consuming administrative work as the technology automates and manages these processes.

Some examples include planning and scheduling technicians and guards, submission of incident reports, authorizations, contract management, shipping, repair and return workflows (when needed), parts management, and so on.

IFS also coordinates the oversight of SLAs and other commitments you've made to your customers, automatically scheduling technician and security team response times in compliance with existing contracts.

By offloading these administrative tasks, your workers have more time to focus on higher-value work, such as the hands-on

maintenance or repair of systems, emergency responses, and ongoing monitoring.

Associated data and outcomes are retained and integrated within all relevant backend systems, including SLA commitments, incident reports, warranty reimbursements (as required), updated parts inventories, technician time management, and other details. With IFS, your business is always up to date.

Predictive, planned, and reactive workforce scenarios

The managed services model supports predictive (maintenance), planned and preventative (proactive), and reactive (system down) scenarios.

- **Reactive:** Triggered by an alert, alarm, or a customer who makes contact directly to report an issue. IFS supports all communication channels, from phone calls, email, chat, and other messaging platforms, including integration with the client's helpdesk system.
- **Planned and preventive:** Regularly scheduled maintenance calls and regulatory inspections, such as checking CO₂ and smoke detectors, based on contractual obligations and existing SLAs.
- **Predictive:** Predictive maintenance, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, IoT, and digital twins, using asset and incident data (such as sensors identifying a door that isn't closing properly).

In either scenario, an IFS work order is created, and a technician or security guard is assigned.



Event
A service call is already on the books or an event/emergency is flagged for response.



Technician
The best worker is assigned based on skills, qualifications, experience, location, availability, clearances, and other factors.



Order
A work order is automatically generated and populated with all the necessary details (technical, historical, tools and parts, SLAs, etc.)



Post-visit
Incident reports, outcomes, and other details integrate with existing systems in real-time to update SLA, invoicing, inventory, worker time, etc.

Workforce planning and scheduling

IFS Workforce planning and scheduling utilizes powerful artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), real-time data, and automation to help drive valuable efficiencies in planning, scheduling, and routing. Proprietary algorithms are executed in milliseconds to identify the best-fit specialist, necessary parts and tools, the fastest route, and additional factors such as variable access protocols based on time of day and if the customer is onsite.

These capabilities extend to crewing aspects, where multiple responders are scheduled for a particular event. IFS also enables phased response cycles. For example, if a failure leaves a location unsecured, the system organizes a security responder to stand guard until a technician can attend and make the necessary repairs.

The right worker must be deployed with the necessary clearances, access (pass card and/or keys), and qualifications. Do-overs erode thin profit margins, so every fix and response must be successful the first time.

Unlike many service industries, response times are narrow and inflexible, especially when responding to an emergency and coordinating parts and people within a very tight SLA. This introduces additional resource challenges you must accommodate to ensure the responding employee arrives on time with the necessary access and tools, delivering the promised service within the guaranteed SLA window.

IFS Automated Intelligent Travel Profiles (AITP) set accurate travel weightings for urban areas at different times of the day.

This capability provides more accurate travel times, especially during high traffic (rush hour) periods, ensuring the on-time arrival of responders.



Travel times at rush hour in London, comparing results from HTMs with and without travel area weightings profile. TomTom data used as a baseline.

The IFS appointment booking engine manages the scheduling of technicians, security responders, and dedicated onsite security workers in real-time, running and ranking available workers to intelligently identify the best option and backfilling when workers call in absent or don't show up.

With a focus on short- and long-term capacity planning, dispatchers and planners

rely on the dynamic IFS Lobbies and Dispatch Console to visualize and manage the workforce.

The ability to adjust the schedule based on real-time activities is of particular value. For example, suppose there is only one technician with the necessary qualifications and parts within range of a call. In this case, the scheduling engine dynamically shifts the



schedules of all technicians to free up the resource and meet the SLA. The system is intelligent, ensuring all other obligations and SLAs are satisfied while prioritizing the response.

IFS manages activities down to the finest detail, including additional time for a responder to obtain a key or access pass enroute and planning parts alongside technicians to ensure each service call is resolved the first time.

Long-term capacity planning is essential for FSSPs. This is especially relevant for ongoing inventory and parts management as well as preparing for new business—ensuring the requisite resources and capacities to meet SLAs and other contractual obligations are available. The IFS what-if scenario explorer (WISE) scopes and explores different options, providing highly accurate predictions to ensure all outcomes are supported.

Investing in your future workforce

Although the global skills shortage impacts most industries, with higher than average turnover, your organization must emphasize training and the rapid onboarding of new talent.

IFS Service Management streamlines the integration of new and qualified personnel, providing a consolidated overview of your worker base. The system makes it easy to find a worker capable of performing a specific job with the necessary tools, access, and other qualifications. Information (capabilities, hourly wage, experience, skills, clearances, etc.) is maintained in the IFS system to help drive the scheduling process, considering all available resources and constraints.

Administrators set permissions enabling all workers in the field to easily access IFS Service Management for any historical and knowledge-based information they may need, especially helpful for new hires. With real-time data at their fingertips and automated workflows, worker productivity increases substantially.

Once the work is completed, all details automatically update your back-office systems in real-time. This allows you to monitor individual performance (the worker doesn't decide the schedule, the system does), outcomes, and results.

Mobile workforces

The locations and conditions for work onsite vary with every call. The IFS Service Management mobile app maintains a connection with your workers regardless of location. Even in intermittent coverage areas or facilities where mobile networks are prohibited, worker activities are tracked and recorded, reconnecting and uploading to backend systems as soon as a connection is reestablished.

Within the existing service agreement, specific information must be captured and shared to ensure workflows and other measures are contractually compliant with SLAs and other guarantees. The IFS mobile app is highly configurable and extensible to correctly record verifications, inspections, and other activities during the call.

This mobile connection also protects workers in the field, incorporating health and safety checks to ensure the employee is safeguarded before proceeding with a response. Protocols are provided for the worker to follow, ensuring assessments align with specific SLAs. Respondents can enable an alert on their mobile devices to request immediate assistance in an emergency.

The IFS mobile app allows workers to connect with backend systems to access and share real-time data and other records. For example, photographs and videos may be taken to record the incident or any malfunctioning parts to support a warranty claim. Photos and videos also prove the installation or repair was carried out successfully and within the contracted window of time. These assets also support insurance claims the customer may file following an event where damages occurred.

The IFS platform works on iOS, Android, and Windows devices, in both online and offline modes to support every potential use case and environment.

Parts and Materials

Repair and maintenance commitments rely on the availability of parts when and as needed. However, these outcomes are offset by the high cost of materials and an inconsistent supply chain that makes it challenging to plan and stock inventory. Accurate forecasting and planning for the future are imperative, but you must also avoid excess and obsolete stock.

IFS Service Parts Management helps you coordinate spare parts alongside scheduling and replenishment, allowing you to manage your entire inventory and logistics operation centrally.

The IFS system generates real-time data to show what's been used, what must be ordered, as well as the current location of all material in the system.

IFS provides granular control over your supply chain, ensuring the necessary parts are in the right place at the right time. The system automates warranty claim workflows to expedite reimbursement for faulty cameras and other equipment that must be replaced.

With IFS, you can maintain lean inventory levels, ensure first-time fixes, and enhance parts visibility, achieving a perfect balance between inventory and service levels.



Data-driven Workflows

Underpinning the entire operation is the data. Information is collected, examined, and recorded from initial activation (alarm, alert, call) to final resolution. Without high-quality data, you cannot accurately report on SLAs, parts inventory management, and other business benchmarks.



Historical data

IFS easily integrates with enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), and other business infrastructure.

Specialists in the field access historical information about specific systems and devices, including previous work orders, failures, repairs, etc. This deeper perspective makes it easier to spot recurring issues and trends, helping to inform the diagnosis.

The system also serves as an asset registry, providing real-time insight into every piece of equipment, from fire extinguishers and alarm points to security doors, used by each customer. Your administrators can access detailed information down to serial numbers to ensure new or replacement parts are correct.



Reports, forms, and other records

Depending upon the customer and the nature of the incident, technicians and security personnel may need to capture and share information using specific forms to prove compliance with industry regulations and other protocols. These documents are also essential to support insurance claims when losses occur due to theft or fire.

IFS document management capabilities are dedicated to these administrative aspects of the work. Rather than relying on one-off attachments, the application serves as a comprehensive third-party document management system. Documents are handled in native format, with approval routing, revision, and document distribution capabilities.

Document management is a native capability within IFS Cloud, storing documents with call tickets, incident reports, customer accounts, and other records.



Dynamic data

As with many service organizations, some FSSPs still rely on archaic data capture systems such as hardcopy notes and Excel spreadsheets. This lag becomes more pronounced as the data becomes more varied, expanding to incorporate multimedia sources such as IoT data, photographs, video, voice recordings, and others.

For example, a service technician records a video of a malfunctioning camera as a part of the diagnostic workflow and supports a warranty claim. Once completed, the technician compiles their findings, storing their report with the video. This straightforward workflow is very complicated if the underlying systems don't support a full range of data formats.



Data integration

IFS manages the data flow across the entire service cycle. Data moves to the back office, seamlessly integrating with critical enterprise systems such as ERP, CRM, and others. It automatically updates these systems based on all service and security activities, providing real-time information for invoicing, parts management, inventories, and scheduling.

Employees quickly access historical and current information about the customer for context when dealing with new issues.

Safety of the workplace

Safety measures in the workplace environment, including CO2 sensors and smoke alarms, help FSSP organizations reduce risk and the severity of emergency situations. Police and fire officials are usually the first contact with the FSSP, and a close liaison with regulatory bodies and emergency services helps meet legal obligations stemming from an event.

The future

New technologies and service models

Remote assistance: Some scenarios can be remediated remotely, allowing the customer to resolve the issue themselves. Since FSSP infrastructure is constantly connected, technicians can easily engage remotely with customers and help guide them through the process of resolving simple scenarios such as resetting alarms, passwords, and other actions.

Remote Assistance extends your finite resources so you can do more with your workforce. Each session is recorded from start to finish for proof that the service call was successfully resolved.

Smart devices and capabilities: An emerging trend for FSSPs, especially within the B2C home security space, involves the monitoring and maintaining smart devices that extend beyond fire safety and security. For example, remotely closing curtains, turning on lights, and other capabilities.

This broader model allows FSSPs to provide additional services, increasing monthly subscription rates for existing and new customers.

Predictive maintenance: FSSPs are responsible for maintenance and inspection services along with emergency responses. Predictive maintenance supports this work by constantly monitoring the ongoing health of systems and equipment. For example, with connected infrastructure, FSSPs can measure asset performance in real-time, providing insights and early warnings if a device is not functioning correctly.

Data from these devices integrate easily with the IFS Service Management platform for rich analysis and business insights that proactively allow your technicians to avoid unnecessary downtime.

These constant connections are also leveraged to perform remote diagnostics, such as repeated low battery warnings from a carbon monoxide sensor that should trigger a callout. This provides the technician with the details of what's gone wrong so they can attend with the right parts and tools for a first-time fix. Software updates and other remote interactions are also supported using these connections.



Photo courtesy of Help Lightning



Summary

IFS Service Management delivers all the mission-critical requirements for fire and security service providers. From the complex scheduling of technicians and security crews and mobile capabilities to record photos and video onsite, to equipment warranties, tracking units to serial number levels, and managing all the data and moving pieces on the backend, we help you deliver consistently outstanding moments of service to your customers. As a composable platform, our solution is designed to grow with the changing needs of your organization.

Visit our [website](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

Join your peers and partner with IFS



About IFS

IFS develops and delivers cloud enterprise software for companies around the world who manufacture and distribute goods, build and maintain assets, and manage service-focused operations. Within our single platform, our industry specific products are innately connected to a single data model and use embedded digital innovation so that our customers can be their best when it really matters to their customers – at the Moment of Service™.

The industry expertise of our people and of our growing ecosystem, together with a commitment to deliver value at every single step, has made IFS a recognized leader and the most recommended supplier in our sector. Our global team of over 5,500 employees every day live our values of agility, trustworthiness and collaboration in how we support thousands of customers.

Learn more about how our enterprise software solutions can help your business today at ifs.com.

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